

9.0 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Forestry research in Malaysia started in 1929 with the establishment of the Forest Research Institute in Kepong, Selangor. The Institute became a statutory body in 1985 and is now known as the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM). FRIM is responsible for all aspects of forestry and forest products. In East Malaysia, the responsibility for research and development rests with the State Forestry Departments of Sabah and Sarawak.

The Asean Timber Technology Centre (ATTC) is a Kuala Lumpur - based Asean project to foster regional cooperation. It is supported by the European Economic Community with a grant of M\$21 million. The Centre is currently striving to improve the utilisation of forest resources and upgrade the technical capability of the downstream timber industries. In an effort to upgrade the skills and management of industry personnel, ATTC has conducted 11 short courses and seven workshops and trained 611 trainees from Asean member countries in various aspects of timber processing and utilisation. ATTC also provides advisory and consultancy services.

Another regional project sited in Malaysia is the Asean Institute of Forest Management (AIFM) which was established in 1985 to provide training to foresters in the Asean region. Under this project, technical and financial assistance are provided by Canada in the form of expert services, equipment, training and other inputs amounting to C\$7.3 million.

10.0 POTENTIAL FOR CANADIAN PARTICIPATION

Dr. Liew Wing Hing, the Director of ATTC, commented that Canadian technology is not suitable for Malaysian forests which have many species intermixed in the logging areas. He recalled that Canadians have had several failures here due to their lack of experience in tropical forests. These problems have been mentioned in the Forestry Study prepared for the Canadian Department of External Affairs in 1988. Nevertheless, Mr. Ooi Seng Hock from the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), indicated that good potential exist for Canadian participation in both downstream and pulp and paper projects. The Industrial Master Plan has outlined strategies to modernize and rationalise local timber mills to make them more competitive. At the same time, Malaysia is facing a shortage of waste paper and pulp. In view of these plans and constraints, a wide scope for consultancy services can be anticipated.

Mr. Paul Brett, Deputy Director of the Asean Institute of Forest Management, commented that, in most cases, foreign technology is not readily transferable for Malaysian purposes. He added that there are a lot of local innovations in the Malaysian mills. The tropical multi-species forest means that the local mills have to develop their own processing methods with available equipment and technology which is primarily designed for non tropical forests.