

31 MARCH 2022

# BELAGA RECOVERY PROJECT

## A big step forward for the environment



31 March 2022 marked an important date in Glenealy Plantation Sdn. Bhd.'s (GPSB) history. On that day, our company reached a major milestone as we took a big step forward in our conservation effort, with the first engagement session with major stakeholders and interested parties for the Belaga Recovery Project.

When GPSB adopted the NDPE (No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation) policy in April 2020, we commissioned a study to determine the group's High Carbon Stock (HCS) liability as a result of our oil palm concession. The study covered our oil palm concessions in Malaysia for the period January 2016 to September 2020.

In January 2021, the study determined that our HCS area loss amounted to 1,853 ha. We shared this information with supply chain stakeholders in order to impress upon them our commitment to transparency and active engagement.

Resulting from this, the Belaga HCS Recovery Project identified a suitable area to be designated and set aside for HCS liability compensation in May 2021. This was in line with our firm commitment to our NDPE policy. The site identified is located in Belaga, in the northern section of the Kapit Division, in Sarawak. It covers an area of 3,736 ha, which is double the calculated HCS liability extent.



Once the Belaga Site was found suitable, landcover mapping was carried out using drone imaging between 17 January to 10 March 2022. On 31 March 2022 the Belaga Recovery Site Project was presented to the important stakeholders and members of the local community. The project objectives were established as:

- To compensate for areas with High Carbon Stock Loss in the development of GPSB oil palm plantations, and
- To manage the recovery site for conservation, rehabilitation, and compensation offset.

Turnout at the 31 March event was very encouraging, to say the least with a total number of 60 persons in attendance, including representatives from Forest Department Sarawak, Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), WWF and several schools as well as residential communes in the area. This was the first of several consultations with stakeholder that are planned throughout the initial phases of project implementation.

The event began with Mr. Chieng Kai Soon, GPSB Senior Sustainability Manager, giving a general overview of the company and the project. The next section of the consultation was facilitated by Malaysian Environmental Consultants (MEC) who is the principal independent consultant steering the Belaga Recovery Site Project. MEC is a neutral 3rd party. Director of MEC Mr. Kishokumar Jeyaraj and Manager of MEC Ms. Norleen Lowrans, explained the objectives of the project, its timeline, completed activities as well as current threats identified.

Some of the activities conducted were drone mapping, boundary demarcation, signboard installation and investigation of encroachment activities. MEC also presented the three phases of the management planning exercise and elaborated on the activities as well as the output of each phase. Examples of future activities are biodiversity, social, carbon analysis, land cover mapping and hydrology assessments.

It was most encouraging to see local community representatives raising their concerns over their involvement, and potential benefits from this Belaga Recovery Project.

Mr. Michael Anak Ngelai of Forest Department Sarawak also addressed those present and emphasised that at the end of the day, this is not a development project - it is a conservation project. "Even hunter-gatherers have a role to play: we gather, we replant," he explained.

While the general consensus was positive overall and stakeholders present were receptive to the project, GPSB is well aware that there is a need to continue to address the concerns raised in order to build greater trust and confidence among the stakeholders especially the local communities. The recovery project will be most beneficial to environmental conservation and all parties and it is long overdue.

Dr Samantha Liew of WWF too had a positive view of the Belaga Recovery Project, and opined that a consistent, committed and transparent consultation process would be key to the success of its progressive roll-out to progressive implementation. Like many things in life, finding the right balance is key.

The participants were also taken for a site visit to the border of the project area within the Paong FMU. Belden Gimán, GPSB Sustainability Executive summed-up the event saying, "This is a major step forward for our company in conservation, as we seek to somewhat 're-set' things. It's exciting! We're the first in the country to undertake a project of this kind; and we hope that others will be encouraged to follow our example."

