

Forest and Trade Asia

Information about forest certification and responsible wood sourcing in Asia Pacific



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13 March 2007

Sabah's Biggest Plywood Manufacturer Joins the Malaysia FTN



Kota Kinabalu - The Malaysia forest products industry received a clarion call yesterday when Sabah's biggest plywood manufacturer, **Cymao Plywood (M) Sdn Bhd**, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WWF's **Malaysia Forest and Trade Network** (Malaysia FTN). Through the signing, Cymao makes a public commitment to implement a responsible purchasing policy and formally joins a growing league of companies worldwide that are committed to responsible purchasing of timber products.

The Malaysia FTN, an initiative funded by its members, the European Commission and the governments of the United States of America and the Netherlands, is the Malaysian chapter of WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN), a worldwide partnership between companies committed to eliminate illegal logging and to improve the management of valuable and threatened forests.

"Cymao Plywood brings the Malaysian forest industry one step closer to responsible practices," said Duncan Pollard, Director of the GFTN. "We hope their commitment will be the starting point for a paradigm shift in the forest industry here in Sabah and across the Asian region."

The world's forests remain under threat from deforestation, illegal logging, and poor forest management. Instead of contributing to these problems, the global forest products industry can be part of the solution. By facilitating market links between companies committed to achieving and supporting responsible forestry, the GFTN creates market conditions that help conserve forests and biodiversity, while providing economic and social benefits for the businesses and people who depend on them.

"Following the signing of Test Rite Pte. Ltd., a timber products trader based in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur last week, Cymao is the fifth company to join the Malaysia FTN. WWF-Malaysia would like to congratulate Cymao on their commitment to responsible purchasing of timber products and we are confident that the leadership role they will play in the industry will inspire others to follow", said WWF-Malaysia's National Programme Director, Dr. Arun Venkataraman at the signing ceremony. "MFTN will assist Cymao to strengthen its responsible purchasing policy and to help their suppliers to achieve credible chain of custody and forest certification. In this way, Cymao will be well placed to respond to the needs of its international customers and shareholders, as well as meet its obligations under the forthcoming EU FLEGT voluntary partnership agreement". (FLEGT-Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade)

Cymao is the largest manufacturer of plywood and decorative paneling in Sabah, exporting products to North America, Europe, Japan and ASEAN countries. As a prerequisite to Malaysia FTN membership, the company has renewed its commitment to Forest Stewardship Council chain of custody (CoC) certification. In addition, Cymao and MFTN will together be working with their log suppliers in Sabah over the coming months and years to support its achievement of controlled wood certification, a new certification standard of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), to ensure all uncertified timber used in the supply chain for FSC products comes from sources independently verified as:

1. Legally harvested,
2. Protecting High Conservation Values,

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3. Free from native or local community rights disputes, and
4. Selectively harvested natural forests or plantations.

“We are delighted with this commitment by Cymao to join the Malaysia Forest & Trade Network to support the reinstatement of its FSC Chain of Custody certificate. This provides us with the reassurance we need that its products will meet the demanding requirements of the UK market,” said Rachel Butler, Environment Manager of Finforest UK.

Through direct links with the GFTN’s \$40 billion network of nearly 300 companies across 30 countries, Cymao will expand its business for products from verified legal and certified sources. The Malaysia FTN will provide technical assistance to help it achieve this, including guiding a responsible purchasing policy and action plan, which is a key element of the transparency demanded by buyers in the increasingly environmentally sensitive global marketplace.


“Many of our customers in North America and Europe are global brands,” said Executive Director of Cymao Holdings Berhad, Mr. Lin Kai Hsuan. “Our work with the Malaysia FTN will help us reassure them that the products they buy from us are coming from well-managed sources.”

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