

BERITA ENSEARCH

Building capacity in the environmental field as an enabler to Malaysian professionals growth

Editor's note

Greetings to all!

2020 has been a harrowing year for all of us, largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has greatly affected our economic and social lifestyles, both locally and globally. There was an initial period of pseudo-positive environmental impact, due to work closure and much reduced business and industry activities. However, during this same period of the various Movement Control Orders (MCO) Malaysia somehow still faced pollution problems such as the contamination of Sg Selangor leading to closure of water treatment plants and hence water woes for the many thousands of consumers, especially in the Klang Valley. Our featured articles in this issue provide interesting insights and food for thought on these topics.

Merely awareness of environmental issues is not sufficient. More attention needs to be paid to actual Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG Goal 12) by all individuals at home, at work and at play, to avoid, prevent or minimise adverse environmental impacts to human and natural environs. Let this be our goal to improve our environment and our quality of life as we move into the new year. We hope for 2021 to be a better year for all, with good health and safety, and clean environment. Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and Safe and Happy New Year!

Jenny Tan
Editor 2020/2021

NOTE TO MEMBERS

Members are encouraged to write to admin@ensearch.org in the event of changing contact details. Corporate Members are recommended to provide more than one contact (email address) to facilitate better dissemination of ENSEARCH information.

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FEATURED MEMBER

Ms Natasha Nordin Manan

(ENSEARCH Co-Opted Council Member)

.Natasha’s childhood love for nature, biodiversity and conservation compelled her to grow out tadpoles found in roadside drains, volunteer her free time at Zoo Negara, and then go on to study fisheries science at a local university. She finally qualified as a marine biologist in 2003 from Kolej Universiti Sains dan Teknologi Malaysia (KUSTEM) (now known as Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, UMT).

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)’s 2009 Conference of the Parties no. 15 (COP15) held in Copenhagen marked a period of shift in her career. From purely working in the marine sciences (which by then involved sea turtles, public aquariums, and offshore oil and gas environmental surveying), Natasha was swept along by the mainstreaming of what has today become the defining approach to human progress - the philosophy of sustainable development. Another seminal moment in environmental history to influence her fortune was when the United Nations launched a new blueprint for humanity titled the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-2030).

As the breadth and depth in environment and sustainability work keeps growing, demand for trained and competent professionals gains increasingly strong. Here Natasha’s experience can be seen as a personal attest. These are just some of the areas she has had the privilege to be in: renewable energy, education for sustainable development, protected areas management, sustainability in commodities, and traceability in supply chains. As the availability of green jobs grows at an ever-accelerating pace, she takes this opportunity to invite the nation especially the younger generation to join her in powering Malaysia’s green revolution.



Ms Natasha (left) and fellow ENSEARCH members during a technical field visit.

Natasha would like to share her favorite environmental quote of all time:

“The environment is man’s first right. Without it, he cannot exist to claim other rights, be they political, social, or economic.”

-Ken Saro-Wiwa-

Natasha is proud to be an ENSEARCH Member since 2009 To connect, please visit <https://www.linkedin.com/in/natasha-manan>



Ms Natasha has supported ENSEARCH in various events and activities. Here is she during ENSEARCH’s Technical Field Visit to IWK STP

FEATURED ARTICLE

Indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment

Author: Manuel A. Zambrano-Monserrate

The new coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) has generated an unprecedented impact in most countries of the world. The virus has affected almost every country on the planet (213 in total), spread to more than 2 million people, and caused around 130,000 deaths (WHO, 2020a). Currently, most countries have tried to fight the spread of the virus with massive COVID-19 screening tests and establishing public policies of social distancing. It is clear that the priority revolves around people's health.

For this reason, the indirect impact of the virus on the environment has been little analyzed. The first studies estimated a positive indirect impact on the environment. On the one hand, climate experts predict that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions could drop to proportions never before seen since World War II (Global Carbon Project, 2020). This outcome is mainly due to the social distancing policies adopted by the governments following the appearance of the pandemic

For example, in Hubei province (China), strong social distancing measures were implemented in late 2019. These measures affected the country's main economic activities. As a result, power plants and industrial facilities halted their production. Also, the use of vehicles decreased considerably. All this led to a dramatic reduction in the concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter that have a diameter of less than 2.5 μm (PM 2.5) in the main Chinese cities (ESA, 2020a; CAMS, 2020, Fig. 1).

In other parts of the world, such as Europe, air pollution has dramatically reduced since governments ordered citizens to stay at home to contain the spread of the new coronavirus. Main industries as well as other regular activities have ground to a halt. For instance, car use has reduced which caused GHGs to decrease. Fig. 2 clearly illustrates a sharp reduction in NO₂ concentrations in countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain (ESA, 2020b).

Also, the social distancing measures adopted by most governments have caused many beaches around the world to get cleaned up. This as a result of the reduction in waste generated by tourists who visit the beaches. Likewise, noise levels have fallen significantly in most countries. The decrease in the use of private and public transportation, as well as commercial activities, has caused a reduction in noise.

Despite the positive indirect effects on the environment, the new coronavirus has also generated negative indirect ones. For example, in the USA, some cities have suspended recycling programs because authorities have been concerned about the risk of spreading the virus in recycling centers. On the other hand, in the European nations particularly affected, sustainable waste management has been restricted. For example, Italy has prohibited infected residents from sorting their waste.

On the other hand, some industries have seized the opportunity to repeal disposable bag bans. Companies that once encouraged consumers to bring their bags have increasingly switched to single-use packaging. For example, a popular coffee company announced a temporary ban on the use of reusable cups. Finally, online food ordering has increased. These growths are resulting in the increase of domestic waste, both organic and inorganic. This research aims to show the positive and negative indirect effects of the SARS-CoV2 coronavirus on the environment. After analyzing each indirect effect, objective conclusions on the subject are presented.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment

Author: Manuel A. Zambrano-Monserrate

2. Positive and negative indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment

2.1. Decreased concentrations of NO₂ and PM 2.5

Air quality is essential for people's health; however, 91% of the world population lives in places where poor air quality exceeds the permissible limits (WHO, 2016). The consequences of air quality degradation are manifested in a significant percentage of global mortality each year (Zhang et al., 2017). In this regard, the 2016 World Health Organization (WHO) report indicates that air pollution contributes to almost 8% of total deaths in the world; the most affected countries being those found in Africa, Asia and part of Europe (WHO, 2016).

China implemented strict traffic restrictions and self-quarantine measures to control the expansion of SARS-CoV2. These actions generated changes in air pollution. Due to quarantine, NO₂ was reduced by 22.8 µg/m³ and 12.9 µg/m³ in Wuhan and China, respectively. PM 2.5 fell by 1.4 µg/m³ in Wuhan but decreased by 18.9 µg/m³ in 367 cities.

On the other hand, the readings from the Copernicus Sentinel-5P satellite show a significant decrease in NO₂ concentrations over Rome, Madrid, and Paris, the first cities in Europe to implement strict quarantine measures. Fig. 2 shows average NO₂ concentrations from 14 to 25 March 2020 (panel b), compared to the monthly average of concentrations from 2019 (panel a).

Additionally, the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) of the European Union observed a drop of PM 2.5 last February in relation to the previous three years. According to CAMS (2020), a drop of approximately 20–30% of PM 2.5 is observed in large parts of China, when comparing the difference between the monthly average for February 2020 and the mean of the monthly averages for February 2017, 2018, and 2019.

In China alone, all of these air quality improvements generated human health benefits that have outnumbered confirmed SARS-CoV2 deaths thus far (Chen et al., 2020).

2.2. Clean beaches

Beaches are one of the most important natural capital assets found in coastal areas (Zambrano-Monserrate et al., 2018). They provide services (land, sand, recreation, and tourism) that are critical to the survival of coastal communities and possess intrinsic values that must be protected from overexploitation (Lucrezi et al., 2016). However, non-responsible use by people has caused many beaches in the world to present pollution problems (Partelow et al., 2015).

The lack of tourists, as a result of the social distancing measures due to the new coronavirus pandemic, has caused a notable change in the appearance of many beaches in the world. For example, beaches like those of Acapulco (Mexico), Barcelona (Spain), or Salinas (Ecuador) now look cleaner and with crystal clear waters.



SDG Corner



SDG11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

Annual mean concentration of particulate matter of less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}) (µg/m³)

Access to improved water source, piped (% of urban population)

Satisfaction with public transport (%)

Did you know?

Value Year Rating Trend

16.0 2017 ● ↗

98.9 2017 ● ↑

61.0 2019 ● ↓

↓ Decreasing ↗ Stagnating ↗ Moderately improving ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement

Malaysia performance according to The Sustainable Development Report 2020 (Cambridge University Press, 2020)

FEATURED ARTICLE

Indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment (contd)

Author: Manuel A. Zambrano-Monserrate

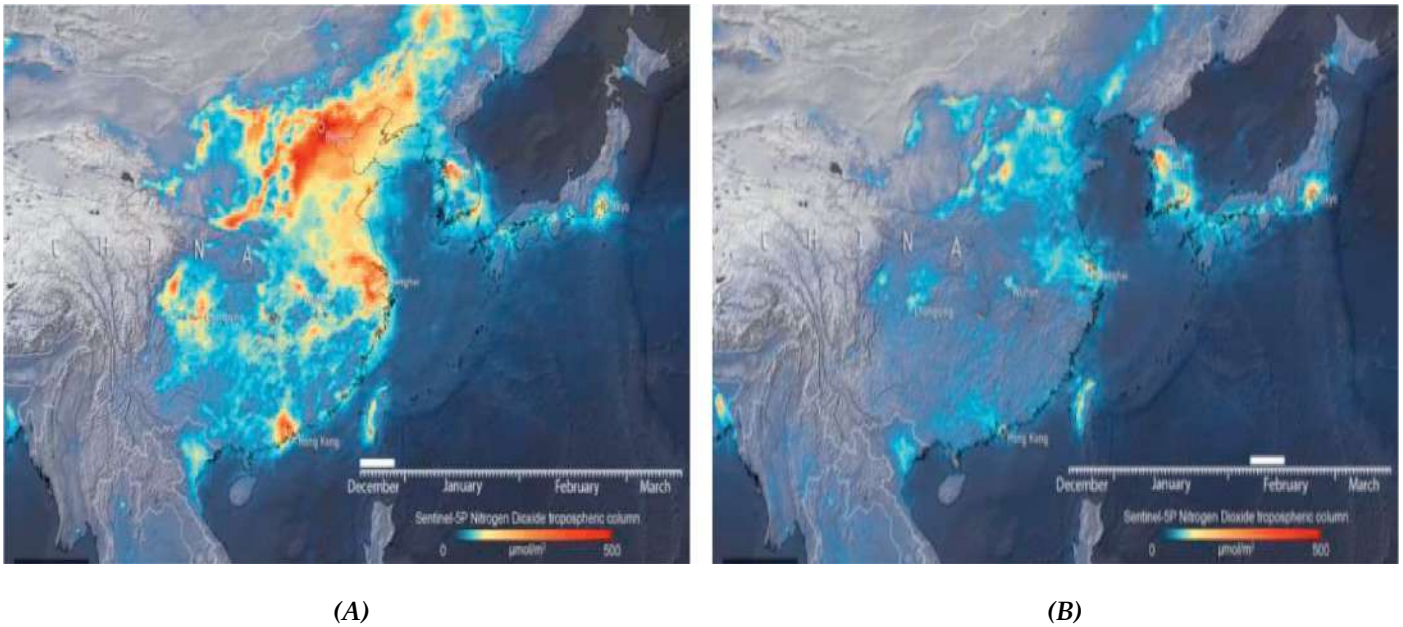



Fig. 1. Evolution of NO₂ concentrations in China. Source: ESA (2020a).

2.4. Increased waste

The generation of organic and inorganic waste is indirectly accompanied by a wide range of environmental issues, such as soil erosion, deforestation, air, and water pollution (Mourad, 2016; Schanes et al., 2018).

The quarantine policies, established in most countries, have led consumers to increase their demand for online shopping for home delivery. Consequently, organic waste generated by households has increased. Also, food purchased online is shipped packed, so inorganic waste has also increased.

SDG Corner

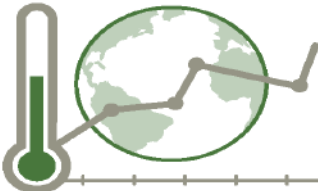


13 CLIMATE ACTION

TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

BEFORE COVID-19


GLOBAL COMMUNITY SHIES AWAY FROM COMMITMENTS REQUIRED TO REVERSE THE CLIMATE CRISIS



2019 WAS THE SECOND WARMEST YEAR ON RECORD

GLOBAL TEMPERATURES ARE PROJECTED TO RISE BY UP TO 3.2°C BY 2100

COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS



COVID-19 MAY RESULT IN A 6% DROP IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FOR 2020

STILL SHORT OF 7.6% ANNUAL REDUCTION REQUIRED TO LIMIT GLOBAL WARMING TO 1.5°C

FEATURED ARTICLE

Indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment (contd)

Author: Manuel A. Zambrano-Monserrate

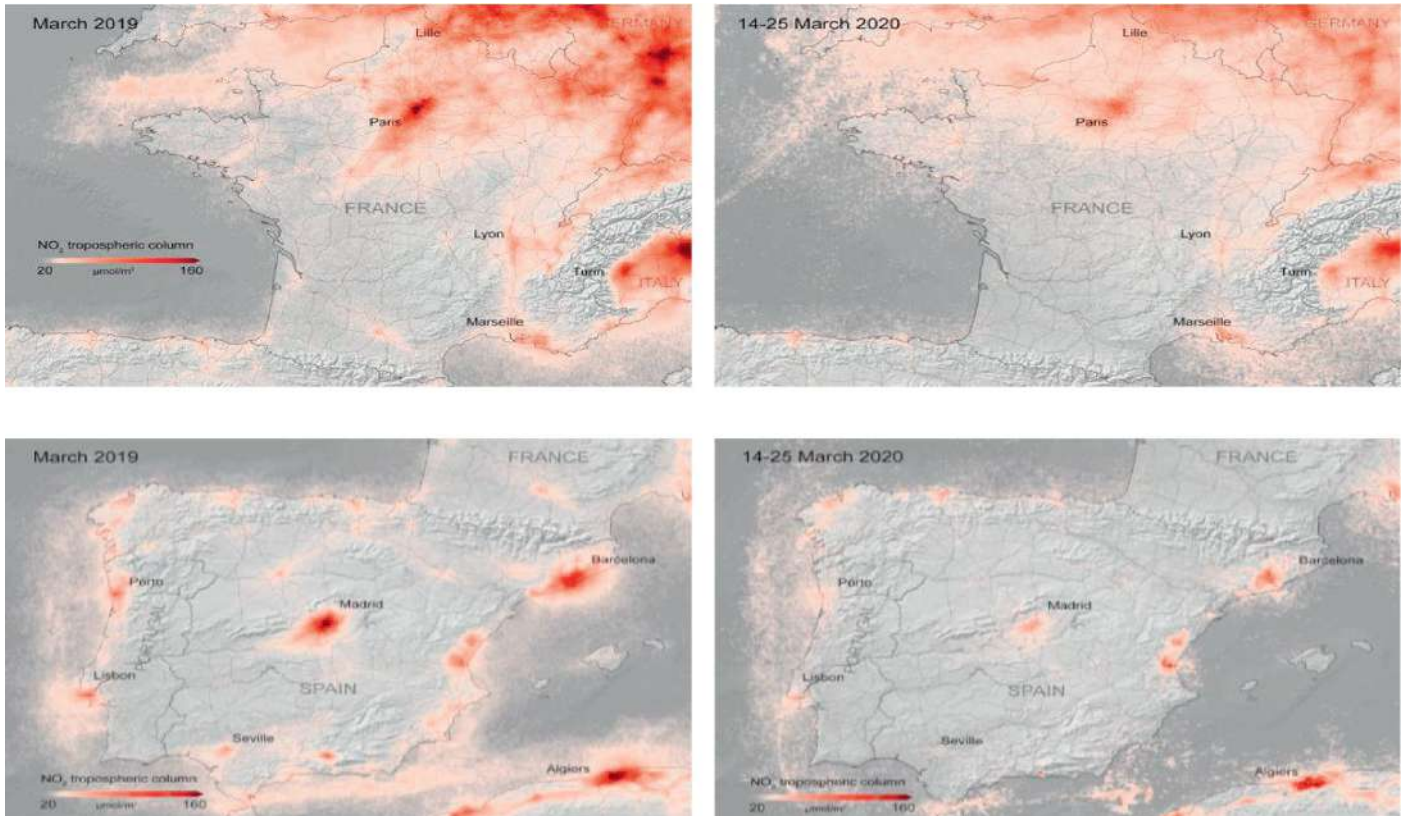


Fig. 2. Evolution of NO₂ concentrations in some regions of Europe. Source: ESA (2020b).

Medical waste is also on the rise. Hospitals in Wuhan produced an average of 240 metric tons of medical waste per day during the outbreak, compared to their previous average of fewer than 50 tons. In other countries such as the USA, there has been an increase in garbage from personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves (Calma, 2020).

2.5. Reduction in waste recycling

Waste recycling has always been a major environmental problem of interest to all countries (Liu et al., 2020). Recycling is a common and effective way to prevent pollution, save energy, and conserve natural resources (Varotto and Spagnolli, 2017). As a result of the pandemic, countries such as the USA have stopped recycling programs in some of their cities, as authorities have been concerned about the risk of COVID-19 spreading in recycling centers.

In particularly affected European countries, waste management has been restricted. For example, Italy has prohibited infected residents from sorting their waste. Also, the industry has seized the opportunity to repeal disposable bag bans, even though single-use plastic can still harbor viruses and bacteria (Bir, 2020).

2.6. Other indirect effects on the environment

China has asked wastewater treatment plants to strengthen their disinfection routines (mainly through increased use of chlorine) to prevent the new coronavirus from spreading through the wastewater. However, there is no evidence on the survival of the SARS-CoV2 virus in drinking water or wastewater (WHO, 2020b). On the contrary, the excess of chlorine in the water could generate harmful effects on people's health (Koivusalo and Vartiainen, 1997).

FEATURED ARTICLE

Threats to rivers

By: WWF Malaysia

Major threats to our rivers

The way we use and manage rivers can cause great environmental damage that adversely affects the very resource that we depend on for our well-being and survival. Undeniably, most threats to rivers are the direct result of our own activities .



Children playing in Sungai Penchala (Penchala River), Selangor (Image: WWF Malaysia)

River Pollution

Pollution is one the largest threats to our rivers. The reduction in river water quality is a clear indicator of the decline in the environmental health of a river basin.

The sources of pollution come from domestic and industrial sewerage, effluents from livestock farms, manufacturing and agro-based industries, suspended solids from mining, housing and road construction, logging and clearing of forest and heavy metals from factories.

In our nation building pursuits, rivers have been utilised to fulfil various development needs, altering the natural conditions and dynamics of rivers, and the land use in river basins. Damage to river systems, degradation of their quality and ability to perform important functions bring about major consequences, leading to long-term economic losses and affecting the population's quality of life as a whole.

Urbanisation significantly contributes to the increase in water pollution problems, especially in the form of sedimentation, solid waste, rubbish, and organic pollution. Urban development usually removes forests within a basin that results in soil erosion and sedimentation. Inefficient waste disposal systems and lack of proper sanitation facilities lead to waste and sewage ending up in rivers.

Rivers contaminated by sewage contain high levels of organic pollutants, and they become breeding grounds for harmful bacteria and viruses that may cause either mass die-offs or reduced resistance to diseases and loss of reproductive ability of fish and other aquatic organisms. Sewage pollution also causes outbreaks of water borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A that are detrimental to human.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Threats to rivers (contd)

By: WWF Malaysia

Pollutants such as heavy metals, pesticides and herbicides pose health hazards to human beings and aquatic life. Consumption of fish, prawn or cockles that have accumulated heavy metal pollutants result in disturbed reproduction rates and life spans. Pesticide and herbicide contamination may lead to death or chronic long-term illness in humans as well as impair the fertility and development of both humans and aquatic fauna.

Physical Alteration of River Systems

Infrastructure projects implemented in river basins for the purpose of flood control, storage of water or to generate power, such as dams, normally involve channelisation of rivers running through urban areas, river diversion, deepening, straightening and widening, and clearing of riparian vegetation.

These activities cause shifts in flow regimes, changes in river water chemistry and processes, and sediment deposition resulting in alteration of the natural river ecology and hydrology. Normally, the aquatic life is the most significantly and directly affected.

Destruction of Highland Catchment Areas

The highlands are important water catchments that are major sources of our water supply. Although forests still form the largest single land use in our highlands, there is increasing interest towards highland development.

Disturbances involving vegetation clearing, especially on the unstable and sensitive steep slopes, will result in soil erosion and sometimes landslides. The types of land use in the highland catchment which impact most significantly on rivers and riverine wetlands are forestry (i.e. timber extraction), agriculture, mining, industry and urbanisation.

Over Exploitation of Fisheries Resources

Excessive harvesting and using destructive and illegal fishing practices and methods, such as derris roots, poisons, explosives, small mesh nets and fish traps, can lead to the reduction in population of most fish species.

Introduction of Exotic Species into Riverine Environment

Introduction of exotic species into the riverine environment, either intentionally or accidentally, for food fish and aquarium trade, is a major issue particularly from the perspective of indigenous freshwater species conservation. Once introduced to a suitable aquatic environment, the exotic fauna and flora can potentially breed excessively and cause displacement of the indigenous populations.

Article was published @ <https://www.wwf.org.my/>



ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



**WATER SCARCITY
COULD DISPLACE
700 MILLION PEOPLE
BY 2030**



SOME COUNTRIES EXPERIENCE A FUNDING GAP OF 61% FOR ACHIEVING WATER AND SANITATION TARGETS

FEATURED ARTICLE

10 facts about air pollution on World Environment Day

By: UN Environment, World Health Organization, World Bank, Every Breath Matters campaign

Nobody is safe from air pollution, the United Nations warned on World Environment Day, with nine out of 10 people on the planet now breathing polluted air.

This has led to a growing, global health crisis, which already causes about 7 million deaths per year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Burning fossil fuels for power, transport and industry is a major contributor to air pollution as well as the main source of planet-warming carbon emissions - and tackling both problems together could bring substantial benefits for public health.

AIR POLLUTION – THE SILENT KILLER

Every year, around **7 MILLION DEATHS** are due to exposure from both outdoor and household air pollution.

Air pollution is a major environmental risk to health. By reducing air pollution levels, countries can reduce:



Stroke



Heart disease



Lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma

REGIONAL ESTIMATES ACCORDING TO WHO REGIONAL GROUPINGS:



CLEAN AIR FOR HEALTH

#AirPollution



FEATURED ARTICLE

10 facts about air pollution on World Environment Day (contd)

Here are some facts on the human impacts of air pollution and its links with climate change:

1. Air pollution kills 800 people every hour or 13 every minute, accounting for more than three times the amount of people who die from malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS combined each year.
2. Some of the same pollutants contribute to both climate change and local air pollution, including black carbon or soot - produced by inefficient combustion in sources like cookstoves and diesel engines - and methane.
3. The five main sources of air pollution are indoor burning of fossil fuels, wood and other biomass to cook, heat and light homes; industry, including power generation such as coal-fired plants and diesel generators; transport, especially vehicles with diesel engines; agriculture, including livestock, which produces methane and ammonia, rice paddies, which produce methane, and the burning of agricultural waste; and open waste burning and organic waste in landfills.

Household air pollution causes about 3.8 million premature deaths each year, the vast majority of them in the developing world, and about 60% of those deaths are among women and children.

5. 93% of children worldwide live in areas where air pollution exceeds WHO guidelines, with 600,000 children under 15 dying from respiratory tract infections in 2016.
6. Air pollution is responsible for 26% of deaths from ischemic heart disease, 24% of deaths from strokes, 43% from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and 29% from lung cancer. In children, it is associated with low birth weight, asthma, childhood cancers, obesity, poor lung development and autism, among other health defects.
7. 97% of cities in low- and middle-income countries with more than 100,000 inhabitants do not meet the WHO minimum air quality levels, and in high-income countries, 29% of cities fall short of guidelines.

The year 2019 was the second warmest on record and the end of the warmest decade, 2010 to 2019. In addition, with a global average temperature of 1.1°C above estimated pre-industrial levels, the global community is far off track to meet either the 1.5 or 2°C targets called for in the Paris Agreement. Although greenhouse gas emissions are projected to drop by 6 per cent in 2020, and air quality has improved as a result of travel bans and the economic slowdown resulting from the pandemic, the improvement is only temporary. Governments and businesses should utilize the lessons learned to accelerate the transitions needed to achieve the Paris Agreement, redefine the relationship with the environment and make systemic shifts and transformational changes to lower greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient economies and societies.

8. About 25% of urban ambient air pollution from fine particulate matter is contributed by traffic, 20% by domestic fuel burning and 15% by industrial activities including electricity generation.
9. Keeping global warming "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6F), as governments have pledged to do under the 2015 Paris Agreement, could save about a million lives a year by 2050 through reducing air pollution alone.

10. In the 15 countries that emit the most planet-warming gases, the cost of air pollution for public health is estimated at more than 4% of GDP. In comparison, keeping warming to the Paris Agreement temperature limits would require investing about 1% of global GDP.

Article was published @ <https://www.weforum.org>

FEATURED ARTICLE

What's Next for Malaysia's Electricity Bill?

By: Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan, Executive Officer, Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia (WECAM)

Malaysia recently saw a 23% spike in residential electricity usage during the COVID-19 nationwide lockdown, resulting in higher than expected electricity bills for consumers staying in. Energy Watch approached Mr. Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan, Executive Officer of Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia (WECAM), to dive deeper into what this means for electricity customers.

Energy Watch (EN): How important is it that consumers are protected in today's economic conditions?

Mr Ravinesh: It is important that the electricity tariffs remain stable, especially now when a sudden fluctuation in bills can cause a massive cascade in economic conditions.

In March, Malaysia's Department of Statistics stated almost 600,000 consumers had lost their jobs during the Movement Control Order (MCO). It's expected that after the MCO there will be almost two million people who could lose their jobs. Many people will be facing a financial crisis, because other than just electricity bills, they have other commitments to pay.

Maintaining stable electricity tariffs at times like these benefits both the economy, and consumers alike.

EW: What do you think the indirect impacts from increasing electricity tariffs will be?

R: An increase in electricity bills will cause a cascading effect that would affect the bottom layer to the top. When energy bills get too expensive, consumers have no choice but to stop paying. Currently, cashflow is needed to revitalise the country's economy, but this could only be achieved if consumers don't have extra financial burden.

Electricity prices don't just impact energy costs. Fundamentally, every single enterprise or industry in Malaysia functions by using electricity as one of their main ways of generating income. This is because industries must compensate their higher utility bills by increasing the price of the products.

However, employee salaries remain the same to ensure profit can be seen with the increase in electricity cost, thus consumers have to buy products that are more expensive, while not receiving enough pay to sustain the increase in product cost. That's why the Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia (WECAM) welcomed the Prihatin Tambahan package, introduced in March, especially for the B40 group, who have been hit very hard during the pandemic.

EW: Stability is crucial during these times, as you mentioned. How well are Malaysian households protected against electricity price rises?

R: We are very fortunate to be receiving rebates and discounts for our bills, but we are a unique case because Malaysia is a people-centric country. Not only do we get these discounts that everyone knows about, we also enjoy lower tariffs on our electricity prices than the rest of the region.

Did you know that among ASEAN countries, we have the lowest electricity tariff? It's not even comparable – our first electricity tariff block is about 22 sen, and the nearest, Singapore, is more than double the price. We also provide more aid for residential users when the global market price for electricity is higher than the tariff price that was already set in Malaysia.

FEATURED ARTICLE

What's Next for Malaysia's Electricity Bill?(contd)

By: Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan, Executive Officer, Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia (WECAM)

In other countries, this works the other way, where residential users pay more in energy bills to offset the bills of commercial and industry players. But this is counter-productive; industrial and commercial players are profit-based organisations, who need customers to purchase their products. If consumers are struggling with living costs and do not have purchasing power, businesses will also suffer. That's the logic behind keeping the tariff price lower for residential users compared to industries and commercial users.

To explain how tariffs are set, you must understand that there are two factors to tariff costs in Malaysia. One is the fixed tariff, which is regulated every three years, and then we have the fuel costs tariff, which is revised every six months.

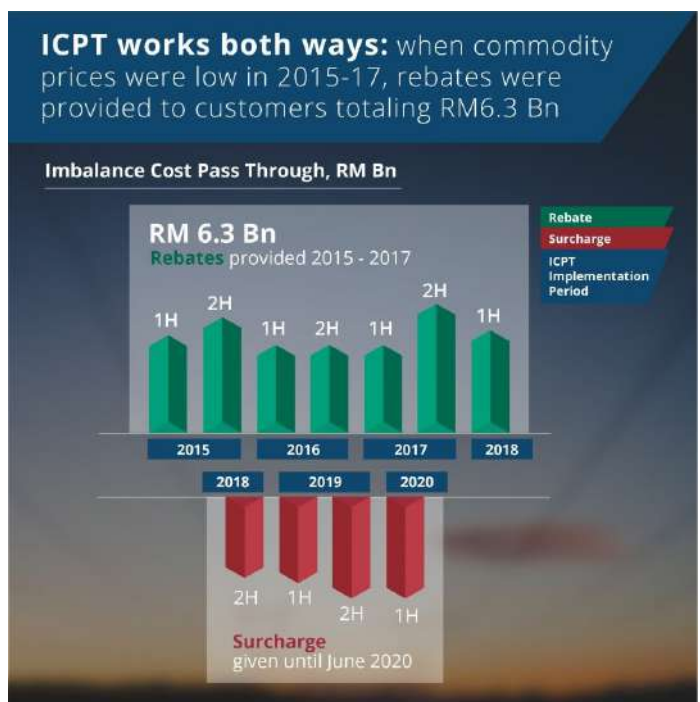
Through a mechanism called Imbalance Cost Pass Through (ICPT), the fluctuating fuel costs can be balanced by applying rebates or surcharges on electricity tariffs. However, all the increases we've see in fuel costs so far are completely disregarded for residential consumers, because it is subsidised by Kumpulan Wang Industri Elektrik (KWIE). This is where KWIE fund played a major role, to ensure the tariff is always fixed. No matter what happens, if the fuel price rises or drops, the tariff is fixed, and does not fluctuate.

EW: Can you explain a bit more about KWIE's role in helping electricity customers in Malaysia?

R: Kumpulan Wang Industri Elektrik (KWIE) is a fund administered by Suruhanjaya Tenaga (Energy Commission). The objective of it is to manage and cushion the impact of electricity tariff to the customers. Not only that, KWIE can also function as a way to buffer electricity prices at times of financial crisis. So far, KWIE has been used to partly subsidise the ICPT surcharge for commercial and industrial energy consumers, and completely subsidise the ICPT surcharge for residential users.

Subsidies and discounts on the electricity tariffs are largely funded by KWIE, including the recent discount packages announced in Feb (PRE20), March (PRIHATIN), June (BPE) and July 2020 (extension of discounts until December 2020) which aimed to provide assistance to citizens and businesses impacted by the current global COVID-19 pandemic. Some people think that TNB is just making profit and consuming that profit. But TNB is neutral to any savings from the lower fuel and generation costs to the system, as these savings

as these savings will be eventually passed through to the customers via ICPT, which is reviewed every 6 months. However, when times are bad or the global market causes energy prices to be high, KWIE is there to absorb the worst of the impact for the most vulnerable Malaysians.



Visit energywatch.com.my for more insights into the energy industry



FEATURED ARTICLE

What's Next for Malaysia's Electricity Bill?(contd)

By: Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan, Executive Officer, Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia (WECAM)

Only now are consumers starting to recognise the benefits of KWIE, even though it has always been there in the background, subsidising consumer needs. Without the KWIE fund, there wouldn't have been the stimulus package, the tariff would have fluctuated. KWIE is why among all ASEAN countries, we are the lowest when it comes to electricity tariffs.

EW: Speaking about reliefs, do you feel that the recent stimulus package offered by the government is sufficient?

R: WECAM is affiliated with FOMCA, which is part of the international consumer movement, and we have insights from other countries. Malaysians should know that there are a lot of countries around the globe where no major actions are being undertaken, especially for consumers, to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the economy and electricity prices.

Malaysia on the other hand, has responded quite effectively through the recently announced stimulus plan and electricity bill discount – we have been an exemplary country in our response. However, it may have been better for consumers to have receive a flat discount instead of a percentage based discount. This is because we don't want consumers to rely on big discounts for their electricity bills, especially since larger consumers will have a large portion of their bills reduced through the percentage discount.

Consumers should remember the first two blocks act as a safety net for those in need and should constantly be protected even through this era of modern technologies. The third and fourth tariff blocks are kept high to ensure consumers practice energy efficiency and energy conservation as those who reach these blocks are usually middle to upper class families. It is advised that consumers in this tariff blocks use appliances that have energy star ratings to reduce energy usage. This high tariff is meant to deter consumers from wasting electricity and spending money unnecessarily on electricity bills.

We want consumers to transition to a more sustainable mindset of practising energy conservation and energy efficiency to manage their consumption, which would be a more sustainable way to reduce their electricity bills.

EW: There has been a bit of confusion lately on the way that TNB calculates consumers' bills. What are your thoughts on this?

R: There have been difficulties as we move from estimated bills during the Movement Control Order (MCO) to actual readings today. Our advice for consumers would be to wait for the actual bill, and not base your assumptions from the estimated bill. TNB will finally compare with your previous meter reading, and your current meter reading, and will only charge you for the difference.

A key issue is that the understanding of pro-rated calculation is still very low amongst consumers. There is a lot of division and multiplication involved to obtain the final value. To many consumers, it feels as if TNB is just lumping up all the numbers – to bill them according to the fourth block, and fifth block, and so on. This assumption gives rise to consumers' dissatisfaction.

So, if we want to evade problems from consumers due to estimated bills, the only way is to educate consumers. And I believe there is a big responsibility for utility providers to educate consumers on things like pro-rated calculation. Why? Because this might not be our last MCO – we may face another lockdown in the future which will require the use of estimated bills.

Of course, all these problems would be solved by the installation of smart meters. That is one reason we have been supporting the implementation of smart meter. But until then, consumers might face the problem of getting estimated bills.

FEATURED ARTICLE

What's Next for Malaysia's Electricity Bill? (contd)

By: Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan, Executive Officer, Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia (WECAM)

EW: What's your advice to consumers in using digital platforms like myTNB to have better oversight and access to their bills and finances?

R: Due to the inability of consumers to get a physical bill, many resorted to downloading the myTNB app so that they could view their bills online. WECAM supports this move as consumers can better track their energy bill and usage, and the application also makes payment easier.

Malaysians would also have heard about the Smart Meters being deployed over the country. We would advise consumers to welcome the implementation of Smart Meter as the myTNB application works best when partnered with it. Together, they enable consumers to get a detailed energy bill, eliminate the need of estimated bills and allows consumers to plan their financial allocation for electricity bills as they are able to get real time data on a daily basis, allowing consumers to change their behaviour to reduce electricity usage.

If you do not have the financial backing, then we suggest you take TNB's Easy Payment Plan. It has no interest, and you can pay gradually. If you're uncertain, don't be afraid to complain. Consumer rights includes the right to ask questions – because a solution that might work for one person might not be the solution for another person.

EW: What are your expectations for electricity prices in the near future – is KWIE along with the government's funds stable enough to continue providing financial relief?

R: With all these discounts and subsidies, the question of sustainability for KWIE comes into mind. There is only a finite amount of funding available to subsidise the needs of the consumers. I believe it's not just TNB's responsibility to provide funds for KWIE, it also falls on all energy providers. In the end, KWIE stands for Kumpulan Wang Industri Elektrik, so every single stakeholder in the electric industry should contribute to KWIE.

As we look at the recent ICPT announcement in June, I think the discount given is sufficient for now. At the end of the day, we need to face our reality – if that is what the market price is, we need to pay for our energy usage.

Yes, it's up to the government to help empower consumers, through rollout of smart meters and education about energy use. At the same time, consumers need to responsibly manage their energy usage by practicing energy efficiency and energy conservation. The KWIE fund can only sustain so much. We cannot put too much pressure on the fund, and if it was to deplete to zero, the consequences would be harder on consumers.



Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan

Executive Officer

Water and Energy Consumers Association of Malaysia

Ravinesh Uthayasuriyan currently leads awareness and education programs on Smart Meters, energy efficiency, and sustainable lifestyles, and frequently delivers talks across Malaysia on the benefits and ways to adopt energy efficiency. As Executive Officer at WECAM, he is involved in stakeholder engagements for Suruhanjaya Tenaga - Malaysia's Energy Commission - for the development of electricity tariffs and energy demand forecasting.

COVID-19
#KitaTeguhKitaMenang

TERMA BAHARU

Lama :
Penjarakan Sosial

Baharu :
Penjarakan Fizikal

Maksud Sama :
Amalkan jarak 1 meter daripada orang lain



**JANGAN LEKA ATAU ALPA,
KITA BELUM MENANG**



Kementerian
Kesihatan
Malaysia



MYHEALTHKKM



National
Foundation for
Infectious
Diseases

www.nfid.org/coronaviruses

**Let's Stop The Spread
of COVID-19**

Flu & COVID-19: #StopTheSpread



PAST EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Environmental Health Impact Assessment Training

The Training on Environmental Health Impact Assessment of Disease Outbreak was another full house, thanks to support from 25 participants. This time around, the trainees got to learn insights and tricks from an experienced trainer, none other than our own Council Member, Dr Subramaniam Karuppanan. The training was held in Sunway Nexis to give basic knowledge prior to field exposure to evaluate and review the environmental policy related to health impact assessment in Malaysia. This training was designed for persons involved in EMS implementation, auditing, system development or system maintenance.



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PAST EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Air Pollution Assessment Level 1 (Beginner) and Level 2 (Intermediate)

The Air Pollution Assessment-Level 1 and level 2 (intermediate) with 18 participants enjoyed learning on various air quality screening and refining models that is being used in EIA study, tailored for Malaysian context. In order to ensure optimum learning experience and ample of tutor-participant interactions as well as conducive Q&A, we've kept the number of participant low to achieve maximum learning efficiency. The trainer was Mr Lim Sze Fook who was the expert meteorologist and experienced trainer. He covered the basics of Air Pollution & Air Quality Modeling with lots of interaction and with Mr Tan Poh Aun covering more ground like USEPA SCREEN3 Model, AERSCREEN & AERMOD. We are looking to organise another air pollution training level 3 (advanced) in February 2021. Stay tuned!!



Mr Tan Poh Aun delivering his training.

PAST EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Talk on "The Economy At A Pandemic Era"

ENSEARCH Talk on "The Economy at a Pandemic Era" by YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Mohd Sheriff Bin Mohd Kassim (Retired Secretary General in Ministry of Finance and Past President of Malaysian Economic Association) was successfully held at the Svofo, Sunway Nexis, Kota Damansara. The talk attracted about 30 people from our members and non-members. This talk has enabled the audience to gain more knowledge and insights on The Environment and Economy during the current pandemic era of Covid 19. His talk was well received by those who attended. We would like to express sincere appreciation to all members who took the time and effort to come. We thank you!



Back by Popular Demand!



Training on EIA and Post EIA Compliance Requirements
(26th - 27th January 2021) - **CLASSROOM** (12 CPD)

◇◇ Please make your way to www.ensearch.org for the latest updates! ◇◇

PAST EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

ENSEARCH 36th Annual General Meeting held on 26th August 2020



The Agenda for the AGM was as follows:

1. Opening Address by the President 2019/2020
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting held on 16th May 2019 (Thursday).
3. Matters Arising
4. Tabling of the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019.
5. Acceptance of the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts for the financial Year 2019.
6. Election of Council Members 2020/2021
7. Appointment of two Honorary Auditors
8. Appointment of Professional Auditors 2020/2021
9. Debate and decision on any Resolution duly submitted and received by the Hon. Secretary General at least two weeks before the Meeting
10. Any Other Business

TRAINING & ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2021



TRAINING CALENDAR YEAR 2021

JANUARY

- 1) **Green Jobs - ONLINE** - Trainer : Dr Hari Ramalu Ragavan - TBC
- 2) **EIA and Post EIA Compliance Requirements** (26th - 27th January 2021) - **CLASSROOM** (12 CPD)
Trainer: Ms. Geetha P. Kumaran

FEBRUARY

- 1) **Forum on STPs in Malaysia : Pollution Prevention and Developing A Green Resource - TBC**
- 2) **Green Logistic (Beginner Level)** (16th - 17th February 2021) - **CLASSROOM** (12 CPD)
Trainer: Dr. Hari Ramalu Ragavan
- 3) **Forum on Management of Industrial Waste** (23th February 2021)
Location: Pasir Gudang, Johor
- 4) **Air Pollution Level 3** (Advance Level) (26th February 2021) - **CLASSROOM** (12 CPD)
Trainer: Mr Tan Poh Aun

MARCH

- 1) **GIS for Environmental Management** (8th - 9th March 2021) - **CLASSROOM**
Trainer: Prof. Dr. Tuong Thuy Vu
- 2) **Climate Change Adaptation: Strategies and Plans for Malaysian Companies** (16th March 2021) - **CLASSROOM** (6 CPD)
Trainer: Mr. Shiro Chikamatsu
- 3) **Water Quality Assessment** (23rd - 24th March 2021)- **CLASSROOM** (12 CPD)
Trainer: Ir. Dr. Zaki Zainudin

ENSEARCH Training are HRDF Claimable,

****PROGRAMS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

EiMAS CPD Points Apply

For more information about our association, kindly visit www.ensearch.org

For more information about training, kindly email to po-training@ensearch.org or call us at 03-61569807

ENSEARCH SEMINAR/TRAINING ROOM FOR RENT

RM350.00 net per day

Approximately 800 square feet

Classroom seating - 25 pax

Theatre seating - 40 pax

Time: 0830 - 1700

INCLUDING

Projector Screen

Whiteboard & Marker

Flip Chart

Water dispenser

High Speed WIFI Internet

Tables & Chairs

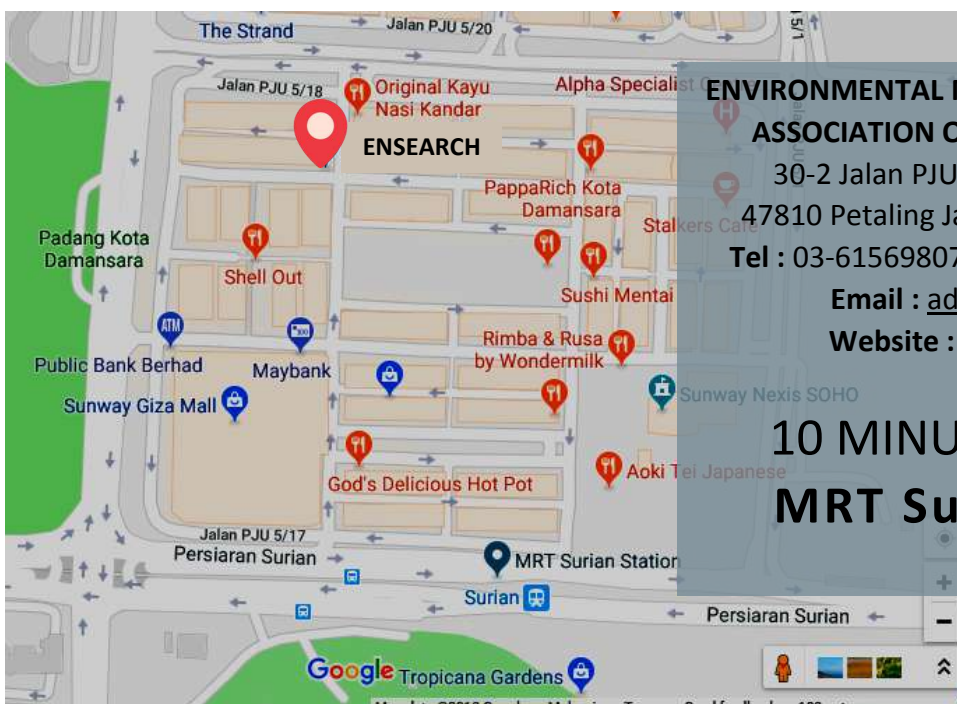
Prayer Room



Spacious classroom or theatre setting



Reading corner at the room's entrance



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH

ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA (70/84 WP)

30-2 Jalan PJU 5/16, Kota Damansara,
47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel : 03-61569807 / 08 Fax : 03 - 61569803

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ENSEARCH COUNCIL 2020-2021

| | |
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| VICE PRESIDENT | : Datuk Ir Othman Bin Abdul Rahim |
| VICE PRESIDENT | : Mr Tan Poh Aun |
| HON. SEC. GENERAL | : Encik Zaipul Anwar Zainu |
| HON. TREASURER | : Mr Kelvin Diong Siong Loong |

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Ms Geetha P. Kumaran

Encik Abdul Aziz bin Long

Encik Mohamed Siraj Abdul Razack

Ir Lee Heng Keng

Dr Subramanian A/L Karuppanan

Dr Hari Ramalu Ragavan

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Ir Elias Saidin (Intermediate Past President)

Puan Ruhaidah Md Hassan (Indah Water Konsortium Sdn. Bhd. Rep)

Ms Jenny Tan

Cik Natasha Manan

ENSEARCH SECRETARIAT



EXECUTIVE SECRETARY & ACCOUNT :

Cik Vishal Singam

PROJECTS OFFICER:

Encik Mohamad Amirul Asraf Kamarudin

PROJECT OFFICER (TRAINING) :

Cik Noor Haneem Bokhri (resigned w.e.f. Oct 2020)

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH

ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA (ENSEARCH)

30-2, Jalan PJU 5/16, Dataran Sunway,
Kota Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya,
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www.ensearch.org



ENSEARCH Resident

Brief History of ENSEARCH

ENSEARCH was established on 26th November 1984 by a pioneer group of local professionals and academics from multidisciplinary backgrounds. The founder President (1984-2000) was Ir. K. Kumarasivam and the first Hon. Secretary General was Dato' Prof Dr. Abu Bakar Jaafar. As of today, ENSEARCH has more than 300 Members consisting of Corporate, Individual and Life Members.

It is acknowledged that enhanced awareness and competency of organizations and individuals through education and training is essential to achieve the objectives of the Malaysian Environmental Quality Act 1974. Therefore ENSEARCH began formulating and implementing training programmes to enhance the capacity for environmental management in Malaysia.

In addition, ENSEARCH organizes Tea Talks and Public Lectures to enhance awareness on pertinent and comprehensive issues on the environment. ENSEARCH has also been actively involved in dialogue sessions with relevant authorities in development of legislative and regulatory frameworks that strengthen the environmental management practices in Malaysia. In recognition of ENSEARCH's objectives, it has been given tax-exempt status whereby the donations to ENSEARCH are exempted from tax.