



cial in determining how people use the resources. The second link is that the poor, who usually have less formal and informal education and thus awareness of the environmental consequences of their actions, may use production methods or consume the nature in an unsustainable way. The third is the binding constraint on current consumption of the poor that may give them no option but to continue to exploit nature in an unsustainable way.

### Property Rights

Many of the natural resources are accessed by the poor through common property. From their review of literature on the role of common property resources in the livelihood



strategies of the poor, Beck and Ne-smith (2001:129) conclude that:

- Common property resources are vital resources for the poor, particularly in the lean or preharvest season, or other times of stress
- Women, in particular, are involved in accessing and using common property resources, but not usually in management
- Common property resources are of greater importance to the poor than to the rich
- Poor people are being progressively excluded from these livelihood resources by privatization and commercialisation
- Indigenous institutions for common property resource management are under strain due to modernisation and globalisation pressures, and conflicts between users are apparent; the extent of influence of the poor on such institutions is (where understood) limited.

Issues surrounding access to, and control over, common property

resources are critical aspects of the livelihood strategies of the poor. The uncertain, unclear or even non-existent property rights on the environment are prevalent in most developing countries.

The users of common property resources tend to have historical rights to the resource and tend to be protective of these resources. They know which people are entitled to use the resource and to what extent. They are monitors of each other and as such, their use of the common property is efficiently regulated from within.

At the government level, understanding and information concerning the people's perceptions is incomplete. For instance, the government might believe that the poor have a "short time horizon" and abuse the nature, whereas in actual fact the problem is that the poor do not have secured rights over the natural resource. It is also noteworthy that the apparently short-sighted behaviour in natural resource use by the poor, when it really occurs, can in most cases be better explained by factors other than mere poverty, such as land alienation, insecurity of tenure or physical insecurity associated with repression.

If the property rights have been well defined and are enforced but still there are environmental problems, then the cause is likely to be a lack of information of the poor on the consequences of their or some other people's action. For instance, in urban squatter settlements poor people may throw their household and human waste in the rivers, which also function as a sewage system: households have no incentive to restrict the disposal of their waste. This is an "open access" problem because the rights of use of rivers for sewage have not been defined. In addition, it is possible that there is simultaneously a problem related to information, because people may be unaware of the health hazards associated with these practices.

However, it is of course possible that people do know that their actions are detrimental to other people but, as they themselves are also suffering from the same problems caused by other people, their own

actions will change nothing. This is an example of an "open access" resource with a negative externality. In this case, the public authority has a role to play in assigning property rights on the use of the river/sewage system. The effects of this example on poverty alleviation should be evident: the positive welfare effect of improved hygiene on people have been well documented.

### Information Problems

The poor have generally considerably less information than the more affluent people in the society. One type of problem related to information is the ignorance of the poor of the causes of their actions on natural resources. An example is soil degradation due to bad land management practices. Another problem is ignorance of the consequences of their actions on other people. This is illustrated by the example of the poor using agricultural pesticides improperly thus contaminating surface water used by the whole community. A third problem is that of ignorance of the effects of environment on them: i.e. ill-health from using dirty water. It may be that pesticide user knows that the substance is harmful to humans but, since the users of the water do not know this, no corrective action is taken by him, nor required.

Another problem stems from the possible ignorance of the regulatory body itself on the negative impact of environmental degradation or pollution on people in general and on the poor in particular. Government officials at local level do not necessarily have adequate information about the environmental effects of different actions.

### Effects of International Trade on Poverty Alleviation

Given the comparative advantage that developing countries possess in terms of low-cost labour, increased international trade represents an opportunity for alleviating poverty in the developing countries as a whole. While the overall impact is expected to be favourable, the increased competition for markets unleashed by the new trading regime

will in all likelihood alleviate poverty more in middle-income developing countries than in LDCs.

While recognizing the contribution of ICT and the market forces of the global economy to the emergence of globalization, too little has been made of the social, cultural and the political roots and ramifications of the phenomenon of globalization. As Brazilian President Enrique Cardoso argues, it is a serious mistake to think of globalization as the result of market forces alone: "The boundaries within which the market operates are defined politically, in direct negotiations between governments in multilateral forums, such as the World Trade Organization. The power game is always present in such negotiations."

Because of globalization's multifaceted nature, it is essential to grasp the different motivating forces that are impelling these developments aside from the purely economic, and also to recognize the different directions from which they are coming. As Paul Streeten (1999) has pointed out, there is a globalization that can come "from above" in the form of multinational firms, international capital flows and world markets. Intrinsic to this form of globalization is a growing legal and institutional framework within which the regimes of contemporary international trade, finance and investment are being conducted. The legal dimensions of that framework are best captured within the context of international economic law generally speaking, while the Bretton Woods MLIs and the WTO are the specific institutional mechanisms within which it is organized.

Another form of globalization can come from below (such as the human rights struggles, women's and anti-nuclear movements, or in the case most relevant to this discussion, environmental). The globalization-from-below activists have the potential to add a democratic dimension to the debates about globalization from above. Especially important, it can help them mobilize resistance against the hegemony that globalization-from-above may present.

*continued on page 16*

# Ecolabelling Timber Products and Forest Resources

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**E**colabelling or certification of timber and timber products has dual motives just like two faces of a coin - environmental as well as marketing. Environmentally, ecolabelling is seen as a step towards ensuring the production of a continuous flow of desired products from the forest reserves without undue reduction of the forest's inherent values and future productivity, and without undue undesirable effects on the physical and social environment. Marketing-wise, it is being actively pursued to ensure continued market access of Malaysian timber products, particularly in the environmentally sensitive markets of Europe, United States and Japan since the market is being undercut in less environmentally-sensitive markets like China, Taiwan and South Korea by low-cost producers like Indonesia and Cambodia.

There are two main ecolabelling or certification programmes adopted in Malaysia: the Government-sanctioned Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) programme and the international non-governmental organisation (NGO)-led Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The standards in the MTCC were formulated to operationalise the International Tropical Timber Organisation's (ITTO's) criteria and indicators (C&I) on the forest resource base, continuity of commodity and service flow, level of environmental control, socio-economic effects and institutional framework. These standards were developed at both the national and forest management unit (FMU) levels, while the standards for the FSC program are specified in its principles and criteria (P&C) that are applicable to all FSC-certified forests throughout the world. These P&C address legal issues, indigenous rights, labour rights, multiple benefits and environmental impacts surrounding forest management.

## Multiple Motives or Interests on Ecolabelling

Stakeholders in timber and forestry sector are interested in ecolabelling for various reasons. The Government is relying upon certification to promote the sustainability of its forest resources and together with the private sector they are reacting to the fear of the loss of international markets. In the domestic scene, environmental and community NGOs and indigenous people are looking at certification as a potential tool to promote more transparent decision making involving forest management and its impact upon the livelihood of indigenous people. The timber and timber products industry is an important contributor to the economy of the country in terms of foreign exchange earnings (3% excluding furniture), employment (2% excluding furniture) and value added creation (5%) on average in the last five years. Throughout the



first and second Industrial Master Plans (1985-1995 and 1996-2005), the timber and timber products sector has been earmarked to provide domestic and export growth for the economy. Hence, the declining trade seemingly caused by importing countries' perception that Malaysian products do not come from well-managed forests is taken seriously by the Federal Government (Yong, 2002).

The Federal Government championed the MTCC programme motivated by the country's commitment to the ITTO's Guidelines for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests and its Criteria for the Measurement of Sustainable Tropical Forest Management (CMSTFM). It was initially guided by the ITTO's C&I in the first phase followed by

further attempts to comply to the FSC's P&C in the second phase. The adoption of the MTCC certification programme is spearheaded by the Forest Departments of various states who are acting as trustees of the PFEs and a few timber firms who gained long-term concessions from the state. The adoption of the FSC is a proactive move by the Malaysian-German Sustainable Forest Management Project (M-GSFMP) in Sabah and the private sector in response either to obtaining internationally acclaimed best practice acknowledgement or in meeting requirements set by international consumers.

The timber industry and the

private sector are seeking ecolabelling as a method of demonstrating and informing consumers that their timber products come from well managed forests, thereby ensuring their products' continued popularity and sale. Environmental NGOs and indigenous peoples' organizations have all along been wary of the state of forest harvesting in the country, both environmentally and socially. They looked upon certification as a tool of influencing and incorporating their conservation and social interests either to promote good forest management or a means of gaining recognition of native rights to forestland, particularly the native customary rights (NCR) land.

## Roadblocks and Challenges to Ecolabelling

There are various roadblocks and challenges to ecolabelling efforts. The main ones gravitate around the recognition of the rights of the indigenous peoples, land and forest disputes, lack of consensus among the social groups and inability of the MTCC certification program to obtain mutual recognition from the FSC.



## Status of Ecolabelling Forest Resources

Firms are free to adopt either FSC and MTCC or both. The Forestry Departments in the states of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak ascribe to the MTCC programme while having an open attitude to new approaches and permitting the industry to make its own choice on which certification

scheme to adopt, including that of FSC and ISO 14,000. As at the end of 2004, eight FMUs in Peninsular Malaysia, i.e. Pahang, Selangor, Terengganu, Johor, Kedah, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Kelantan, covering a total of 4.67 million hectares of Permanent Reserved Forests (PRFs) had been certified under the MTCC scheme (MTCC 2005). All these certified forests are 'Government owned'. The first privately managed FMU to be certified by MTCC was the Sela'an Linau FMU in Sarawak in January 2005.

In Sabah, Deramakot Forest Reserve, involving an area of 55,000 ha in September 1997 was certified as being a "well-managed forest" adopting a management concept and practices in full compliance with the MC&I and hence the ITTO's criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as well as the FSC P&C (Gilley 2000). In Sarawak, the Samleng Group has undergone a FSC pre-assessment while the KTS Group has begun developing its Environmental Management System (EMS) and under the ISO14,000 received a FSC certificate. In Peninsular Malaysia, PITC with an area of 9,000 ha, has also applied for a FSC certification and was assessed to comply and obtained its FSC certificate at the end of July 2002. PITC has also begun EMS activities in its attempt to obtain the ISO14,000 scheme while the MTCC-certified Kumpulan Permodalan Kayu Kayan Terengganu has opted to seek FSC certification as well.

In Sarawak, there are also two bilateral and multilateral SFM projects being established. One is the Malaysian-German SFM project involving bilateral cooperation between the Sarawak Forestry Department and GTZ undertaken by the Samleng Group at Ulu Baram involving 170,000 ha of hill forest, where a FSC certificate is being sought. Another is the MTCC-ITTO SFM project undertaken by the Ta Tau Group at Ulu Anap involving another 170,000 ha where the MTCC certification program is underway.

### Status of Ecolabelling of Timber

The first shipment of MTCC-certified timber was exported in July 2002 to The Netherlands. By the end of

November 2004, a total of 31,852 m<sup>3</sup> of MTCC-certified timber had been exported to The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Australia (MTCC 2005). A number of authorities and companies have shown interest in accepting MTCC-certified timber products. For example, the Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy has included the MTCC scheme as one of the accepted schemes in its document entitled Purchasing Tropical Timber: Environmental Guidelines (Iamail, 2004). As of November 2004, 55 companies have received the MTCC Certificate for Chain-of-Custody (coc) (MTCC, 2005).

### Impacts of Ecolabelling

Forest policy, authority and decision over practices have always been the domain of the Government and Forestry Department. The entry of FSC and other certification programs have introduced a 'threat' to this domination. Environmental and indigenous people NGOs have a strong influence on market endorsement of the credibility of any ecolabelling scheme. The NGOs have demanded a higher level of transparency and stakeholders' participation and consultation on decisions involving forest management and timber trade. Governments are beginning to see this power shift.

Socially, ecolabelling has led to positive effects. Certified concessions have to oblige to take care of the interest of local residents. For instance, PITC has created social programs in its effort to fulfill the third FSC principle on financial, socio-economic and legal considerations. The Orang Asli or Indigenous People Program has enabled the Orang Asli people to be employed as logging workers at all levels of skilled work tasks and receiving wages at par with other Malaysians.

Economically, sellers could boost their market share because of the cachet of ecolabelled timber in eco-sensitive markets. This is indicative of firms obtaining FSC accreditation.

But, firms obtaining forest certification have to incur incremental costs owing to compliance



to additional forest management activities. PITC has reported an average increase in direct production cost of about 15%. It should be noted too that such cost increases are not limited to concessionaire and logging contractors. The Forestry Department would also incur incremental costs for supervisory and monitoring costs during tree marking and mapping operations and road design (Mohd Shahwahid *et al.*, 2002).

Environmentally, ecolabelling has led to a greater planning and monitoring of the forest concession. For instance, the Forest Management Plans (FMP) have to be prepared following a new format whereby information related to the environment, community participation and social have to be considered as well (Terengganu State Forestry Department, 2002).

### Conclusion

Ecolabeling of timber and forest resources is still at infancy stage in the country. The State Government and the Forestry Departments of the three regions with support from some NGOs are all committed to streamlining the national MTCC certification in its phased approach towards global acceptance. Market forces for FSC and MTCC labelling, particularly demand from international customers, have provided the

necessary interest in ecolabelling among concessionaires and industries. But ecolabelling has provided a new dimension in forest management and timber trade whereby all three elements of environment, economics and social, particularly indigenous peoples' concerns, have to be taken on board. Compliance with ecolabelling have also proven to be costly while price premiums are being enjoyed mainly by FSC certified concessions only. Nevertheless, ecolabelling has made concessionaires more aware of international customer requirements for timber from well-managed forests and its chain of custody. This has indirectly disciplined harvesting crews in certified concessions.

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# The ISO 14001 Implementation: Implications for Regulatory Compliance

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**M**ost of the environmental problems we have today result from industrialization and its associated activities. This is because human society depends heavily on industrial products to sustain its living standards. Corporations consume resources and create environmental emissions during product manufacture stage. These are, however, not significant compared to that a product generates during its life cycle. In general, environmental load throughout the entire life cycle of a product is much greater than that from the manufacturing stage. Environmental loads from the use and disposal stages are much greater than that from the manufacturing stage.

As a result of emerging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy and growing pressure from the public, industries have decided to take the initiative to overcome environmental problems rather than being pushed by interested parties such as governments, environmental activists and the public. This saw the introduction of a voluntary program called environmental management into the management of corporations. The implementation of ISO 14001 EMS and its implications on the environment and business in general will follow.

## Adopting an ISO 14001-EMS

### *What is ISO 14001-EMS?*

ISO 14001 was developed by experts from around the world representing industry, research, government, standards bodies and other international organizations. Only a few pages long, ISO 14001 establishes a flexible framework within which an organization can identify and manage its significant environmental issues. Its operating principle is simple: use traditional business practices to systematically

manage environmental responsibilities, just as businesses systematically manage finance, inventory or product quality. ISO 14001 is based on the “plan, do, check, act” kaizen wheel business model: the organization defines goals, develops a plan to reach those goals, implements the plan, tracks its effectiveness, and periodically reviews and evaluates how the organization might improve its performance. At the core of ISO 14001 are three commitments: compliance, pollution prevention and continual improvement. In applying the ISO 14001 standard to environmental responsibilities, an organization identifies the environmental issues or “environmental aspects” that are significant to its facility, sets measurable objectives and targets, then develops and implements programs to accomplish those objectives. These objectives are monitored and periodically reviewed by management.

Areas that typically need additional attention when implementing an ISO 14001 are those unregulated activities with potential environmental impact where there is potential for pollution prevention

or continual improvement, though this attention must not come at the expense of compliance assurance.

### *Making ISO 14001 Work for You*

The key to successful implementation of ISO 14001 is to make it work for you. The EMS should be consistent with how the facility does business. Looking at how the facility does business and how the EMS can be designed and implemented to fit that model is the best place to start applying ISO 14001.

Crucial to the successful implementation of ISO 14001 is realizing that it is a management initiative, not an environmental project. Visible and consistent top management participation is critical to creating an effective EMS, and ISO 14001 spells out what role top management must play. Further, the development of the EMS should not become the sole responsibility of the environmental professional. Members from operations, quality, safety, purchasing, human resources, and finance should participate too. This multidisciplinary approach increases the chances that the EMS will be based on how the

company does business and how the EMS will ultimately be accepted, implemented and integrated throughout the company.

## Impact on the Environment & Business

Together with the issue of resource consumption, environmental impact caused by products or services is also a major issue faced by human society. Global environmental impacts such as global warming and stratospheric ozone depletion pose a great danger to the survival of the human race. Regional as well as local environmental impacts such as acidification, eutrophication, photochemical oxidant creation, eco-toxicity and human toxicity also damage the ecosystem's stability and human health.

International conventions and regional and local regulations in the environmental area are created to save the earth and human species from an uncertain future resulting from resource depletion and environmental disaster.

However, there is another side to the coin. These conventions and



regulations are potential technical barriers to trade. Industrialized countries with sound environmental policies in effect could require imported products to meet their own environmental criteria.

In light of possibilities of environmental conventions and regulations becoming technical barriers to trade, the international community decided to harmonize these practices and the net result is the implementation of ISO 14001. There is the very reason why countries exporting products to the developed countries should pay close attention to the contents, applications and implications of the implementation of ISO 14001 EMS.

The impact of the ISO 14001 implementation on the environment and business may be estimated by analyzing the activities of governments, business and international organizations. The common concerns of the implementation of ISO 14001-EMS on the environment and business activities is briefly analysed.

#### *Common Concerns*

Stakeholders see many potential advantages and benefits in an international standard for environmental management. Yet each group also harbors concerns over possible costs and impacts.

#### *Some Industry Concerns*

Some in industry are concerned that implementation of ISO 14001 will increase costs and administrative red tape without commensurate improvement in environmental protection or offsetting commercial and regulatory advantages. The concern expressed is valid if ISO 14001 is seen only in that narrow context of regulatory compliance. Its real value, rather, is its potential to change the organizational culture and the behavior of individuals. Those are the changes and the benefits which make implementation worthwhile and ultimately justified.

#### *Some Concerns of Small & Medium Size Enterprises*

There are several concerns related to small and medium sized enterprises (SME). Many SMEs are not yet familiar with the 14001 standard;

they dismiss it as being an issue of big business, or they see the certification process as being too complicated and expensive. The 14000 standards were developed so they could be tailored to the size and needs of any organization; therefore, a smaller enterprise will have proportionately less cost and complexity than a large enterprise. All organizations, whether large or small, have the potential to really be impacted by the trade implications of the standards as products are exported to Europe and Asia where the standards may very well be a *de facto* condition of doing business.

#### *Some Regulatory Concerns*

A few regulators are concerned that emphasis on the management approach to environmental protection will de-emphasize command and control regulation. They believe that environmental performance can only be achieved through coercive measures and detailed legal requirements. Such attitudes belie a failure to appreciate the fact that environmental protection can only be guaranteed over the long term by behavioral change and institutional acceptance and integration. It seems reasonable that as these regulators begin to understand the significance of the ISO 14001 approach, they will embrace its use in alternative compliance schemes to create win-win situations for all parties.

#### *Some Concerns of Environmentalists*

Like regulators, environmentalists too worry that ISO 14001 may lead to relaxation of the command and control approach. They also worry that ISO 14001 registration will be used to denote environmental excellence of the organization or environmental superiority of the organization's products. Conformance to ISO 14001 does not necessarily equate to environmental excellence. It only reflects that the organization has a management system that satisfies the elements of ISO 14001. It would be a misuse of registration, as well, to imply that the organization's products are environmentally preferable. This would confuse ISO 14001 registration with environmental labeling of products.

#### *Conformity Assessment*

All stakeholders are concerned about the credibility and integrity of conformity assessment. Conformity assessment that lacks integrity is useless as it can nullify any credit the organization expects to receive from customers, regulators and environmental groups. A conformity assessment process that cannot assure the organization is in conformance with the elements of ISO 14001 lacks integrity. Regulators are particularly concerned over this issue as they are under public scrutiny to treat all enterprises equally and not give advantages to undeserving parties. Conformity assessment officials in many countries are taking great pains to ensure the integrity of their conformity assessment systems as the stakes are quite high for all parties.

#### **Conclusion**

The benefits of the implementation of ISO 14001-EMS have been realized by organizations in Malaysia. Firms with established EMS and some with headquarters-driven customized EMS have adopted this standard. ISO 14001 is an ideal catalyst to break the inertia in firms that do not have an EMS and have not advanced over their existing EMS. The immediate operational benefits of ISO 14001 include improved efficiency in resource utilization, greening of supply chain, and improved corporate commitment. The largest benefit perceived by firms' vis-à-vis the overall industrial environment is the realization of the importance of the greening of the suppliers. Almost all firms have reported the benefits of the ISO 14001 like greater cost savings, resource conservation, and improved corporate image.

The ultimate aspiration of ISO 14001 is to achieve a system which is based on performance. In the interim, however, the management standards will coexist with country laws and regulations which, for now, are still the major incentives for many organizations. Implementation considerations that relate to management changes, registration strategies and provide answers to concerns have begun to take center-stage in ISO 14000 circles. This is,

of course, to be expected sooner or later as organizations begin to weigh the benefits and costs of the new approach. Fortunately, a number of ISO 14000 sources of information and solutions are emerging to assist all interested parties. The next few years should prove very interesting as we collectively work out answers to the many questions.

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