

## BERJAYA SOMPO IN COLLABORATION WITH GEC KICKS OFF RIVER SLOPE MITIGATION THROUGH TREE PLANTING TO PROTECT WATER RESOURCES AT THE KLANG RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KUALA LUMPUR, 25 July 2023:** Berjaya Sompo Insurance Berhad (Berjaya Sompo), together with Global Environment Centre (GEC), in partnership with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) Gombak, Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) Gombak and Petaling District, Jungle School Gombak Malaysia and Friends of Sungai Gombak Batu 12 at Kampung Batu 12, Gombak has embarked on a River Slope Mitigation through Tree Planting to Protect Water Resources at the Klang River Basin initiative.

The initiative kicked-off with over 40 volunteers from both Berjaya Sompo and local indigenous (Orang Asli) community members coming together to plant over 730 trees, including species such as *Melastoma malabathricum* (Senduduk), *Dillenia suffruticosa* (Simpoh Air) and *Saraca thaipingensis* (Gapis), and erosion control plants like *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (Vetiver) and *Schizostachyum jaculan* (Buluh termiang) at the Gombak River slope at the Kampung Batu 12. Further to this, the Orang Asli communities will also be engaged through the Friends of Sungai Gombak Batu 12 platform to monitor the river and the trees planted.

Berjaya Sompo and GEC are collaborating to mitigate the slopes through bioengineering, focusing on the Upper Gombak River Basin (Gombak River is a tributary of Klang River Basin) to reduce potential riverbank erosions and landslides as well as to increase the biodiversity of the area. The initiative also aims to foster stakeholder engagements with the Orang Asli community and to promote mainstreaming bioengineering in river management at Upper Gombak River Basin.

Berjaya Sompo's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Tan Sek Kee in his officiating address said, "As part of Berjaya Sompo's broader Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiative, this tree planting for slope mitigation goes one step further. We recognise that environmental sustainability is not just about reducing our carbon footprint but also about actively contributing to the well-being of our local communities. By addressing slope mitigation, we prevent potential disasters and create a safer environment for our people, flora, fauna and river".

In Malaysia, 97% of our water supply comes from the rivers. Hence, river protection and pollution reduction are vital to ensure the sustainability of our water sources. Tree planting at slope through the bioengineering method is one of the crucial nature-based solutions to protect the river and our water resources from riverbank erosions, improve the ecosystem and increase the riverine biodiversity and eventually the water quality.

For the first time for Gombak River, the project adopts the soil bioengineering technique through involvement of Orang Asli community from Kampung Batu 12. The community has been empowered on slope bioengineering techniques through a training conducted by GEC. Their involvement in the project directly provides them with some additional source of income. The project also aims to support them in nursery establishment and management in the following year, which in turn can be a source of alternative income generation for them in the future through a green economy model.

GEC River Care Programme Manager Dr Kalithasan Kailasam welcomed Berjaya Sompo for their commitment to this project in his opening address. Corporate involvement, contribution, and active participation from stakeholders through a smart partnership, which includes parties such as the local community, government agencies and NGOs, is essential in environmental conservation and restoration efforts.

Following the tree planting activity, GEC's Programme Officers conducted a river monitoring demonstration as part of the river education initiative and follow up monitoring. River monitoring kit and tree monitoring kit were also provided to the community representative for the monitoring phase of the initiative. The participants, especially Berjaya Sompo staff, also were given the opportunity to learn about the lifestyle and culture of the local indigenous community.

Ends

### **About Global Environment Centre (GEC)**

Global Environment Centre is an award-winning non-profit organisation established in 1998 to work on environmental issues of global importance. For its work, GEC was recognised by the prestigious Merdeka Award for environment category in 2022. Registered in Malaysia, GEC works regionally and internationally both directly and through many partners making its mark as a forerunner and leader both in thought leadership and on-the-ground environmental best management practices in the areas of river, peatland, and forest management. It supports information exchange and capacity building as well as undertakes strategic projects particularly in developing countries. It works in partnership with other like-minded agencies worldwide. It focusses on a community-based approach to natural resource management and environmental protection and has worked with thousands of community members and volunteers to support action in Malaysia and throughout Southeast Asia. For more information on the Global Environment Centre please visit [www.gec.org.my](http://www.gec.org.my)

### **About Berjaya Sompo Insurance Berhad**

Berjaya Sompo Insurance Berhad ("Berjaya Sompo"), is the Malaysian operating entity and part of Sompo Group. Bolstered by the Sompo Group's 80 years of trusted presence in Asia, spreading across 14 markets in the region, Berjaya Sompo is a leading name in general insurance in Malaysia, with an ever-expanding network that presently comprises 16 offices and 2,590 agents nationwide. Berjaya Sompo provides a comprehensive range of general insurance solutions for individuals and corporations.

For more information, go to [www.berjayasompo.com.my](http://www.berjayasompo.com.my).

Photos link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1lf6l4ECUIv9oBlueZijwJ9FuRypCBjZ?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1lf6l4ECUIv9oBlueZijwJ9FuRypCBjZ?usp=drive_link)

Captions:

### Photo 1

Volunteers from Berjaya Sompo together with Programme Officers from GEC and the orang asli community at kickstart of the River Slope Mitigation through Tree Planting to Protect Water Resources at the Klang River Basin initiative.

### Photo 2

(From left) Mr Tan Sek Kee, CEO of Berjaya Sompo together with Dr Kalithasan Kailasam, GEC River Care Programme Manager

### Photo 3

Volunteers planting *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (Vetiver) to mitigate the soil erosion on the slope at Kampung Batu 12, Gombak.

### Photo 4

Dr Kalithasan Kailasam, GEC River Care Programme Manager briefed the volunteers about the water resources at Klang River Basin.

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