



AFES Bulletin



AFES upholds sustainability via waste solution business

by HANIZAH KAMEL

Alam Flora Environmental Solutions (AFES), a fully-owned subsidiary of Alam Flora Sdn Bhd, believes that sustainability is the way forward. While most people presciently identify sustainability with environmental conservation, its bigger purpose is about safeguarding the health and wellbeing of people and communities. Besides environmental conservation, the sustainability agenda also sparks social responsibility and economic development of a nation, which is what AFES is striving for by means of waste management solutions that we streamlined. AFES is not alone, according to a report from UNEP, 90% of the world's 250 largest companies are now reporting on sustainability, as are three-quarters of the top 100 companies in 40 countries. Established in 2013, when it was known as ORB-HCCM Environmental Services (IHES) back then, AFES has provided advancement and continuously explored new technologies for better waste management and solution, but at the end of the matter, AFES is beyond waste solutions. It offers holistic environmental solutions through its core business activities namely Asset Facility Management (AFM), Infrastructure Cleaning and Waste Solutions (ICWS), Waste

Management Facility (WMF) and New Project Developments. Through these activities that uphold sustainability and an environment-friendly integrated waste management system, AFES is determined to leave a clear legacy for the future generation. **Importance of United Nations SDG** The global agenda of sustainability can be attained through better and responsible waste management, recycling and repurposing through circular economy activities. According to the Circular Economy "Circularity Gap Report 2021", it stated that the world is only 1.6% circular, leaving a massive circularity gap. Just two years ago that number was 0.1%. The global circularity needs to double from 0.6% to 1.2% to keep our world livable and thriving. With almost eight years under its belt, AFES is putting its experiences to good use by focusing on sustainable development via harnessing the latest technologies and progress that support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). As per the SDG, AFES directly supports nine of the 17 goals in total. One example is SDG 12 which is to substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse by 2030.

Iti COO Nazar Abdul Rauf told The Malaysian Reserve (TMR) recently in an interview that they are effectuating several strategies to achieve the goal. "First of all, we need to educate and spread awareness to the public, next is to push the sustainability agenda and assist in transforming waste to wealth. By doing so, we can change the way we manage waste in the future. "Our business model and facilities can be used to educate our clients, stakeholders and the community on the importance of good sustainable practices," he said. **FIKS and IRF** In Petrusaj, AFES has established two facilities known as Fasilitas Inovasi Kitar Semula (FIKS) and the Integrated Recycling Facility (IRF) in Prekint 5. For the time being, the Covid-19 pandemic has halted plan involving physical visitation due to the implementation of the reinstated Movement Control Order (MCO) 2.0. AFES swiftly adapted to the new norm, offering virtual tours via online platforms for visitors to learn and experience the facilities without having to set foot on the premises. "Since FIKS was launched last July, more than 900 visitors including the general public, students, corporate companies, foreign dignitaries, government agencies, and ministries have learned about waste recovery and repurpose. In the event of AFES gaining full support from the people, Nazari said they are open to the idea of opening such facilities in more states. Each facility cost more than RM12 million, and AFES is currently operating 11 other sites that incorporate forward-thinking practices in handling and managing waste. He noted that AFES manages to collect all recyclable items close to 400 to 500 tonnes a month at its Petrusaj facilities. "Let's say if we do not have this kind of facility in Malaysia, the 500 tonnes would end up in the landfills where it takes up space and land, and we spend millions on nothing," he told TMR. As the country's economy thrives, landfills are no longer seen as a feasible means of waste disposal with land becoming scarcer and costlier, not to mention its harmful effect on the environment. However, Nazari said landfills are still needed to dispose of items that cannot be recycled, and does play a role that complainers, other waste management solutions, albeit it must be day-minimised. He said items that can be recycled should not

be thrown into the landfills, adding that if we can reduce using landfills to 10%, we can extend its purpose for many more years. **Collaborations in Business and Education** Interestingly, the solutions that AFES provides is also a form of wealth sharing as the proceeds from the dry waste such as paper, aluminium tin and plastic that is being recycled and repurposed, are shared with its partners through the ECO Duta programme. AFES has collaborations with several companies including Malaysia Apsco Holdings Bhd and QSR Brands (M) Holdings Bhd, acting as a sustainability partner and managing the private waste of the companies. "The previous practice of waste management seen at all the waste and rubbish collected being sent to landfills, but through our collaboration, we are sorting centres where we sort and divert the waste from ever going to the landfills," said Nazari. To date, AFES manages the biggest capacity waste facility transit in Malaysia, at 2,500 tonnes per day. He believes that for solid waste management, AFES is the only company in the market that can provide holistic solutions. "This is because we have a license to manage from the source/building, we can collect all the waste generated from the building, we can clean infrastructure, we have facilities to treat waste, and we also manage landfills. "Nevertheless, we need healthy competition and very objective policies to stimulate the industry to believe Malaysia is already going in that direction," he said. For the business and treatment process, AFES has already collaborated with several notable universities in landfill gas extraction, converting plastic into fuel, and converting bottom ash from incinerators into bricks. "We want students to come and learn about the industry technology from us. We want to develop the competency of Malaysians and then we will be ready for the big waste-to-energy (WTE) development," Nazari pointed out. He revealed that local expertise contributed immensely to the tech advancements of AFES to tackle the existing predicament surrounding the country's waste management. While European countries such as Germany and Sweden are well ahead with their own sustainability agenda and in a different league when compared to Malaysia, Nazari said we must start somewhere and continue to make a difference in the current landscape.

Pangkor Island Incinerator Plant AFES has a other illustrious chapter in Pangkor Island when it commenced its incinerator operations in December 2016. In the beginning, AFES considered the incinerator as the facility was not conducive to get work done and even existing machines failed to run properly, "backlog garbage also became an issue. Now, AFES burns a maximum level of solid waste by 20 metric tonnes per day due to the various improvements it made during the four years of handling the incinerator. Meanwhile, its incinerator is Cameron Highlands can burn up to 40 metric tonnes per day. An incinerator project in Pangkor Island achieved an impressive milestone when it tabbed the Best



AFES Chief Operating Officer, Nazar Abdul Rauf

Environmental Impact Award for 2019 presented at the Europa awards for Sustainability and organized by EUMCCO - EU and Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Recently on Feb 7, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin launched AFES' first Centre of Excellence (COE) facility at a Pangkor plant.

AFM to Play Pivotal Role Moving forward, AFES intends to focus on its AFM service this year. Amidst the pandemic, authorities around the world prepare to loosen restrictions and draw up plans to successfully and safely return to the workplace. For AFES, it offers effective management on the system processes and practices of all technical, mechanical, electrical, civil, structural and architectural engineering facilities, within the premises. Operating at an optimum cost and efficiency without compromising on safety and quality of the natural environment. "With the current scenario, we do feel that AFM will play a pivotal role as it is a valuable tool that provides the 'safe and clean' working environment for all, be it in offices or factories. It offers a fine balance in terms of work commitment and safety, wellbeing, management, improved planning, risk management and an increased sense of engagement to the team," Nazari added.



Nazar explains AFES operations at Integrated Recycling Facility in Petrusaj



AFES operates Pulau Pangkor Incinerator



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