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UNIMAS designers propose better water treatment system

Economical: Dr Azham showing samples of EcoSagoTek's water filtering system while Dr Khairuddin looks on.

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) lecturer Dr Azham Zulkharnain attributes his win at the Ecopreneur 2012 to their cost-effective and practical water treatment system.

He said the good thing about the proposed system was that it could be practised in real world situations, particularly to treat waste water from sago processing factories in Pusa and Mukah.

"Normal waste water treatment systems are very costly. We have developed a more economical method to treat waste water system that had been in existence, and to adapt it for a larger scale use like sago processing factories without incurring much cost," he told a press conference yesterday.

Dr Azham won the "Best CEO Award" at the "Ecopreneur 2012" held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia last week.

His team called "EcoSagoTek" had developed a business proposal for their revolutionary water treatment system.

The team comprised mentor associate professor Zainab Ngaini, lecturer Nordiana Ahmad Nordin and two students, Mohd Ismail Salim and Vanessa Lawai.

Dr Azham said the concept was developed since 2010, in collaboration with two sago processing plants in Mukah and Pusa.

Inspired by the management of waste product from sago processing factories in Sarawak, EcoSagoTek had put their revolutionary business plan on the global spotlight against 22 other countries namely Mongolia, Indonesia, Israel, United States, Columbia, Mexico, Turkey and Burkina Faso, winning a cash prize of US$1,000.

From the team's research, said Dr Azham, their system cost about 30% of the total to set up a sago processing factory.

He explained that their project was to set up an efficient waste-water filtering system by means of chemically activated carbon filter.

"I did not expect to win the Best CEO Award but I think more because of the uniqueness of our team's project, which is a solution for one of the current environmental issues," he said.

"Cost incurred would only be maintenance cost. Based on our experimental systems, it would be less than RM2,000 a month. Comparing that to a standard water treatment system, it is much more cost effective and not burdening to sago factory operators," he added.

Meanwhile, Unimas vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Khairuddin Abdul Hamid invited any interested organisations, corporate bodies and industries to invest in the development of their water treatment system.

"We (Unimas) have to think big and bring it to the next step," he said.

Ecopreneur is an annual international competition that highlights innovative and viable green products.

Organised by Global Talentpreneur Innovation and Collaboration Asso–ciation (Global TIC) and Young Americas Business Trust, this year's competition was held in collaboration with the Mongolian Entrepre–neurs Organisation.

A total of 26 teams from 22 countries participated in this year's competition.

source: thestar