

Unimas to carry out EIA study on Bakun HEP

By Seman Endawie

KUCHING — Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) has been appointed to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study on the Bakun Hydro Electric Project (HEP) following the exchange of letters between Ekran Bhd and Unimas here yesterday.

Ekran, the company awarded the privatised project, was represented by its chairman Datuk Ting Pek Khiing, while Unimas Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Zawawi Ismail represented the university.

The ceremony, which was witnessed by Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, took place after the Cabinet Committee meeting on the Bakun HEP at Wisma Bapa Malaysia.

Also present were Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud and Unimas Council Chairman Tan Sri Datuk Amar Bujang Mohd Noor.

According to an Ekran press statement, Unimas will carry out the study through its Centre For Technology Transfer & Consultancy (CTTC), which is a registered body under the Department of Environment (DOE), for EIA work.

Unimas will engage experts for the EIA study, monitor the progress of the study and present the EIA report to the State and Federal authorities for approval.

The press statement said that Unimas will set up a permanent research centre within the Batang Rejang Basin to facilitate the study.

"The final report will address issues such as socio-economic (including resettlement, socio-cultural, hydrology, water quality, public health and safety, land use, vegetation, wildlife, aquatic resources, erosion and sedimentation, microclimate, geohazards, induced electromagnetic field and other environmental considerations," it said.

It added: "The study involves 60 local and 14 foreign experts. The exercise will mobilise 160 personnel from Unimas, local and foreign universities, local and consultancy firms and several Federal and State government agencies."

CTTC has submitted a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the detailed EIA study to the Ministry of Resource Planning (Sarawak) and the DOE.

The statement said: "The draft TOR addresses among others the conditions of areas directly and indirectly affected by the project, and the potential impacts of the development." These include the potential impact of the proposed Bintulu-Bakun access road, dam site clearing and installation of underwater cables.

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