

Get green certification, nation's manufacturers urged

FURNITURE manufacturers in Malaysia need to go for green certification since the country is a leading furniture exporter amid rising demands for environmental-friendly furniture products globally.

Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) Green Technology Programme head Dr Gan Kee Seng said green certification was important to give customers the assurance that raw materials used were sourced legally and sustainably.

The materials used should not emit toxic chemicals that could be harmful to human health and the

environment when products were in used, he said.

"The certification also gives assurance that the products are of good quality before the end of its life. This means if a product is designed to last 10 years, it must go through lab tests that it will last up to 10 years.

"But if it breaks, it shows the product fails to meet the required standard quality," he told *The Star* here yesterday.

Gan, one of the speakers at a seminar on Furniture Industry Development in Sarawak, said

FRIM now provided quality lab test services.

Manufacturers could approach Sirim for its eco-labelling scheme or overseas agencies such as Green Environmental Choice Scheme, Green Label from Hong Kong and Singapore, he said.

"Manufacturers need to choose the right scheme that is recognised by their customers."

He said for quality tests in FRIM, manufacturers only had to pay a nominal fee of about RM1,000, which was two to three times lower than those in Singapore or the

United States.

Green and quality certifications were essential if manufacturers wished to remain competitive and relevant in the global market, he said.

FRIM Furniture Testing Laboratory head Mohd Arshad Saru said for now, it was not mandatory for furniture manufacturers in Malaysia to send their products for quality testing, but they were encouraged to do so.

"On average, about 50 manufacturers go for quality testing at FRIM mainly because their customers

demand the quality certification.

"Some customers, particularly those from overseas will require manufacturers to go for a second test after two years before they make new purchasing to ensure the furniture retain their quality," he said.

Some failed to meet the quality tests although the products looked nice, he said, stressing that quality tests were also important for customers' safety.

"Those who failed will have to redesign and improve their products."