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PRESS STATEMENT

MALAYSIA GOVERNMENT TO FACILITATE THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE SME INDUSTRY DURING COVID-19 EPIDEMIC AND ECONOMIC AFLOAT

The Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) would like to record our sincere appreciation towards the government initiatives on the national survival and the well being of the "rakyat" through "Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package announced by the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on 28 March 2020. This stimulus package showed the government deep understanding; bring assistance and benefits to the plight of the rakyat, especially the most vulnerable and the lower-paid community. However, ILAM would like to highlight the impact of Covid-19 and Movement Control Order on landscape architecture industry, as one of the critical sectors that are actively contributing to the outdoor greener environment and the well-being of the Malaysian community.

The Covid-19 pandemic spreads to take lives and destroy economic sustenance. ILAM council has deliberated this matter during our Council Meeting and having sought inputs from our members on how much this economy afloat has affected our SME industry. ILAM would like to kindly request the government to address the massive losses of income suffered by the landscape architecture services fraternity caused by the Movement Control Order in combating the Covid-19 pandemic since 18 March 2020. ILAM highlights the critical points and proposal for the government and stakeholders to initiate as follows:

1. The Landscape consultant offices are currently unable to obtain payment from the client due to MCO, and therefore, this situation upholds the company responsibilities and intention to proceed with their staff's remuneration as usual. Therefore, an uneasy hick-up is inevitable on the salary payment among the consultant offices to their employee, especially within this 6 months duration. To ease this situation, ILAM would like to propose for the accounting department of the related industry (government and private entities) to continue the payment processing procedures to their dedicated consultants.
2. At the same time, ILAM would like to propose for the GLC developers to honour consultant's payment with the 20 working days instead of the current practices taking 45-90 days of the payment processing.
3. ILAM would like to propose for the government to accept the official project Appointment Letter to be used as a bank bond for the consultant to be able to use it as a company overhead. As for the government project, ILAM is proposing for the advance payment to the consultant. This assistance could be able to ensure the sustenance of the landscape architecture industry.
4. Trees and plants are essential elements in the landscape architecture industry. They need to survive as well as the importance of ensuring human well-being. The country suffers from ecological imbalance if these plants are not well maintained. Therefore, ILAM wishes for the government to officially categorise the Landscape Maintenance Services as one of the Critical Sectors during MCO.
5. ILAM would kindly request for all our landscape consultants to allow for an automatic Extension of Time for contract projects that are profoundly affected by the Covid-19 and MCO. As for the government projects, ILAM is proposing for the person-month method payment is to be increased accordingly, as the MCO will surely affecting the project production and performance. The increase of person-month is crucial for a consultant to ensure the proper tailing of their staff's salary and production.

6. During this critical pandemic situation, ILAM wishes for the government to allow consultants to undertake the working days' reduction or salary cutting exercise within the 6 months. This effort enables consultants to cope-up with their high operation cost, their survival and sustenance. ILAM ensures that these operation cost-cutting exercises are only applicable during the 6 months of economy afloat.

7. ILAM wishes to propose for the government to absorb the employee and company income-tax within these 6 months of Covid-19 epidemic. The government should also consider reducing the income-tax to be paid for the next two years to mitigate the financial burden on the built-environment construction industry. This assistance is highly appreciated as it reduces the burden on the consultant offices and at the same time, ensures the benefits of rakyat been taken care of by the government.

8. To summarise, ILAM wishes the government to help to SAVE our landscape architecture SME industry that is profoundly affected during this Covid-19 and Movement Control Order. Please help us to continue to save the environment by making it greener and safeguarding the well-being of the rakyat Malaysia, even in any problematic situation. Please help us in ensuring that all landscape architects continue to be employed and our consultancy offices can run their businesses as usual. ILAM has faith in the greener, healthier and a prosperous Malaysia

Prof. Madya LAr. Dr. Suhardi Maulan

President
Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia

31 March 2020

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