



SIRIM

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# SIRIMLink

BEST PARTNER FOR INNOVATION

BRINGING STANDARDS TO THE FOREFRONT

– Dr. Norlinda Mohd Zawawi

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE  
FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

– Abdul Aziz Long

FOSTERING GLOBAL TRADE  
THROUGH INDUSTRY STANDARDS

– Datuk Aureen Jean Nornis



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# FOREWORD

## EMBRACE *the* BOUNTY of STANDARDS

*Standards are the silent, typically forgotten, heroes of society. They pervade our lives more often than we realise. Almost every object that surrounds us is intentionally designed to comply with standards. But have you ever wondered why we need them? Standards facilitate our daily routines – providing assurance that safety and quality are upheld. They provide a common framework that allows for compatibility and interoperability across products and systems. They play a crucial role in progressing economies and nations!*

In recent decades, standardisation has been expanding immensely across fields. With over half a century of experience in Malaysia's standards development landscape and over 40 industry standards under our belt in recent years, SIRIM has the capabilities to assist our local players in embracing industry standards for the betterment of their businesses and our economy. The then American Engineering Standards Committee (presently the American National Standards Institute) once declared that "Standardization is dynamic, not static; it means not standing still, but to move forward together". In this age of rapid innovations, let us utilise our solid foundation of standards as leverage in our bid to progress onward.



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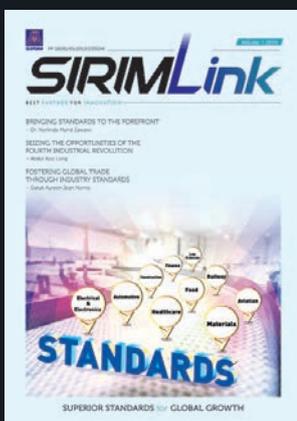
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*With a strong foundation in standards that spans 52 years, SIRIM STS Sdn Bhd is, today, the largest standards development agency in the country.*

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*Standards can help  
organisations enhance their  
competitive edge by defining the  
minimum requirements needed  
to uphold quality.*

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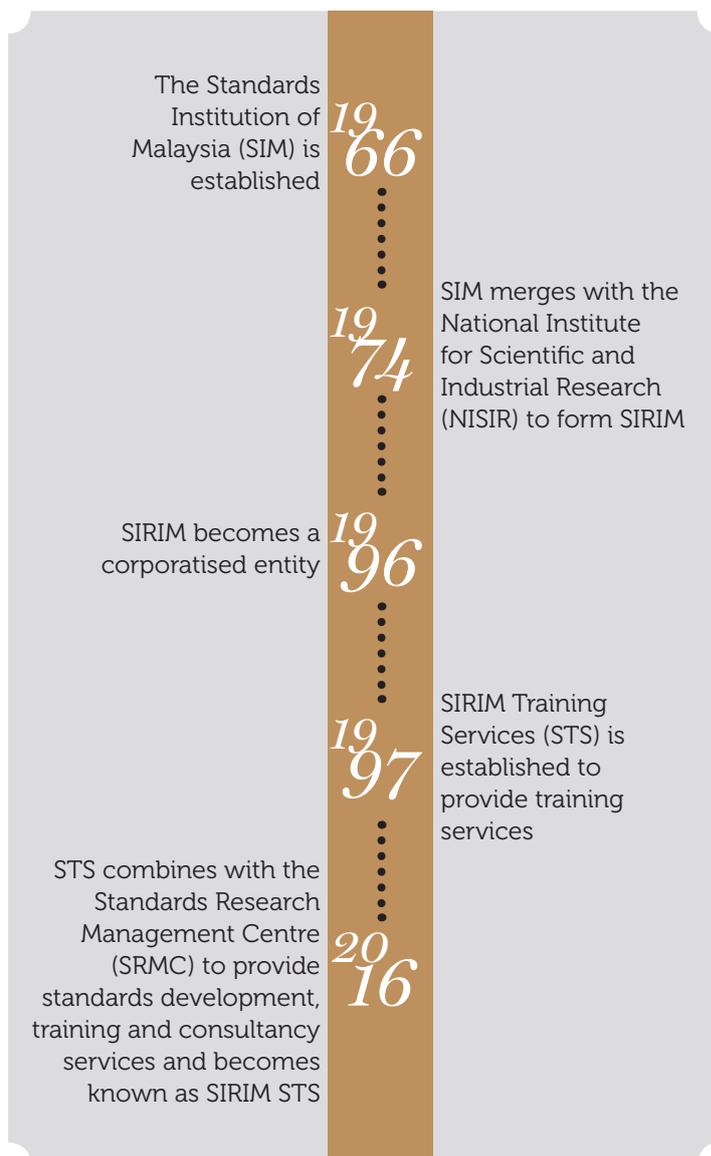


# Bringing STANDARDS to the FOREFRONT

*In Malaysia, the name SIRIM is synonymous with standards; and it's easy to see why. The organisation has been at the forefront of the nation's standards development since the 1960s. Dr. Norlinda Mohd Zawawi, the Managing Director of SIRIM STS Sdn Bhd, shares why standards continue to be relevant (if not more so!) and the role of SIRIM Industry Standards in championing today's economy.*

In an increasingly globalised economy, where a multitude of products and services is being churned out every minute, it has become imperative to ensure that all parties involved are on the same page. This is where standards can help.

Standards refer to published documents that detail requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to ensure that materials, products, services and systems are fit for their intended purpose.



“*Look around you; everything has to do with standards somehow. With SIRIM's expertise in standards, we are well equipped to assist industries in this area.*”

“*Compliance with standards is important for industries to thrive in the global marketplace. Many of our industry players supply parts to other countries. When we export, we need to meet the specifications and requirements of the countries to which we are exporting. This is where standards will come in handy.*”



There are five levels of standardisation, namely Organisation/Company Standards, Industry/Association Standards, National Standards, Regional Standards and International Standards. The higher up the hierarchy, the larger the audience base, making it likelier that the standards will be more general; for example, standards at the international level will have to apply to a diverse assortment of companies or industries in different countries.

With a strong foundation in standards that spans 52 years, SIRIM STS Sdn Bhd is, today, the largest standards development agency in the country. In addition to its renowned SIRIM Industry Standards, the agency also plays an instrumental role in advocating the importance of standards, providing standards-related training and consultancy and becoming the enquiry point on World Trade Organization (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) notifications, as well as being a sales agent for Malaysian Standards and other international standards like International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and European Standards (EN), among others.

“Look around you; everything has to do with standards somehow,” said Managing Director of SIRIM STS Sdn Bhd Dr. Norlinda Mohd Zawawi. “With SIRIM’s expertise in standards, we are well equipped to assist industries in this area.”

### A Different Perspective

SIRIM Industry Standards were introduced in 2014. Unlike Malaysian Standards that are under the purview of the Malaysian Standards and Accreditation Council (MSAC) and require approval at ministerial level, the coverage of SIRIM Industry Standards is only up to industry level, and thus involves a smaller group of stakeholders.

In essence, SIRIM Industry Standards offer an alternative to industries:

- when a national consensus document is not required
- when there is a need for a standard that caters for the specific requirements of an organisation or certain industry sector
- to address gaps not covered by Malaysian Standards

SIRIM Industry Standards can come in the form of specifications, guidelines, industry codes of practice or even guidelines on the interpretation of other standards. Currently, there are 43 published SIRIM Industry Standards, with 23 of them being at industry level and 20 at organisation/company level. The Standards are available for purchase at the SIRIM Standards Store portal: <https://standards.sirimsts.my>.

Some of the potential areas where SIRIM Industry Standards can be developed include guidelines for product individualisation, installation of production lines or retrofitting and Industry 4.0 maturity levels.

### Distinctive Advantage

Standards can help organisations enhance their competitive edge by defining the minimum requirements needed to uphold quality. This is especially important for those in the manufacturing and service-oriented industries. “The standards provide a bar that individual companies can not just reach for but aim to surpass,” stated Dr. Norlinda. With quality guidelines in place, the organisation’s performance level can potentially be increased as it works towards utilising its resources more efficiently and decreasing wastage while minimising discrepancies and rejection rates.

Standards also play an important role in promoting uniformity. “This makes it easier for the industry players. Following a set of specifications will facilitate the attainment of economies of scale. This will drive down costs, boost productivity and improve profits,” explained Dr. Norlinda.

Another benefit of standards is that they provide a common framework that facilitates proper communication between employees within an organisation, between an organisation and its vendors, and between the organisation and its customers, further enhancing the operational efficiency of the organisation.

Additionally, with standards, industry players will find it easier to penetrate the marketplace effectively. In fact, some industry associations require

their member organisations to adhere to specific standards. "Compliance with standards is important for industries to thrive in the global marketplace. Many of our industry players supply parts to other countries. When we export, we need to meet the specifications and requirements of the countries to which we are exporting. This is where standards will come in handy," elaborated Dr. Norlinda.

"Those who are involved in the value chain will have to understand the relevant standards to ensure that their products adhere properly to these standards before they are shipped out to the end users," she added.

In fact, standards can also be employed as a strategic marketing tool to encourage trade and boost the economy by adding value to a product. "If exporters don't follow standards, they might find it difficult to trade in other countries. What's more, consumers might not want to purchase products that are not certified," continued Dr. Norlinda.

**Facilitating Progress**

With the world being in the midst of Industry 4.0, innovations are a central focus. This is also another area in which standards can help. Research and technology institutes involved in research & development work will stand to gain from having an established set of parameters from which to work and, in turn, generate even more innovations.

"For example, in this era of smart manufacturing, machines need to

be able to 'communicate' with each other via sensors. Standards will help in establishing the specifications and ensuring interoperability," said Dr. Norlinda.

**Stringent Process**

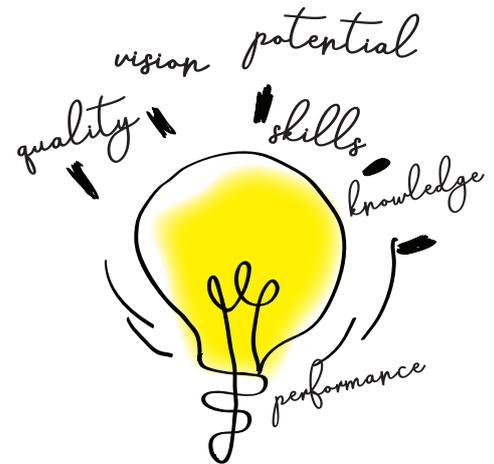
The development of SIRIM Industry Standards is typically driven by industries and funded by the industries, government agencies and/or SIRIM, with the participation of the relevant stakeholders. The standards are based on international best practices that emphasise principles of consensus and transparency with balanced representation from three categories of stakeholders, namely general, users and producers, who will participate in the development process.

Generally, a project committee, comprising the respective stakeholders, will conduct background research on the topic on hand, thereafter drafting the contents of the standard. The draft standard is then drawn out and posted for public comments, which will be deliberated by the committee for incorporation into the draft standard. This will go on until the standard is finalised and published. The entire process usually takes around six to eight months.

Research & development can be an important part of the standard development process, particularly when it comes to standards for testing. "We need research & development to develop standards for eco-packaging, for instance. Utilising the SIRIM Industrial Research laboratory, we come

up with the necessary parameters. Hence, the standards development is not just about theoretical research. It's also hands-on – research in action!" enthused Dr. Norlinda.

“*Those who are involved in the value chain will have to understand the relevant standards to ensure that their products adhere properly to these standards before they are shipped out to the end users.*”



**BEST PRACTICE**

*Pre-standard, or draft standard, is a term used in developed countries to refer to guidelines and specifications for a new innovation or product to create trust and acceptance among peers or industry players before it becomes an official standard.*



## Bright Future

With nearly all industries standing to benefit from having standards, the role of SIRIM Industry Standards is set to grow. Nevertheless, there are several concerns that have to be addressed in order for this to happen.

First, the country requires the proper infrastructure in place to facilitate collaboration and the attainment of consensus between the parties involved. Next, the level of awareness on the importance of standards needs to be raised. "Standards have to be industry-led, but to obtain industry buy-in is not easy," lamented Dr. Norlinda.

Funding is another important consideration. Often, Malaysian industry players assume that the funding should come from the government, but this is not true. "In Japan, for instance, the organisations, through their respective associations, come up with the money to develop the standards for their industries. Look at them – their industries are very advanced!" declared Dr. Norlinda.

Nevertheless, moving forward, Dr. Norlinda sees a bright future for SIRIM Industry Standards throughout the value chain. According to her, "Industry 4.0 and smart manufacturing are changing the way our manufacturers operate, especially with the rapid developments in the areas of information technology and hardware. In tandem with this new revolution, more industry standards will

*While SIRIM STS offers services in the development of SIRIM Industry Standards, a document standard in nature, SIRIM's National Metrology Institute of Malaysia (NMIM) deals with physical standards that provide traceability through calibration of measuring equipment. NMIM is the custodian for the national weights and measures governed by the Weights and Measures Act 1972 and the National Measurement Systems Act 2007.*



be required to support the adoption of new technologies and resolve any issues that may arise."

In this respect, with the collective efforts of governmental agencies and associations, SIRIM is confident of the growth potential of SIRIM Industry Standards. "We can start with organisational standards. Once these become accepted by a wider audience, we can keep moving up until we reach Malaysian Standard level. Hopefully, one day, SIRIM Industry Standards will be upgraded to international standards and adopted by the market worldwide," concluded Dr. Norlinda.

At international level, the SIRIM Standard on Good Practices for Implementing Commuting Safety Management (SIRIM 4:2014) has been accepted as a new item for ISO standard. The Technical Committee on Road Traffic Safety Management Systems (ISO/TC 241) is responsible for the standard, which is currently in the development stage (ISO/CD 39002). SIRIM 4:2014 was developed for Social Security Organisation (SOCISO) with the intention of reducing the number of fatalities and severity of injuries, as well as minimising damages to properties and economic losses arising from road accidents.

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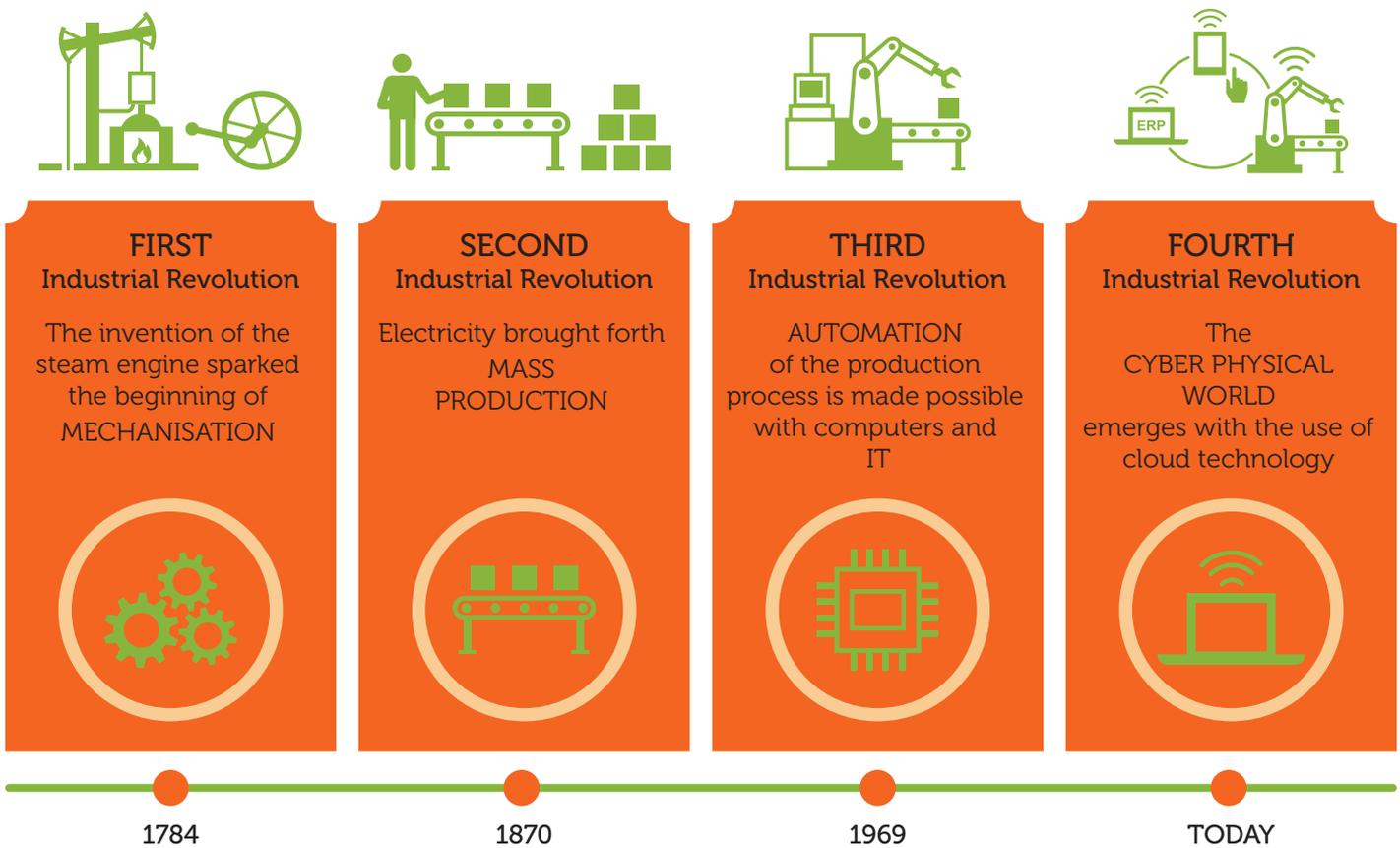
- Dr. Norlinda Mohd Zawawi



# Seizing the OPPORTUNITIES of the **FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

*Exciting times are around the corner as the world watches the fourth industrial revolution unfold at an exponential rate. Abdul Aziz Long, the Senior General Manager of the Standards Development of SIRIM STS Sdn Bhd, offers SIRIMLink a glimpse at what lies ahead and why standards are necessary.*

## An Overview of the Industrial Revolutions



To date, the fourth industrial revolution has brought unprecedented transformations, and we are anticipating plenty more to come as manufacturers scramble to produce more, better and faster products and services. An increase in the application of cutting-edge technology across all sectors – from agriculture to aerospace – will lead to the development of new business models from existing and newly established businesses such as GRAB for taxis or Airbnb for hotels.

An example is on-demand economy. “Brick-and-mortar’ fashion retailers are experiencing a slowdown in the number of physical visitors; but if you take a closer look at the data,

the fashion industry, for example, has been experiencing double-digit growth. This shows that the closing down of shops in malls does not necessarily mean that sales are declining. Instead, retailers are exploring alternative channels. This is disruptive technology in action,” stated Abdul Aziz Long, Senior General Manager of the Standards Department of SIRIM STS.

This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors, including an expanding global market as well as an increase in online access among the world’s population, middle class disposable income and innovating technologies that facilitate the growth of e-commerce.

*On-demand economy refers to the economic activity created by digital marketplaces and technology companies to fulfil consumer demand by providing them with convenient and immediate access to products and services.*

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*“Brick-and-mortar” fashion retailers are experiencing a slowdown in the number of physical visitors; but if you take a closer look at the data, the fashion industry, for example, has been experiencing double-digit growth. This shows that the closing down of shops in malls does not necessarily mean that sales are declining. Instead, retailers are exploring alternative channels. This is disruptive technology in action.*”

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## Meeting Demands

Further expounding on his example on fashion, Abdul Aziz explains that advancements in technology have been making it easier for the industry to create a better customer experience online. “Currently, reports reveal that around 50% of online clothing purchases are being returned, but technology can be applied to resolve this. One way is by employing augmented reality to give the shopper a better idea of how the clothing item would fit,” he said.

As consumer demand increases, so does the necessity for Malaysian industries to incorporate the relevant technologies and adopt new work processes. This means that they have to be ready to change the way they do things. All the players in the entire supply chain will have to do their part, from the idea, product design, procurement of raw resources and manufacturing process to the logistics until the products reach the customers.

“To achieve change at the front-end, businesses will have to adopt new technologies at the back-end of their production line,” commented Abdul Aziz.

## Data is King

In this fourth industrial revolution, data has become a valuable raw resource. With the technologies available in the present day and the prevalence of a multitude of data from all around the world at our fingertips at all times, readers and sensors can be used to collect the data and analyse it in real time for our benefit, such as for

maintenance, energy management and marketing purposes.

This data allows businesses to observe consumer trends as well as managing their costs and their digital footprint. Utilising data analytics, the businesses are then able to reach out better to their target audiences via personalised e-mails and prevent machine breakdown before it happens. And these are just some of the many possibilities that data offers.

“In this new economy, the question we need to ask is, ‘How smartly are we going to use our data?’ These are among the implications of cutting-edge technology that we are already experiencing today, and we are just at the beginning of the industrial revolution!” exclaimed Abdul Aziz enthusiastically.

## Increasing Awareness

While many people, be they industry players or the general public, are already enjoying the fruits of the fourth industrial revolution, the awareness

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level of its importance is still relatively low. In fact, many of our Malaysian industries still do not employ much automation in their manufacturing processes.

In order for them to take advantage of the benefits that this industrial revolution brings, it is imperative to increase the awareness level and prepare the nation to meet its challenges. This is where the key stakeholders will have to band together.

For one, the government needs to play a role in providing the necessary frameworks to pave the way for industries. One such endeavour is the Industry4WRD policy which was recently rolled out by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) to address Industry 4.0 specifically.

Proper infrastructure also has to be established. For example, as data is instrumental in this era, we have to be able to move to 5G technology to allow the transfer of data at a faster speed.

Talent development is essential as well. “This is where schools, technical institutes and universities come in. We need to get our people ready so we’ll have an adequate pool of highly skilled manpower,” explained Abdul Aziz.

In encouraging industries to adopt technology, funding becomes a primary concern too. “A lot of investment is required for industries to enhance their existing production facilities and incorporate more technological advances. However, the best approach is to start small,” he said. “They need to see some form of return on investment or they might not do it.”



Of course, industry players have to do their part and be open to change. “They have to be open-minded in incorporating new and relevant technologies. The benefits are tremendous if they do!” he pointed out.

Technologies like Internet of Things (IoT) and sensors are set to make monitoring machines and equipment easy. This will allow the organisation to schedule maintenance works optimally, saving the organisation valuable downtime. The same goes for inventory management which, with the use of digital tracking systems, will help ensure that the manufacturer has enough stock on hand at all times. This leads to higher productivity and lower costs, allowing for better economies of scale.

Subsequently, with on-demand economy, manufacturers will be able to offer personalised products to meet customers’ individual requirements at mass production costs. We can also

expect to see a proliferation of more smart products that are connected to the internet and can be managed using applications.

**Getting Up to Standard**

Amidst all the excitement, standards need to be developed in tandem with the technological advances to ensure that we are able to reap the benefits of these new innovations. After all, when it involves integration within a specific organisation, within an industry sector or even within an ecosystem, standardisation of products and processes is important.

“As we are at the beginning of the new industrial revolution, industry standards are necessary to establish the way forward. It will be good to start to develop new standards via a sectoral approach such as Food & Beverage to ensure proper integration and interoperability,” explained Abdul Aziz.

“In terms of developing basic standards related to industry technology pillars, developed countries through ISO and IEC are already moving forward with the review process,” he observed.

The fourth industrial revolution is rapidly speeding up globalisation. A larger marketplace could also potentially mean a larger pool of competitors. Consequently, to penetrate this fast growing marketplace, industry players need standards to set the benchmark accordingly.

“Every factory, organisation and industry needs standards to ensure that the people, machines and enterprises are all communicating within the same context,” said Abdul Aziz.

Standards have to be developed in an open system to enable all the related parties to use them. “Every single player in the country will have to be willing to adopt these standards. We have to work together within the ecosystem to integrate and benefit mutually.

“When it comes to standardisation, we are the enabler that brings the different stakeholders together. We will identify the issues and resolve them with standards,” enthused Abdul Aziz.

With over 50 years of experience in standards development, SIRIM is already well established in the country’s ecosystem, perfectly positioned to assist Malaysian industries, big and small, in identifying the standards they need and developing new standards to ensure they are able to reap the benefits of cutting-edge technology that the fourth industrial revolution promises to bring forth.

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- Abdul Aziz Long



# Fostering GLOBAL TRADE through INDUSTRY STANDARDS

*As businesses grow and expand, going global is often the next logical step. The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) plays an instrumental role in helping them get their foot in the door of the export market. Datuk Aureen Jean Nornis, Senior Director of Strategic Planning Division at MATRADE, highlights the importance of industry standards in making this happen.*



According to the Annual SME Corp. Report 2017/2018, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) make up more than 98.5% of the total establishments in Malaysia, contributing nearly 37.1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 66% of our employment. However, their contribution to exports is only at 17.3%.

These figures show that SMEs are inclined to be more dependent on the domestic market. In order for them to move forward, it is inevitable that they turn to the export market. Nevertheless, most of them may not have a high level of awareness when it comes to exporting policies and procedures. This can be attributed to several constraining factors, including limited human resource and financial

capabilities. Conversely, the awareness level typically increases when it comes to bigger companies.

"We feel that the level of awareness tends to differ with the status of the companies. Mid-tier to large companies are usually more aware of the regulations in international markets as well as their rights and responsibilities as exporters. This is mainly because they have sufficient human resource power and research funds to be armed with the necessary knowledge and adhere to the required regulations for export markets," explained Datuk Aureen Jean Nornis, the Senior Director of Strategic Planning Division at the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE).

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Over 98.5% of total establishments in Malaysia are SMEs



Source: Annual SME Corp. Report 2017/2018

*The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) is Malaysia's national trade promotion agency under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), with the main task of helping export-ready companies to go global while positioning Malaysia as a globally competitive trading nation.*

*MATRADE's objectives are:*

- *to raise the profile of Malaysian exporters in foreign markets;*
- *to disseminate timely and relevant information and market intelligence to help Malaysian companies gain a competitive edge in foreign markets;*
- *to introduce Malaysian companies to foreign importers seeking Malaysian suppliers; and*
- *to undertake activities to promote the export of Malaysian goods and services in overseas markets*



### Championing Standards

Exporters, SMEs in particular, need proper guidance to facilitate international acceptance of their products. Industry standards provide the crucial first step in ensuring that they are on track right from the start. This is especially true if there are no prior international standards available.

"In addition to safeguarding product quality and meeting various health, safety and environmental requirements, standards can also help to maximise the product's compatibility with those offered by other companies, thereby increasing potential sales and widespread acceptance," added Datuk Aureen.

Additionally, exporters who comply with industry standards will have a document that shows that they have fulfilled the set criteria of the standard. This will be a form of testimony that they can share with prospective business partners. Compliance with industry standards will also make it easier for the company to subsequently adhere to requirements in the international market.

*Mid-tier companies in Malaysia refer to companies with annual revenues of between RM50 million and RM500 million in the manufacturing sector, and between RM20 million and RM500 million in the services sector.*

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*In addition to safeguarding product quality and meeting various health, safety and environmental requirements, standards can also help to maximise the product's compatibility with those offered by other companies, thereby increasing potential sales and widespread acceptance.*

”

- Datuk Aureen Jean Normis





Malaysian government's high impact initiatives, the Mid-Tier Companies Development Programme (MTCDP) is a nine-month-long programme with the objective of helping mid-tier companies grow their businesses internationally. It does this by broadening the companies' reach in high potential markets, providing tailored business advice, providing access to funding and facilitating introductions to new technology. Fifty high performing mid-tier companies are selected to participate annually.

### The Global Edge

*Exporters will have plenty to gain from complying with or even developing their own industry standards. Among others, this will:*

- *safeguard product quality, safety and technical standards to meet health, safety and environment requirements*
- *provide greater accessibility to the international market, thus enhancing the product's reputation, distinction and competitiveness*
- *ensure the production of high quality products that are aligned with international standards, thus facilitating wider international acceptance*
- *protect consumer interests, providing independent assurance of product quality, safety & reliability and compatibility of technology*

Industry standards set the guidelines for manufacturers to develop their products, and can also be seen as a means to ensure that companies deliver what they promise as well as being a good countermeasure to address counterfeiting issues. "New products are constantly being churned out. With everything clearly laid out in the standards, issues such as subpar products and services can be eliminated," explained Datuk Auren.

### Growing Export Capabilities

Tasked with facilitating Malaysian exports, MATRADE is constantly encouraging local mid-tier companies, in particular, to export globally. One such initiative is its Mid-Tier Companies Development Programme (MTCDP) that aims to help the companies to accelerate their export growth and strengthen their core business functions.

"Mid-tier companies are a key driving force behind the Malaysian economy. Currently, there are around 10,000 mid-tier companies in Malaysia that collectively contribute an estimated 30% of the country's GDP and employ over 22% of our workforce," revealed Datuk Aureen.

As a key component for exporting is compliance with standards, Datuk Aureen is confident that the adoption of industry standards can help companies in their global ventures. Citing the seafood industry as an example, she explained, "Malaysia has a fair share of seafood manufacturing companies, and many global players look to Malaysia when sourcing for seafood products. When these companies comply with industry standards on seafood processing, they will have proof of their capabilities in producing quality products and, as such, their products will be more easily accepted in international markets."

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Among others, MATRADE conducts seminars and workshops from time to time to assist exporters, and one of the key topics it covers is compliance with international standards and certifications. MATRADE works closely with SIRIM, the Department of Standards Malaysia and other professional bodies to ensure that exporters are aware of the standards or requirements needed for their products to penetrate the overseas market. Additionally, it takes note of the challenges, concerns or issues faced by exporters and highlights these to the relevant agencies.

### Enhancing Malaysia's Economy

Taking into consideration the functions and benefits of industry standards, it is no wonder that they play a pivotal role in a country's economy when it comes to export-related activities.



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“Industry standards are a good support for Malaysian companies when they want to venture into the export market.”

“Industry standards are a good support for Malaysian companies when they want to venture into the export market,” reiterated Datuk Aureen. “They are a passport for a company or country to progress. Just look at countries like Germany, for example. They are very strong in industry standards, which is why they are a big player in industrialisation!”

For export markets, it is also very important for companies to focus on international standards like ISO as those would be what international buyers

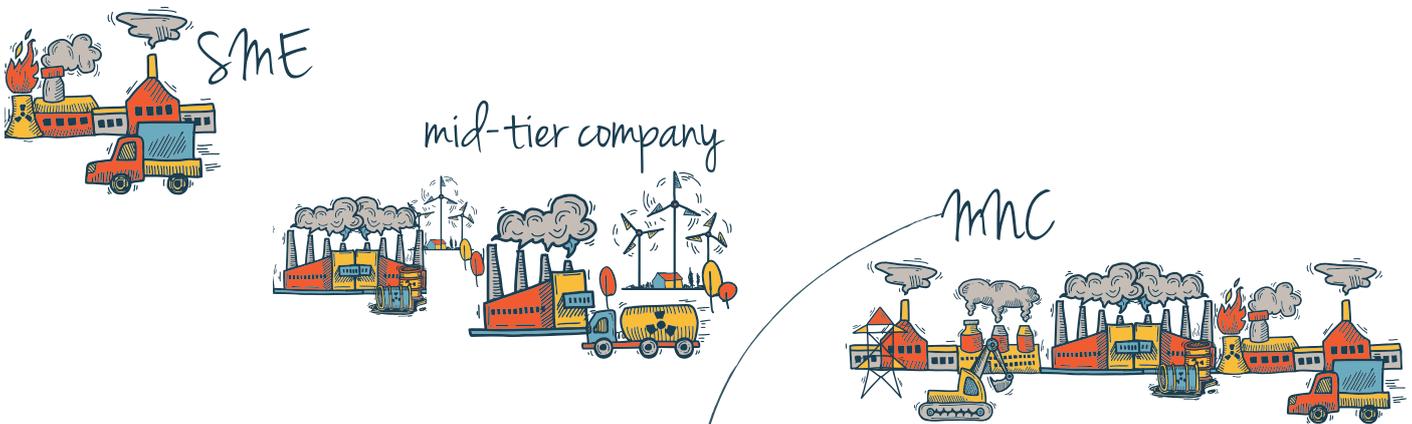
look for when sourcing for potential suppliers or business partners.

“With that in mind, MATRADE feels that companies should try to fulfil industry standards, and when they are ready to move forward, they can attempt to comply with Malaysian standards and subsequently international standards,” said Datuk Aureen.

Consequently, MATRADE hopes to continue working closely with SIRIM to promote available industry standards as well as services to help organisations

and trade associations to create standards for their particular sectors.

“These companies should look into developing standards with SIRIM’s assistance. After establishing the standards, they can work with MATRADE to move to the international market – the market penetration process will then be much easier. This should be the way forward in enhancing the country’s industrialisation process,” declared Datuk Aureen.



As the size of the company increases the awareness of the importance of standards also increases.

**The Voice of Malaysia's Manufacturers**

*The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) has been the voice and partner of the Malaysian manufacturing sector since 1968. As one of the largest economic organisations in the country with over 10,000 member companies, it actively engages with the government and key agencies at federal, state and local levels. It is also well linked with international organisations, Malaysian businesses and civil society. In assisting manufacturers to be competitive globally, FMM plays an active role in advocacy, providing trade and business networking opportunities for the industry domestically and internationally, as well as regular information updates and training.*



*Within an increasingly globalised marketplace, industry standards are being thrust into the limelight. The President of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM), Dato' Soh Thian Lai, offers his take on how these standards can help raise the industry as a whole to a higher level of success.*

*Paving the Way for* **GREATER GROWTH & SUCCESS**

Industry players today are keenly aware of the importance of complying with standards, especially those mandated by the law or required by their customers, whether in domestic or export markets.

"Standards are extremely important!" declared Federation of Manufacturing Malaysia (FMM) President Dato' Soh Thian Lai. "No matter what, if you are adopting standards, it is definitely benefiting you."

For one, standards compliance can support sustainable manufacturing operations by providing clear guidelines on the minimum technical specifications that a product needs to adhere to. This facilitates the reduction of waste by minimising production via trial and error as well as promoting greater accuracy in calibration, measurement and manufacturing, and managing waste disposal in compliance with environmental requirements.

Efficiency in production processes is further enhanced when the operations of machineries and equipment comply with the relevant standards. Standards

compliance also promotes the effective use of resources and higher productivity while improving risk management.

"Currently, with smart manufacturing and the resultant technological advancements like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), we need to have an effective production process in place. With everything fulfilling the necessary standards, it is hoped that the products will be manufactured correctly, minimising rejection rates. All manufacturers should embrace the concept of 'First Time Right'... with the help of standards," smiled Dato' Soh.

Additionally, standards provide the technical base from which research & development can be carried out to improve performance, product quality and efficiency, subsequently inspiring the attainment of higher standards and continuous improvement.

**Thriving in the Global Marketplace**

With the acceleration in globalisation and market integration, the main question on many manufacturers' minds is, "How do you export and generate income fast enough?" Perhaps one of the most visible advantages of complying with standards for manufacturers is the ability to widen their reach across the markets. "With the Malaysian market being limited, this will help our manufacturers to increase their profitability," explained Dato' Soh.

An integral component of international frameworks, agreements and platforms is the worldwide harmonisation of

“Standards are extremely important! No matter what, if you are adopting standards, it is definitely benefiting you.”

standards and conformity assessment systems. A good example is the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) agreement, which supports the use of international standards to eliminate technical barriers to trade. Subsequently, industries are recognising the importance of standards in increasing their competitiveness and providing them access to more markets.

Furthermore, standards are able to address compatibility issues; this will lead to a reduction in cost and time and, most importantly, facilitate transparency in market access and product supply based on quality, safety and health. Apart from that, compliance with standards also promotes innovation from concept to market, thus allowing businesses to shape and develop new markets at a faster rate.

### Moving Forward

FMM expects an upswing in the development, application and adoption of standards to support the burgeoning Industry 4.0, where quality and speed are essential. "With smart manufacturing processes, it is very important for manufacturers to fulfil the highest standards. We talk about automation; you need to have the hardware to support this, and the hardware will require standards," said Dato' Soh.

Other areas gaining momentum would be standards related to responsible trade and green trade. In addition to typical technical, quality, safety and price demands, suppliers are also increasingly requested to meet social or environmental standards through supplier codes of conduct, fair trade and eco-labelling schemes, with many countries imposing stricter quality standards on environmental protection to advocate more sustainable development and consumption, and mitigate climate change and the depletion of exhaustible resources as well as emphasising health-related requirements.

With standards and standards compliance being demand or market-driven, raising awareness regarding their benefits should, therefore, be primarily built around improving

access to business opportunities and securing the competitive advantage in the marketplace.

One way is by providing industry with regular and well-publicised updates on related information, such as standards requirements for the different markets. As a national TBT enquiry point, SIRIM employs the e-Ping alert system (<http://www.epingalert.org/en>) to do this. e-Ping is the central WTO system that disseminates both TBT and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) notifications.

### Accelerating Standards Adoption

While Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) make up the lion's share of the manufacturing sector, they may not have enough resources. This is where SIRIM plays an important role in working with all the relevant parties, especially manufacturers, to ensure that they are not only fully aware of the importance of standards but also adequately equipped to adopt them.

"In terms of research & development, Malaysian manufacturers as a whole, especially SMEs, are very weak. With its technical expertise and facilities, SIRIM is ideally positioned to be the bridge in enhancing the research & developmental capabilities of SMEs and ultimately help our industries to upgrade their technical knowledge and expand their pool of in-house expertise in a faster and more cost-efficient manner," explained Dato' Soh.

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*Definitely, industry standards will be fundamental well into the future! Malaysian organisations today are not just competing with other Malaysian organisations. They are competing with international players, and they all need to be able to ensure that their products are of the best quality and highest standards.*

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- Dato' Soh Thian Lai

Consequently, FMM applauds SIRIM's offerings of testing, calibration, certification and technical assistance as well as research & development centres. "We look forward to the setting up of more testing facilities by SIRIM, including those that are not available locally, across the nation," added Dato' Soh, who believes that there is a demand for these services, including from neighbouring countries.

As markets become more globalised and borderless, it is inevitable that industries will have to ensure that their products meet stringent quality, safety, health and sustainability aspects towards strengthening their competitiveness and relevance. "Definitely, industry standards will be fundamental well into the future!" declared Dato' Soh. "Malaysian organisations today are not just competing with other Malaysian organisations. They are competing with international players, and they all need to be able to ensure that their products are of the best quality and highest standards."

To that end, FMM urges all Malaysian organisations to take initiative to improve their production processes and achieve the world standards as soon as possible. "Don't wait, take action now!" he concluded.



# The STANDARD of SUCCESS

*Backed by over half a century of experience and expertise, SIRIM is no stranger to the world of standards. In the past five years alone, the organisation has published over 40 industry standards. SIRIMLink takes a closer look at SIRIM's collaborations with three other organisations in developing standards in different areas.*

## Lean-ing towards Efficiency

*RESPECT Business and Advanced Technology Solutions Sdn Bhd (RESPECT) is an ISO 9001:2015 certified spinoff company of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) that focuses on providing holistic strategic solutions for sustainable operations in the food, agriculture, manufacturing, remanufacturing, defence, service and hospitality industries. Among others, the company has collaborated with Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in strategising the growth of the Malaysian remanufacturing industry under the 11th Malaysia Plan and assisted the Malaysia Automotive, Robotics & IoT Institute (MARII) and SIRIM in remanufacturing as well as innovation management-related matters. It has also worked with the Prime Minister's Department (Implementation and Coordination Unit), as well as government-linked companies and various SMEs.*

*Strategically located in Kelana Jaya and Penang, RESPECT is not only conveniently accessible but also has the best research minds and state-of-the-art facilities readily available.*



RESPECT Business and Advanced Technology Solutions Sdn Bhd (RESPECT) recently worked with SIRIM to come up with two industry standards, i.e. SIRIM 12:2017 and SIRIM 13:2017, which are related to lean management.

The lean management system aims to reduce costs and optimise resources. SIRIM 12:2017 targets organisations in general, providing a specification of the requirements for key activities in implementing lean management. SIRIM 13:2017, on the other hand, focuses on the employees. It defines the competency requirements for employees in an organisation that is adopting lean management.

RESPECT provides holistic strategic solutions for sustainable operations in:



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Agriculture



Manufacturing



Remanufacturing



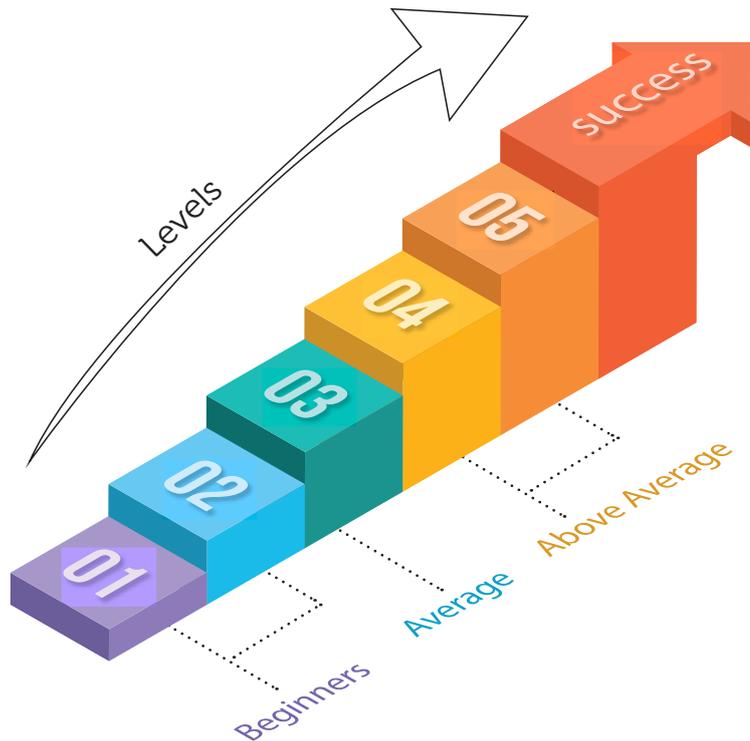
Defence



Service & Hospitality

“Many people think that being lean is about cutting down on the resources, which means firing people, but that’s not true. It just means that you have to optimise your resources; we’re actually talking about employee efficiency,” clarified Dr. Halim Shah Dato’ Hamzah, the Managing Director of RESPECT.

A five-tier maturity scale has been prescribed for the standards



RESPECT

SIRIM

**SIRIM 12:2017**  
 &  
**SIRIM 13:2017**

The creation of the lean concept is credited to Eiji Toyoda and Taiichi Ohno, and can be traced back to Toyota’s founder, Sakichi Toyoda. Lean management primarily attempts to eliminate waste. This is done by enhancing what adds value and reducing whatever does not essentially optimising resources and costs to improve overall efficiency and quality.

### Enhancing Operational Performance

While the standards stand alone as individual documents, collectively, they encompass the 4Ms (method, machine, materials and man), with SIRIM 12 encompassing the first three and SIRIM 13 covering ‘man’.

For both standards, a five-tier maturity scale has been specified with 3 being ‘average’. This means that organisations at the lower levels (1-2) are considered ‘beginners’, while levels 4 and 5 show that the organisations are above average. This lets the organisations gauge their current standing so that they are able to see what needs to be done to move up the scale. “It’s alright if the organisation is at the lowest level or does not have a quality management system to start with. We have taken that into consideration, which is why most of the activities we have detailed for the first two levels are quality-based,” assured Dr. Halim.

Consequently, it is important to ensure that employees are able to perform at a satisfactory level. SIRIM 13 therefore

acts as a guide that facilitates the progress and development of the employees, and when they attain Level 5, they will be able to coach or mentor others.

“SIRIM 13 is structured to resemble the Lean Six Sigma model, which has employees striving to attain the various belts. However, we didn’t think it was necessary to emulate Six Sigma in its entirety, as we felt that Six Sigma would be more suitable for industries with bigger production volumes,” said Dr. Halim.

According to him, lean would be a natural progression for an organisation once they have attained quality. “The idea of ‘quality’ is to have a stable process, which reduces noise, defects or rejections, allowing for the manufacturing of products that meet customer requirements. Once you have achieved that, the next logical step would be to reduce costs and optimise resources – this is where lean will come in,” he said.

An obvious benefit of the standards is cost-efficiency. However, they also

play an instrumental role in helping organisations in the wake of Industry 4.0. "As the Industry 4.0 standard is based on lean, SIRIM 12 and 13 will also allow organisations to be better prepared for Industry 4.0 strategies and solutions.

"They also become reference documents that various organisations can use as guidelines or benchmarks in the event that they hire consultants or trainers to help them adopt lean principles," added Dr. Halim.

**A Solid Partner for Standards**

Dr. Halim had worked with SIRIM before this and is familiar with SIRIM's strong reputation in industry. "SIRIM is renowned as an expert in standards. We know that organisations that have used SIRIM auditors for their ISO certifications are solid companies. Thus, this becomes our advantage. We want our industry standards to be something that Malaysia can be proud of," he explained.

RESPECT, with the help of SIRIM, is currently attempting to focus on standards that cover industrial engineering, and hopes to expand its reach even further still. With Industry 4.0 being the current buzzword, RESPECT hopes to develop more standards related to it. "Industry 4.0 is only projected to reach maturity in the year 2035. Presently, the technology, which is supposed to be the backbone of Industry 4.0, is just at its infancy stage. We know that the basics of Industry 4.0 encompass smart factories, 5G and Internet of Things (IoT), to name a few, but we are not there yet," said Dr. Halim. This is where having the proper standards will lay the foundation to move industries towards Industry 4.0, even as we begin thinking about the next phase.

Another area that RESPECT is looking at for the future is the development of use cases related to Industry 4.0. These are essentially case studies that are more specific in nature.



Among others, RESPECT hopes to see an increase in the number of organisations adopting the SIRIM 12:2017 and SIRIM 13:2017 standards. "These will benefit organisations tremendously in terms of costs and resources; it's a no-brainer, really!" exclaimed Dr. Halim.



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*Industry 4.0 is only projected to reach maturity in the year 2035. Presently, the technology, which is supposed to be the backbone of Industry 4.0, is just at its infancy stage. We know that the basics of Industry 4.0 encompass smart factories, 5G and Internet of Things (IoT), to name a few, but we are not there yet.*

”

- Dr. Halim Shah Dato' Hamzah

**Greening the Construction Industry**

*Established in 1872, the Public Works Department of Malaysia (Jabatan Kerja Raya or JKR) serves as a main technical agency of the government, and is responsible for implementing infrastructure development and maintenance projects for various ministries, departments, statutory bodies and state governments. Its main functions include the planning, design and construction of infrastructure such as roads, buildings and airports, the maintenance of roads and government buildings, and the provision of related advisory service to the federal government.*

*JKR's Environment & Energy Efficiency Branch (Cawangan Alam Sekitar & Kecekapan Tenaga, or CASKT) was established in 2002 to implement its Environmental and Energy policy towards enhancing sustainable development practices in Malaysia and ensure that its development projects do not affect the environment negatively.*



*JKR/SIRIM standards are developed according to SIRIM's standardisation procedures, which are in line with international practices that ensure appropriate participation of various stakeholders.*



- Yuvabalan  
A/L Govindasamy

In recent years, the Public Works Department of Malaysia (Jabatan Kerja Raya or JKR) has been collaborating with SIRIM on several industry standards: the Manual for Green Product Scoring System (GPSS), Penarafan Hijau (pHJKR) bagi Fasiliti Bangunan Kediaman dan Bukan Kediaman, and Environmental Protection and Enhancement Work (EPW). These were originally JKR guidelines which have been or are

being upgraded to enable them to be shared with the public and utilised by the relevant industry players.

As a leading industrial research and technology organisation in Malaysia that is well recognised as the Standards Development Agency for Environmental Management, SIRIM is JKR's top choice when it comes to standards development. With SIRIM's

*Benefits of JKR / SIRIM Industry Standards -*



*GPSS - heightens awareness of & demand for green construction materials*

*pHJKR - development of greener, more efficient projects*

*EPW - minimises adverse impacts of construction projects*

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*GPSS only focuses on the green materials used in the building. It is not a rating tool but can be applied as one of the criteria under the GBI, for example.*

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*Our existing JKR guidelines come in various formats and styles. SIRIM comes in to help us put things in order. This also helps us to obtain and incorporate public feedback.*

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- Ar. S. Thulasaidas

extensive experience and expertise in this area, JKR is confident that SIRIM will help them to develop standards that are on par with international standards.

The GPSS Standard was published in 2017. The latter two are presently still under development; the pHJKR Standard is currently in the public comment phase and will hopefully be published soon, while the EPW Standard still in the works, targeted to be completed by end of the year.

According to Yuvabalan A/L Govindasamy, the Senior Civil Engineer of the Environment and Energy Efficiency Branch of JKR, “JKR/SIRIM standards are developed according to SIRIM’s standardisation procedures, which are in line with international practices that ensure appropriate participation of various stakeholders.”

“Our existing JKR guidelines come in various formats and styles. SIRIM comes in to help us put things in order. This also helps us to obtain and incorporate stakeholder’s feedback,” chimed in Ar. S. Thulasaidas, Senior Superintendent Architect, Facility Design Higher Education Division, Architect Branch of JKR.

**Green Product/Materials Score**

In a bid to enhance JKR’s sustainable development projects, the GPSS Standard was developed with the intention of providing a systematic

and structured assessment system incorporating calculation methods to calculate the score of the green product content in a building and road construction projects. The scoring system prescribed in the standard is applicable for new projects, as well as refurbishment, upgrading or renovation projects. However, for refurbishment, upgrading and renovation projects, only new components that are specified are evaluated.

This standard is open to all organisations, whether regulators, government agencies, associations or professionals from the public or private sector, and complements the score for green materials that are prescribed in some of the green rating tools commonly used in Malaysia, such as the Malaysian Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Tool (MyCREST) and pHJKR or even Green Building Index (GBI). “GPSS only focuses on the green materials used in the building. It is not a rating tool but can be applied as one of the criteria under the pHJKR, for example,” clarified S. Thulasaidas.

**An Industry Advantage**

With the development of JKR/SIRIM industry standards, JKR hopes to be recognised as a leading government agency in sustainable development. “Our endeavour has allowed us to develop more comprehensive guidance documents that incorporate the input of all relevant stakeholders.



This, in turn, enables us to advocate the importance of sustainable development in the construction industry,” declared Yuvabalan.

Industry in general stands to reap numerous benefits from the JKR/SIRIM industry standards. In addition to enabling industry players to measure the number of green products used in their projects, the GPSS will also heighten awareness on the benefits of going green and consequently the demand for green products. This will also encourage the construction materials industry to obtain eco-labelling certification for their products, which will lead to an increase in the number and types of green products in the market.

“When this happens, we believe that it will lead to more competitive usage and pricing of green products. This will allow JKR and other industry players to increase the usage of green products in our projects, which is in line with the Government Green Procurement (GGP) performance target of 20% by the year 2020 as set in the 11th Malaysia Plan,” explained S. Thulasaidas. In the long run, this will facilitate environmental protection and the emergence of a more sustainable society.

Taking into account various good green management practices, the pHJKR standard is aimed at assisting the construction industry to achieve recognised green building standards according to current needs. By adopting this standard, there is a potential for industry players to reduce the cost of their projects while simultaneously developing a greener project that

incorporates sustainable planning and site management, more efficient use of resources, improved energy and water management, and reduced carbon emissions.

The EPW Standard, on the other hand, provides comprehensive guidelines that are in accordance with current technical requirements. This helps to minimise adverse impacts from the construction projects.

### A Greener Future

In playing its role in advocating for a greener construction industry, JKR is currently also working with the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation to increase the number of construction-related products registered in the MyHijau directory, which allows the public to view the details of green products available

in the market. Besides that, JKR’s Architect Branch conducts seminars on green products available, inviting the manufacturers to showcase and promote their products.

JKR also sees the need for industry standards in other areas of the construction industry. “At the moment, there are no guidelines for GGP for works in Malaysia or Asia. JKR is looking into coming up with one by 2020,” said Monaliza Mohd Hassan, Superintendent Architect of JKR’s Environment and Energy Efficiency Branch.

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*We need to be willing to share – with the public, suppliers, contractors... It is only then that we will be able to truly achieve sustainable development.*

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The SIRIM Industry Standards on Manual for GPSS was developed in 2017.



Provides a systematic and structured assessment system for green products in building & road projects

Creates awareness among stakeholders on green products & services



Encourages manufacturers to apply for green product certification

Extolling the benefits of industry standards, she highly recommends that the players in the construction industry look into adopting the relevant SIRIM Industry Standards to ensure standardised practices in the country. "I would also like to encourage other organisations to develop their own industry standards, which can be shared with and used by other industry players for the benefit of all," she added.

S. Thulasaidas agrees. "If industry players develop their own standards with SIRIM, these standards will then be readily available for others. We won't have to start from scratch," he said.

"We need to be willing to share – with the public, suppliers, contractors... It is only then that we will be able to truly achieve sustainable development," concluded Monaliza.

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*I would also like to encourage other organisations to develop their own industry standards, which can be shared with and used by other industry players for the benefit of all.*

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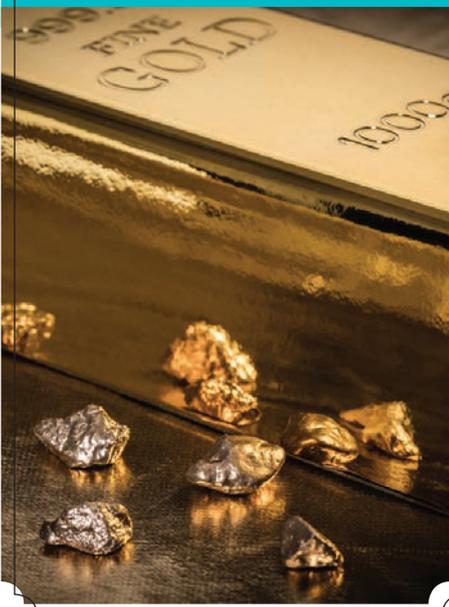
- Monaliza Mohd Hassan



## The Golden Standard

*Established in March 2010, Demi Idaman Sdn Bhd (Demi Idaman) is a fully integrated manufacturer of precious metals, focusing on refining gold and silver as its main activity. The company produces precious metal hallmark bars, minted coins, wafers and strips, as well as other related customised products.*

*In its endeavours to be the best in Malaysia, Demi Idaman is consistently enhancing its capabilities in refining, producing, processing, assaying, storing and distributing precious metal products. Among others, it invests heavily in the latest equipment and machineries, while employing its combination of technical knowledge and business experience as leverage.*



Demi Idaman Sdn Bhd (Demi Idaman), together with SIRIM, has developed a SIRIM Industry Standard on specifications for the fineness and marking of gold bullions, and is currently finalising an organisation standard regarding the operations for refining and processing precious metal. The former covers end products, such as the company's signature Idaman gold bars, and therefore helps to ensure that the end products are of top quality. This has subsequently facilitated market confidence in the Idaman brand in both local and international markets.

Aiman Azli, the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Demi Idaman, considers the standard to be very beneficial. "Internally, it creates a solid base of operating manuals that all our staff members can adhere to. This way, we have a precise document that helps us to make sure that every process we conduct is a success," he explained.

As the company is dealing with high-value products, it is extremely important that it is able to ensure the reliability of its products in terms of purity and weight, for instance. "We

cannot afford to make mistakes during the production process; as such we try our best to reduce the error margin as much as we can by following the standard procedures that we have developed with SIRIM," said Aiman.

### High-value Advantages

Aiman attributes Demi Idaman's position as a leading name in the industry to SIRIM standards. "We have been working with SIRIM for the past years, and they have helped us to gain wider recognition and market confidence. With the standards, we have moved up to become one of the main players in the Malaysian market," he said.

With the establishment of a solid reputation in the marketplace, Demi Idaman has been able to earn the trust and confidence of its purchasers. This is an essential element for any business. Additionally, this enables a more systematic process for its daily operations as well as determining a standardised base guideline for gold bar production.

"Sales have been really good. We've had returning customers, which is a good sign; this has led to the formation of a solid customer base. Furthermore, our bars are now well known and accepted in the market. These are all a big advantage for us," elaborated Aiman.

"SIRIM is an established name in the market when it comes to standards. When we tell our clients that our standards were developed in collaboration with SIRIM, they see that as a good thing – it increases their confidence in us!" he expounded.

The increased confidence in Demi Idaman's products has not only reinforced its existing clientele base but also opened up prospects for international markets. Today, the company exports its gold bars to various countries, including Qatar, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, China and India.



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*SIRIM is an established name in the market when it comes to standards. When we tell our clients that our standards were developed in collaboration with SIRIM, they see that as a good thing – it increases their confidence in us!*

”

### Glittering Future

As well as the standard focusing on the operations for refining and processing precious metals that is currently in the works, Demi Idaman foresees that there are other opportunities for developing standards for the betterment of the gold and other precious metals industry. With the former, Demi Idaman hopes to build a standardised marketplace for all the local manufacturers, thus enabling them to be on the same page.

Aiman also identifies assaying as a key area for the development of standards, and looks forward to working with SIRIM on this in the near future. "To my knowledge, there are two independent assayers in the country presently. We all

need to be synchronised in our assaying activities to ensure consistency. We can't have traders getting differing results when they send their samples to different assayers!"

With Demi Idaman eyeing the production of smaller bars ranging from 5g to 20g, he also sees standards on coin and bullion marking as beneficial. "In fact, coin and bullion marking involves more players in Malaysia, so a standard in this area could benefit a larger pool of people," he added.

Another important aspect that the gold and other precious metals industry could look into is security and logistics, especially since the industry involves high-value products.



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*We have a precise document that helps us to make sure that every process we conduct is a success.*

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With the immense benefits that industry players in general stand to gain from industry standards, Aiman is quick to recommend for industries, particularly manufacturing industries, to look into adopting existing SIRIM industry standards or developing their own.

"This is especially applicable for production-based entities – those which are involved in chemicals, food and medicine, for example. These industries would entail safety and health issues. As such, it is important for them to adhere to set standards!" he said emphatically.

As pioneers and early developers, industry players with niche products could also establish their own organisation standards in order to set the stage to boost their economic activities. "I would really encourage all organisations or industries to go ahead and develop the relevant standards. These will definitely help them gain leverage in the marketplace," declared Aiman.



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*We have been working with SIRIM for the past years, and they have helped us to gain wider recognition and market confidence. With the standards, we have moved up to become one of the main players in the Malaysian market.*

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*Sales have been really good. We've had returning customers, which is a good sign; this has led to the formation of a solid customer base. Furthermore, our bars are now well known and accepted in the market. These are all a big advantage for us.*

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- Aiman Azli





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