

October 24, 2013

For Immediate Release

ASKUL Corporation
Yanmar Co., Ltd.
Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd.

Askul and Yanmar to Participate in Measures to Tackle Climate Change in Vietnam (REDD+ Demonstration Activities)

Askul Corporation (President & CEO: Shoichiro Iwata; Head Office: Koto-ku, Tokyo) and Yanmar Co., Ltd. (President: Takehito Yamaoka; Head Office: Kita-ku, Osaka) announced their decision to participate in the REDD+^{*1} demonstration activities being implemented by Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Akira Ichikawa; Head office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

REDD+ is gaining the attention of the international community as an initiative for alleviating climate change by preventing deforestation and forest degradation in developing nations. At present, the United Nations is moving forward with discussions on the provision of economic incentives to developing nations corresponding to CO₂ emission reduction using REDD+ measures. Ahead of the full-fledged system introduction, this program aims to accelerate and expand REDD+ activities through demonstrations in village areas. To this end, Sumitomo Forestry and JICA entered a partnership agreement in August 2013 to become the first government-private sector collaboration to embark on such initiatives.

With the aim of expanding REDD+ demonstration activities, Sumitomo Forestry and JICA reached out to private-sector companies to participate in full-fledged activities that contribute to the preservation of forests and the environment, and to sustainable regional development. Askul and Yanmar responded to this call.

Askul is a logistics company that handles a wide range of products made from wood materials that are also exported from Vietnam. Meanwhile, Yanmar manufactures industrial machinery that offers support to Vietnam's agricultural industry, which is expected to grow going forward. Both companies plan to participate in comprehensive forest management as a part of CSR activities.

On September 9, 2013, in commemoration of Japan-Vietnam Friendship Year, the local government (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Dien Bien Province), JICA, Sumitomo Forestry, Askul, and Yanmar invited local related parties to attend a commemorative ceremony in Dien Bien Province.

Prior to this ceremony, a cherry tree was planted in Dien Bien to memorialize the event. More than 80 people attended the ceremony. In honor of the good relations between the two nations, a *kagami-biraki* ceremony was held, where a wooden cask filled with *sake* rice wine, was cracked open with a wooden hammer. The events confirmed the goal of all parties to further strengthen their partnership.

The increase in the number of companies participating in the program will enable the enrichment and expansion of the program's activities and fortify forest conservation in the province. In addition to contributing to measures to prevent global warming, it is expected these efforts will improve the quality of life for local residents.

In order to expand the REDD+ demonstration activities, Sumitomo Forestry and JICA plan to recruit more private-sector companies that advocate the objectives of these activities, which set out to contribute to the preservation of forests and the environment, and sustainable regional development.

*1 Reducing (global CO₂) Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD) plus (+) the enhancement of forest carbon stocks mainly through sustainable forest management. Currently, the United Nations and other organizations are considering a framework for the international promotion of REDD+ as a program for dealing with climate change.

Appendix

■ Summary of REDD+ demonstration activities

- (1) Location Muong Phang commune, Dien Bien District, Dien Bien Province in northwestern Vietnam
- (2) Implementation period August 2013–August 2015
- (3) Local participants Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dien Bien Province
Provincial People's Committee of Dien Bien, People's Committee of Muong Phang commune (counterparts of JICA's Project for Sustainable Forest Management in the Northwest Watershed Area (SUSFORM-NOW)
Vietnam Forestry University (Sumitomo Forestry's consignee)
- (4) Activities To prevent forest depletion and degradation, forestry management via activities such as forest preservation and the reforestation of degraded forests alone is insufficient. It is necessary to comprehensively provide assistance for improving the livelihood and sustenance of local residents to reduce their overdependence on the forest and its resources. These demonstration activities support comprehensive efforts in which local residents participate, including the development of organizations to protect the forest, preservation activities, forestation, the cultivation of fruit trees and vegetables, and the farming of fish and livestock. By monitoring these REDD+ activities, the effect of measures to alleviate climate change at the village level can be verified.

■ Japan-Vietnam Friendship Year Ceremony

- (1) Date: September 9, 2013
- (2) Place: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dien Bien Phu City, Dien Bien Province
- (3) Sponsor: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dien Bien Province, JICA, Sumitomo Forestry, Askul, Yanmar
- (4) Participants: Sponsors and local related organizations (see above), village chiefs who were part of the demonstration activities, etc. (about 80 people)
- (5) Summary: After congratulatory addresses by the Provincial People's Committee of Dien Bien, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Dien Bien, the three Japanese companies, and JICA, the *kagami-biraki* ceremony was held, where a wooden cask filled with *sake* rice wine produced in Vietnam, was cracked open with a wooden hammer. There was also a performance of song and dance from both nations. Prior to this event, a cherry tree and a *ban* tree (a species native to Vietnam) were ceremonially planted at the Muong Phang commune in Dien Bien Province.