FMM Commissions Scientific Research on Transboundary Haze Impacts, Calls for Action at APEC and ASEAN Meetings

Kuala Lumpur, October 28, 2026 - The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing (FMM) has commissioned an independent scientific study on the 2026 fire season and transboundary haze affecting Malaysia, highlighting its impact on public health, industrial productivity, business operations and the wider economy.

The research paper, titled "The 2026 Fire Season and Transboundary Haze in Malaysia," covers the period from 1 July to 22 October 2026. It draws on satellite observations, air-quality monitoring, atmospheric modelling and findings from FMM's member survey to assess the sources, severity and consequences of prolonged haze exposure.

FMM President Mr Jacob Lee Chor Kok said that transboundary haze has become a recurring regional challenge that requires more decisive and coordinated action.

"Year after year, Malaysia and neighbouring countries continue to experience the consequences of transboundary haze. Beyond environmental degradation, haze affects people's health, workers' wellbeing, industrial productivity and economic activities.

"For manufacturers, prolonged haze can result in employee illness, absenteeism, disruptions to production and deliveries, and additional expenditure on protective measures and healthcare. These costs ultimately affect business competitiveness and economic resilience."

Scientific Research to Support Evidence-Based Policymaking

The study was undertaken by Dr Piyu Ke, Chief Scientist of Carbon Spur Sdn Bhd, who holds two doctoral degrees: a doctorate in Ecology from Tsinghua University, China, and a doctorate in Mathematics from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

Dr Ke brings interdisciplinary scientific expertise to the assessment of environmental conditions, atmospheric pollution and their wider implications.

The study combines multiple scientific approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the haze problem, including the cumulative effects of prolonged pollution exposure rather than focusing solely on peak air pollution readings.

FMM believes that credible scientific research is essential to support effective public policies, strengthen preventive measures and improve regional cooperation.

The findings remain provisional, as the 2026 fire season was still ongoing at the study's data cut-off.

FMM Calls for Transboundary Haze to Be Addressed at APEC and ASEAN Meetings

FMM urges regional leaders to give greater attention to transboundary haze pollution at the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings and ASEAN

meetings, including through the relevant environmental, economic and ministerial cooperation mechanisms.

“Transboundary haze does not recognise national boundaries. Its consequences are shared by neighbouring countries, their populations and their economies. Therefore, its prevention cannot be the responsibility of any single country alone.

“FMM appeals to APEC and ASEAN leaders to place greater emphasis on this recurring challenge and strengthen regional cooperation in scientific research, environmental monitoring, early warning systems, sustainable land management and fire prevention.”

FMM acknowledges the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution and the Second Roadmap for ASEAN Cooperation on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (2023–2030), which provide the regional framework for achieving a haze-free ASEAN by 2030.

However, the severity and prolonged nature of this year’s haze underscore the urgency of translating these commitments into more effective and measurable action. FMM calls for accelerated implementation of the Roadmap, supported by transparent and regular reporting against its targets, timely sharing of hotspot and air-quality data, coordinated early warning and rapid response mechanisms, stronger enforcement against activities that cause forest and peatland fires, and adequate resources for prevention and sustainable land management. Findings from the 2026 fire season should inform a review of implementation gaps and the strengthening of regional measures to protect public health and economic productivity.

FMM also encourages APEC economies to explore how technological innovation, satellite monitoring, artificial intelligence and scientific collaboration can strengthen regional environmental resilience.

Protecting Economic Productivity and Public Health

FMM emphasises that haze should no longer be viewed exclusively as an environmental issue.

It is also a matter of public health, labour productivity, economic sustainability and regional competitiveness.

“Manufacturing industries are increasingly interconnected through regional and global supply chains. Environmental disruptions in one country can affect economic activities and business operations across national boundaries.

“Preventing haze is therefore not only an environmental responsibility but also an investment in economic resilience, sustainable industrial development and the wellbeing of future generations.”

FMM Submits Findings to the Government

FMM has submitted the commissioned research paper to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) for consideration.

FMM hopes that the findings will contribute to the Government's ongoing efforts to strengthen haze prevention, monitoring and mitigation measures, as well as cooperation with neighbouring countries.

FMM is prepared to engage with NRES, the Department of Environment and other relevant government agencies to discuss the findings and explore practical policy recommendations.

"Malaysia should continue to play a constructive role in promoting regional environmental cooperation. Through science, technology, responsible governance and collective commitment, we must move from repeatedly responding to haze emergencies towards preventing them.

"Clean air is a shared responsibility, and protecting it must become a shared regional priority."



Mr Jacob Lee Chor Kok
President, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing

FMM Advocates Transparency, Integrity, Accountability and No Corruption

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About FMM

The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing (FMM) (formerly known as Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers) has been the voice of the Malaysian manufacturing sector since 1968, advocating policies and initiatives that drive industrial growth, competitiveness and workforce development. Representing over 13,540 member companies (4,270 direct and 9,270 indirect) from the manufacturing supply chain, FMM is actively engaged with government and its key agencies at Federal, State and local levels. FMM is also well-linked with international organisations, Malaysian businesses and civil society. Apart from benefitting from FMM's advocacy, FMM members enjoy value-added services including training, business networking and trade opportunities as well as regular information updates.

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