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NEWS RELEASE

First SME (Small and Mid-size Enterprise) Programme Introduced to Plasma Cooperative in Central Kalimantan as Alternative to Oil Palm

Jakarta, 30 December 2019 – To support the local community incorporated in Cooperative Mitra Bahaum, a plasma partnership associated with the concession of PT Bumitama Gunajaya Abadi (BGB) in Central Kalimantan, the representatives of Bumitama, Bappenas (National Development Planning Agency) and Kotawaringin Baru regional government came together on Wednesday 18 December 2019 to inaugurate the operation of an SME focusing on silver catfish (*pangasius* / ikan patin) farm.

On the day of the inauguration, Mr. Hadi Fauzan, the Director of Sustainability and Compliance of Bumitama together with Mrs. Nurhidayah, the Regent of Kotawaringin Baru, Mr. Ahmad Dading Gunadi, the Director of SME development of Bappenas, the Chairman of Plasma Cooperative Mitra Bahaum and its members inaugurated the commencement of the operation with releasing of 100,000 fish fries into the ponds which had been prepared with the required depth and suitable water acidity level for these silver catfish fries.



The strategic partnership is intended to provide an alternative livelihood outside oil palm for the local community and is positioned in Mubin, which is an area located between the villages of Sakabulin and Lalang in the regency of Kotawaringin Baru. This area for this fish farming project and the fish ponds were stringently researched, selected and designed, where Bumitama's Geographic Information System (GIS) and Engineering departments worked together with the Indonesian Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs and Bappenas by providing assistance in the identification of suitable location, designing and construction of the ponds, its close water circulation system and supporting buildings.

In the start-up phase 6 fish ponds of 900 m² per pond will be used for training and hand-holding of the management of this project, which comprises of local hires and persons appointed from the cooperative, assisted by a trainer from Bappenas and co-ordinated by Bumitama. The 5 core aspects of business which are production, human resources, marketing, finance and legal will be imparted to this team. The later phase will include the addition of another 6 ponds and training to look at fish breeding. When it is fully matured this project targets production of around 5 ton of silver catfish every month, using modern fishery technique that blends in with elements of local know-how. It is of interest to note how this project will gradually introduce sustainable and natural fermentation feed process into the system by utilising palm oil production waste in form of empty fruit bunches and other natural waste material like poultry droppings.



The Chairman of Mitra Bahaum plasma cooperative, Mr. Masyakin, showed his enthusiasm of the project that will provide complementary and alternative revenue to the cyclical nature of oil palm business. With this pilot fully complete, Bappenas expects that this concept can be replicated in a sustainable way, utilizing the specific local commodities in other regions across Indonesia.

We are enthusiastic that the success of this pilot will create positive impact that will spill over into other programmes created in support of this project, while inspiring local people to set up similar sustainable alternative livelihood programmes in the region, which has the potential of establishing itself as an ecotourism site. Bumitama will continue to replicate this SME initiative, not necessarily in fish but also in other types of natural and sustainable businesses for the benefit of the local communities.

For articles published on this project in local press please refer to:

<http://www.neraca.co.id/article/126001/budidaya-perikanan-pendapatan-alternatif-bagi-petani-sawit>

<https://beritasampit.co.id/2019/12/18/program-pendapatan-alternatif-budidaya-ikan-patin-majukan-ekonomi-masyarakat-kolam/>

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