

**Sustainability
Research:
Business, Energy
& Social Impact**

eISBN 978-629-95163-1-6

OCTOBER 2024

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Foreword by Professor Sanjay Sarma

**Chief Executive Officer, President, and
Dean of Asia School of Business**

I am pleased to introduce the 2023/2024 edition of sustainability research from the Asia School of Business (ASB) Research Office. This compilation serves as a valuable resource for regulators, academics, corporate leaders, entrepreneurs, and the media, providing insights into sustainable practices grounded in rigorous academic research and analysis.

At ASB, we are committed to advancing sustainable business practices and fostering global discussions on policies that promote long-term sustainability. In 2024, the Research Office has placed a stronger focus on sustainability, reflecting the urgency of addressing global challenges such as climate change and the depletion of natural resources. These issues directly impact economic growth and societal stability, making it crucial for us to act now to safeguard the welfare of future generations and the ecosystems we share. ASB is proud to contribute to this growing body of knowledge, which can guide ethical, sustainable decisions for a better future.

Through its data-driven, impactful research, ASB's Research Office provides essential insights to decision-makers across regulatory bodies, public institutions, and corporate sectors. The findings from this research will serve as critical references for policymakers developing strategies and regulations to address these pressing global challenges.

I am particularly inspired by the Research Office's dedication to exploring a wide range of important fields. Led by Professor Melati Nungsari, the team operates across four specialized centers:

- Center for Technology, Strategy, and Sustainability (CTSS): Focuses on the intersection of technology, energy, and sustainable development.
- ASEAN Research Center (ARC): Supports emerging markets in the ASEAN region.
- Center for Sustainable Smallholders (CSS): Promotes sustainable practices in the oil palm industry.
- Central Banking Research Center (CBRC): Explores key issues in central banking and financial sectors.

Together, these centers contribute to ASB's mission of delivering relevant, research-driven knowledge and insights.

Our Research Office collaborates with leading organizations to enhance the real-world impact of its work. ARC is funded by Maybank, CTSS is supported by Sapura Energy, CSS by Procter & Gamble (P&G), and additional funding comes from Temasek Foundation. These strategic partnerships have strengthened our ability to provide valuable research for industry stakeholders and the academic community, all working toward a shared vision of a sustainable future.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated research team for their hard work and passion. I am confident that the research produced by the ASB Research Office will continue to support stakeholders in making informed decisions that move us closer to a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Message by Professor Melati Nungsari

Deputy Dean of Research



As ASB's first Deputy Dean of Research, I am thrilled to welcome you all to a new beginning for the university with the publication of this book, which summarizes ongoing research projects on campus. We hope that this guide will serve as a tool to further engage with the broad set of people and organizations that constitute our stakeholders as a publicly funded institution. These include the public, companies, funders, our research participants, university partners, and the media, all of whom we work with to further our goal of positioning ourselves as key thought leaders on management issues in Asia.

When I was tasked with finding a motto for the ASB Research Office—the centralized office that oversees the university's research portfolio—I struggled to find something that could encompass the breadth of what we do at ASB. From palm plantations in Johor to oil fields in Saudi Arabia, from sustainable textiles in Laos to rich American datasets, ASB research is truly an exceptional feature of the school: global yet grounded in things that matter. I'm pleased to announce that our official tagline is: "Authentic Inquiry by Global Minds with Local Heart." In short, at ASB, we leverage our genuine curiosity about global issues, deeply rooted in local nuances, to drive transformative progress. We also believe that engaging in impactful research enhances our effectiveness as educators.

Academia and higher education are changing, and it is no longer sufficient for those who want to make small ripples in the vast ocean of the world to remain within their ivory towers. At ASB, we believe that impact—however defined—plays a pivotal role in our day-to-day work as researchers. We cannot take more than we give back to the people involved in our studies, and we must always strive for excellence and scientific inquiry when asking and answering questions.

Please browse through our book to get a sense of what we offer, in whatever capacity you represent. In line with our mission to create transformative and principled leaders, we believe that our research should be translated for the public to promote the betterment of society and the world. Our research community at ASB is small but mighty—like the favorite local "cili padi" (bird's eye chili)—and is composed of talented individuals from around the world, including our world-class faculty and professional researchers.

If you have any questions, please direct them to research@asb.edu.my.
I look forward to engaging with you soon!

About this Book

Sustainability has emerged as a prominent and widely discussed topic among businesses globally. The existential threat of climate change and the increased voices calling for immediate action to secure a better shared future. The Asia School of Business is at the forefront of this conversation, conducting extensive research on various themes of sustainability.

What is sustainability?

In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” As irreversible changes in the Earth’s systems occur, the threat of climate change has become too significant to ignore. The surpassing of environmental thresholds is raising concerns about potential domino effects in global natural systems and societies. Climate concerns have placed pressures on businesses to find solutions for climate concerns, but also opening up opportunities to establish sustainability goals if they haven’t already.

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, companies continued to align with the United Nations General Assembly’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established in 2015 and intended to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs provide a universal framework for sustainability in business, addressing critical areas such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and climate change.

Many academic institutions have started delving into these issues. At ASB, sustainability is an important pillar of our research work. Our comprehensive research is divided into three parts, each addressing a critical aspect of sustainable development:


- Part 1: Sustainability in Business
- Part 2: Energy Sustainability
- Part 3: Social Sustainability





Part 1

Sustainability in Business



Sustainability in business refers to a company's strategy and actions to minimize negative environmental and social effects arising from its operations within a specific market. An organization's sustainability efforts are often evaluated using environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria, requiring in-depth understanding into pathways to fulfil these criteria. ASB hopes to be at the frontier of expanding understanding the landscape of ESG research.

Research Highlights

ASB's research focuses on partnering with various institutions and industries in the realm of business sustainability. ASB has collaborated with the ASEAN-Korea Centre, palm oil smallholder farmers in Johor under the P&G Smallholder Program, and corporate organizations such as PwC Malaysia. In particular, our work focuses on the "social" aspect of ESG, a key area of concern for firms and businesses. While the environmental sustainability often receives significant attention from companies, the complexities of the social aspect and employees are frequently overlooked despite their crucial role in achieving overall sustainability.

ESG Practices in ASEAN & Korea: Pathways Towards Sustainability By Asia School of Business ASEAN Research Center, Malaysia and ASEAN-Korea Centre, South Korea

One of the main collaborations in 2023 was with the ASEAN-Korea Centre on ESG practices in the ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region. This report focuses on understanding ESG policies in ASEAN, investigating the criteria that businesses use to operate responsibly and sustainably which are rapidly emerging and evolving. ESG practices in ASEAN are primarily driven by domestic policy and supply chains. Therefore, ESG practices in ASEAN are dynamic and differentiated, influenced by complex domestic and international stakeholders, presenting both risks and opportunities.

Economically advanced ASEAN countries, such as Singapore, lead in advanced ESG regulatory and governance structures, with a focus on sustainable finance and carbon services. Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam are emerging leaders in the electric vehicle market. Malaysia has launched initiatives to encourage ESG adoption by MSMEs, while the Philippines is successful in ensuring publicly listed firms disclose their greenhouse gas emissions. Cambodia and Lao PDR are increasingly using sustainable bonds to finance their development, and Brunei has recently launched a national program to expand the use of solar power. Ultimately, different countries demonstrate leadership in various domains of ESG practices.

ASB has adopted ESG practices from the start of its construction in 2015, featuring a green building powered by sustainable energy and implementing the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) throughout the building with signage and reminders. Additionally, a smart monitoring system is in place, and the social and governance aspects are addressed by taking care of employees and fostering a community.



Achieving Sustainable Development Goals – An NDPE and Certification Strategy for Independent Smallholder Farmers for Oil Palm

By Kee En Lim, Vasagi Ramachandran, Yusof Nursaiyidah, Muhilan Ratnam, Azahar Saiful, & Asad Ata

On the local agriculture front, the Center for Sustainable Small-owners (CSS) conducts research to guide independent smallholders (ISH) through a comprehensive learning process, starting from the commitment to certification and livelihood improvement. Millions of smallholders, mainly farmers, rely on palm oil for their livelihoods, but the shift to sustainable agricultural practices is often hampered by limited resources, knowledge, and awareness. This research shows that it is important to empower ISH and address these challenges while promoting ethical palm oil production.

CSS is committed to no deforestation, no new development on peatlands, and no exploitation (NDPE) in the supply chain. Their approach includes empowering communities through certification and compliance, building farmer associations, and sourcing responsibly. CSS's initiatives support Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2, 8, 12, 15, and 17 through activities like traceability and verification, training, certification, livelihood improvement, community development, and monitoring. Continuous improvement post-certification includes training ambassadors for the P&G program.

This research and actionable contribution to the palm oil industry are exemplified by ASB becoming an Affiliate Member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in November 2023 and its commitment to support the sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of RSPO-certified palm oil. This business strategy aims to enhance biodiversity, protect natural ecosystems, and improve the well-being of local communities and areas.

Leading the Leap: Trust-driven Strategies to Shape Reinvention

By Yi-Ren Wang & Zhai Gen Tan

Trust within the firm is also crucial for the ESG pathway. ASB and PwC Malaysia collaborated to explore trust in the workplace and its role in shaping business reinvention. The main theme centers on the trust between employees and management, highlighting its necessity for sustaining both the workforce and the business. This report is a continuation of a 4-year collaboration on the Building Trust Award between ASB and PwC.

For this report, over 11,000 employees in Malaysia were surveyed. The study shows that a workforce in a high-trust organization is not only more receptive to a leader's decisions but also more resilient to the turbulence that comes with new strategies. The survey identifies three key factors impacting their readiness to reinvent: a fair rewards system, a culture of openness and respect, and the diversity climate of the company.

It is crucial to bring the workforce along on the business's sustainability journey, working inclusively on strategic sustainability priorities. Additionally, it is important to communicate sustainability milestones to employees, contextualizing the results of sustainability initiatives to areas of operations, such as sources of carbon emissions, waste production, and indicators of ethical business practices.



ARC Team attending the ASEAN-Korea ESG Forum



ASB & PWC Team at Leading the leap: Trust-driven strategies to shape reinvention launch



Audience at the ASB-UNHCR Conference on Refugee Studies & Forced Displacement 2024



Audience member asking a question at the ASB-UNHCR Conference on Refugee Studies & Forced Displacement 2024



CSS Team at
Diffusion Training



CSS Team at Field Demo
on GAP Learning Farm



CSS Team peat soil testing

Interviews



"There is a stereotype that ESG simply means "going green" and adopting the 3Rs (recycling, reusing, and reducing). However, after contributing to the ESG report, it's important to raise awareness that the social aspect plays a big part in ESG, and businesses are starting to take responsibility for this."

- Fatimah Zahra, ARC Researcher

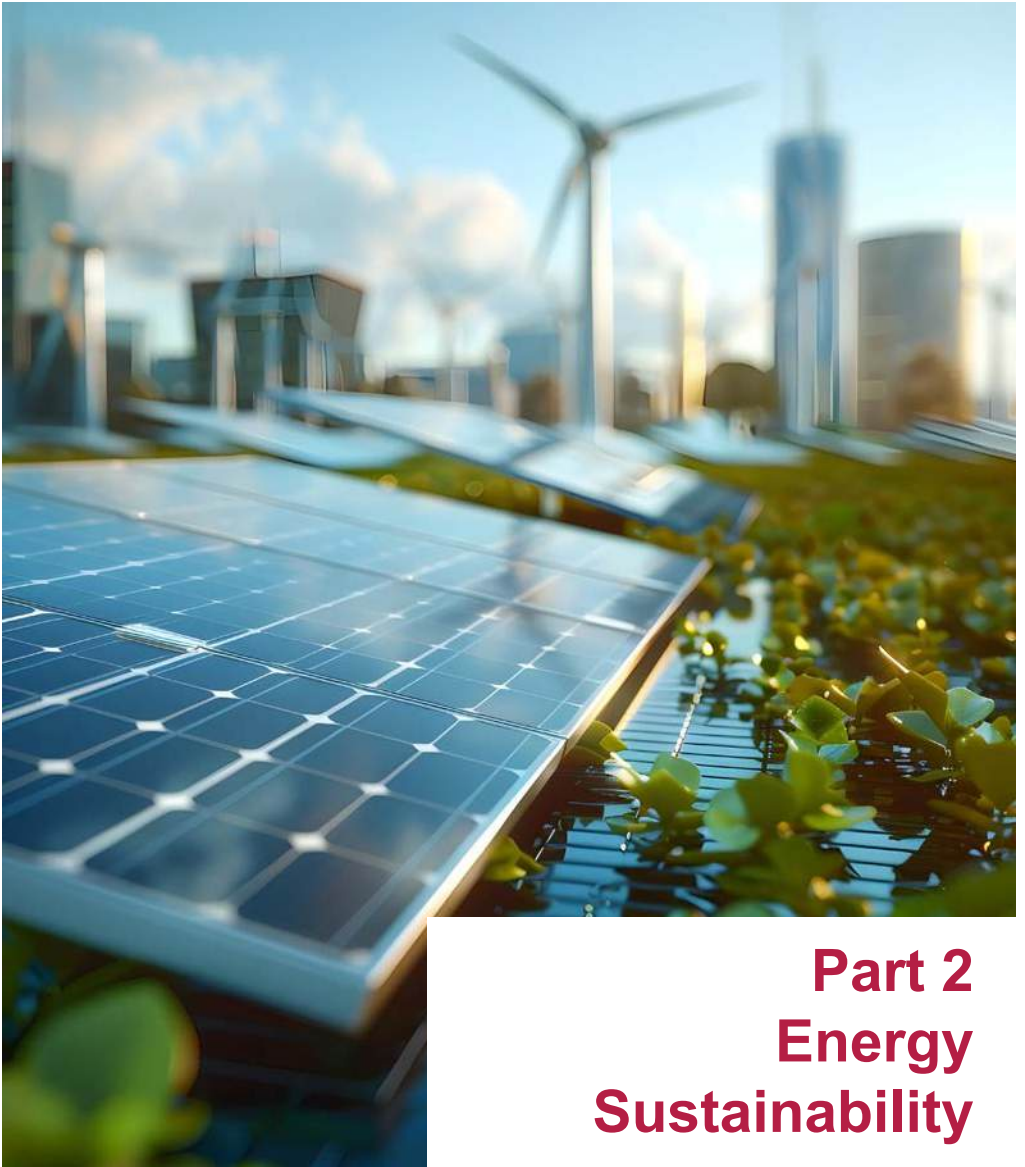


"There will always be challenges when adopting ESG practices; some aspects are progressing while others are still underdeveloped. Awareness plays a very important role, and the younger generation is definitely more informed going forward."

- Aimi Azman, ARC Researcher

From our research focus on sustainability in business, we found that any serious action for sustainability requires the transformation of all stakeholders within the business sector. Employees need to be equipped with the tools they need to understand sustainability. This includes providing the knowledge, skills, and technology required to integrate sustainability into their day-to-day work and embrace necessary changes.


Besides interactive leadership sessions to raise awareness about key sustainability roles in the company, leaders need to share a clear tone from the top, for example, through roadshows or recurring team updates. It is also important to celebrate success and reward exemplary behavior.



Part 2

Energy

Sustainability

An aerial photograph showing a large array of solar panels installed in a field, with some greenery visible in the background. The panels are arranged in a grid pattern, and the image is used as a background for the text.

Energy sustainability is defined as the provision and use of energy in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own energy needs. This involves not only ensuring a reliable and affordable energy supply but also minimizing the environmental impact of energy production and consumption.

Research Highlights

Energy sustainability is important because it addresses the critical challenges of energy security, environmental protection, and social equity. By focusing on sustainable energy practices, The Center for Technology, Strategy & Sustainability (CTSS) at ASB is focused on the understanding how greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced, mitigation policies for climate change, and the preservation of natural resources. Furthermore, sustainable energy solutions can promote economic development and social well-being by providing access to clean and affordable energy for all, especially in underserved communities.

The transition to sustainable energy systems also drives innovation and job creation in new industries, fostering economic resilience and growth. In essence, energy sustainability is crucial for building a more stable, equitable, and healthy future for our planet and its inhabitants.

Malaysia's New Voluntary Carbon Market: Origins, Ecosystem and Prospects By Pieter Stek, Thessa Vasudhevan, & Renato Lima-de-Oliveira

Malaysia, as a middle-income economy integrated into global value chains, faces the dual challenge of managing significant domestic carbon emissions while leveraging opportunities for nature-based carbon offsets. In response to these challenges, Malaysia launched a domestic Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) in December 2022, following its announcement in September 2021. This initiative is part of the government's broader climate change policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions in a sustainable manner.

However, the success of the VCM hinges on stronger government direction. While there are opportunities to transition towards renewable energy, this often requires deforestation—something that Malaysia's current policies aim to prevent. The challenge lies in balancing environmental protection with the growing demand for energy and carbon credits. Effective regulation and government support are crucial to shaping a fair and competitive carbon market, especially given the involvement of state-owned companies and domestic interests.

Additionally, Malaysia must work towards building a standardized carbon trading framework that aligns with both local and ASEAN contexts. This is essential for ensuring that the VCM operates effectively, and that Malaysia can fully capitalize on its potential for nature-based carbon offsets.

The future of Malaysia's carbon market depends on navigating these complexities, with a focus on both economic growth and environmental sustainability.

An aerial photograph showing a large array of solar panels in the foreground and middle ground, with a dense forest of green trees in the background. The solar panels are arranged in a grid pattern, and the trees are lush and green. The overall scene suggests a focus on renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

Breaking the carbon lock-in: Identifying pathways for Malaysia towards a low-carbon future

By Esther Schuch, Maria Aperi, Deborah Yik, Kuen Chow, Laima Eicke, Andreas Goldthau, Jude H. Kurniawan, Renato Lima-de-Oliveira, Zhai Gen Tan, & Silvia Weko

The Paris Agreement (2015) mandates countries to reduce their carbon dependency, posing a challenge for traditional oil and gas producers. “Carbon lock-in” refers to the difficulty of shifting away from fossil fuels due to economic, political, and infrastructural dependencies.

This research explores how nations like Malaysia, the second-largest oil producer in Southeast Asia, can transition from a fossil fuel-heavy system to renewable energy. With nearly 80% of Malaysia’s greenhouse gas emissions stemming from the fossil fuel sector, the study models the structural components of the Malaysian energy system to identify key leverage points for energy transitions. Creating pathways for energy transition means recognizing the need to move away from fossil fuels. However, the increasing electrification due to electric vehicles (EVs) is raising overall electricity demand. While aiming to be greener, it’s essential to consider that much of this electricity still comes from fossil fuels, questioning the sufficiency of reaching the global net zero goal.

Renewable energy has its pros and cons. Despite Malaysia’s ample sunlight and rainfall, considerations must be made regarding the costs, production processes, efficiency, and energy transportation. For example, solar panels are land-intensive, and hydro energy requires significant environmental changes such as flooding a valley.

By incorporating stakeholder input, the research identifies the main factors influencing Malaysia’s energy shift and uses Cross Impact Balances (CIB) to create scenarios. The findings highlight the need to decentralize political power and introduce green growth recovery packages to overcome carbon lock-in. While the study focuses on Malaysia, it offers broader insights into how fossil fuel-reliant emerging economies can break path dependencies and transition to clean energy.

Interviews



"Energy is the basis of all modern living since the Industrial Revolution. It powers our world of both comfort and development. However, it could also destroy our world, so it is important to understand where energy production comes from in order to understand how we can transition it."

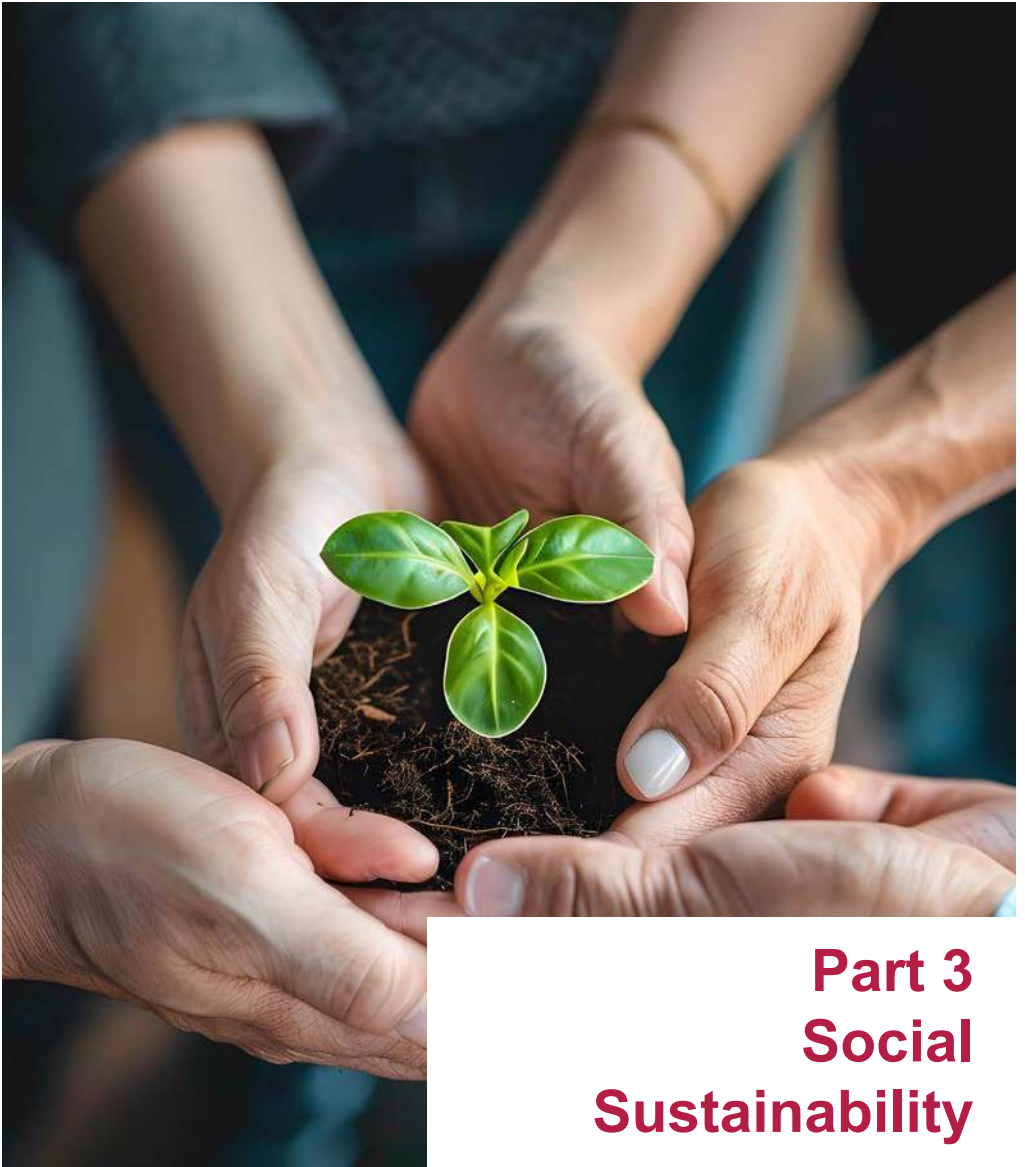
- Zhai Gen Tan, ASB Assistant Director of Research



"The energy transition requires not just changes in technology, but also in regulation, business models and social and economic behaviour. Malaysia is in a difficult position because it has a carbon-intensive economy that depends on international trade and investment. This forces businesses to be pro-active and outward looking, and to strike new alliances with competitors, regulators, suppliers and clients to turn these challenges into opportunities."

- Pieter E. Stek, ASB Senior Academic Lecturer

In summary, ASB investigates energy sustainability as an important research area as a growing trend that concerns all stakeholders. Raising awareness about the global challenge of climate change and energy transition provides the impetus for action. By participating in discussions, workshops, and teachings, ASB provides opportunities for policymakers and corporate organizations to take action and avoid the pitfalls of greenwashing in the energy transition.



Part 3 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability is defined as the ability to maintain and improve the well-being of individuals and communities while ensuring that social systems remain stable and equitable over the long term. It encompasses efforts to support underprivileged communities, promote social inclusion, and address inequalities.

Research Highlights

At ASB, social sustainability is closely tied to the ASEAN Research Center (ARC), which aims to conduct research on underprivileged communities to advocate for impactful policies. This involves looking into the hawker community in Malaysia or visiting palm oil fields to investigate conditions and human rights of the workers. One project under ARC, called Rapid Youth Success Entrepreneurship/Employability (RYSE), conducts both programs and research within Malaysia to empower Malaysian youth with entrepreneurship and employability opportunities.

Conditions of precarity and strategies of resilience: An overview of the Malaysian hawker community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

By Melati Nungsari, Kar Yern Chin, Shen Yi Chua, & Fathin Nadhirah

Jostling for Right of Way': Hawker Discourse, Legitimation, and Politics in Post-Independence Malay(sia), 1957–1969 (under review)

By Kar Yern Chin

The hawker community research examines the challenges faced by hawkers in Peninsular Malaysia and explores how they can adapt to social security, digitalization, and spatial needs. This study focuses on SMEs like burger stalls, wet markets, and street food vendors, gathering insights through interviews within the Klang Valley.

The first research implies that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted hawking practices, complicating livelihoods with restrictions on space and movement, rising commodity prices, and changing customer food patterns. Tensions with law enforcement and public health officials further strained their operations. In response, hawkers have shown resilience by adapting business strategies and embracing digitalization. Many unemployed individuals have turned to hawking as a means of survival, highlighting the precarious nature of this form of labor. However, the pandemic also exposed the shortcomings of government assistance and social protection, leaving hawkers financially vulnerable. Hawker organizations have attempted to bridge this gap, but challenges remain.

The second research also underscores the importance of understanding the historical and legal context surrounding hawking, including the tension between hawkers and public spaces. By exploring these dynamics, the study offers policy recommendations to support hawkers in overcoming current challenges, aligning with Malaysia's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to microbusinesses. This research aims to enhance the resilience and sustainability of hawkers, ensuring they can continue to thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

Ineffective corporate grievance mechanisms for palm oil estate workers: The case of Peninsular Malaysia (under review)

By Kar Yern Chin & Melati Nungsari

This research examines the working conditions in palm oil fields and among smallholders—individuals who own the land—in three Malaysian states: Johor, Negeri Sembilan, and Perak. The study evaluates the human rights practices in these areas and assesses how corporate ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) frameworks are implemented. It reveals that workers primarily rely on unions for addressing grievances, yet there is a lack of documented cases and effective resolutions. Existing corporate non-judicial grievance mechanisms (CGMs) are found to be ineffective in providing access to remedy, and there is a significant lack of transparency in handling grievance cases, raising questions about adherence to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The findings underscore the need for greater transparency between corporations and smallholders, highlighting that current mechanisms are insufficient. It suggests that improved education and awareness are necessary, particularly given existing language barriers and ineffective practices.

Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring workers have access to the resources and opportunities required for a fulfilling and dignified life. By focusing on social sustainability, both corporations and societies can work towards creating more stable and prosperous communities. ASB remains dedicated to researching and understanding these challenges, collaborating with government and corporate organizations to enhance ESG strategies and improve CGMs.

Improving Livelihoods for Independent Smallholders by Yield Intensification through Good Agricultural Practices

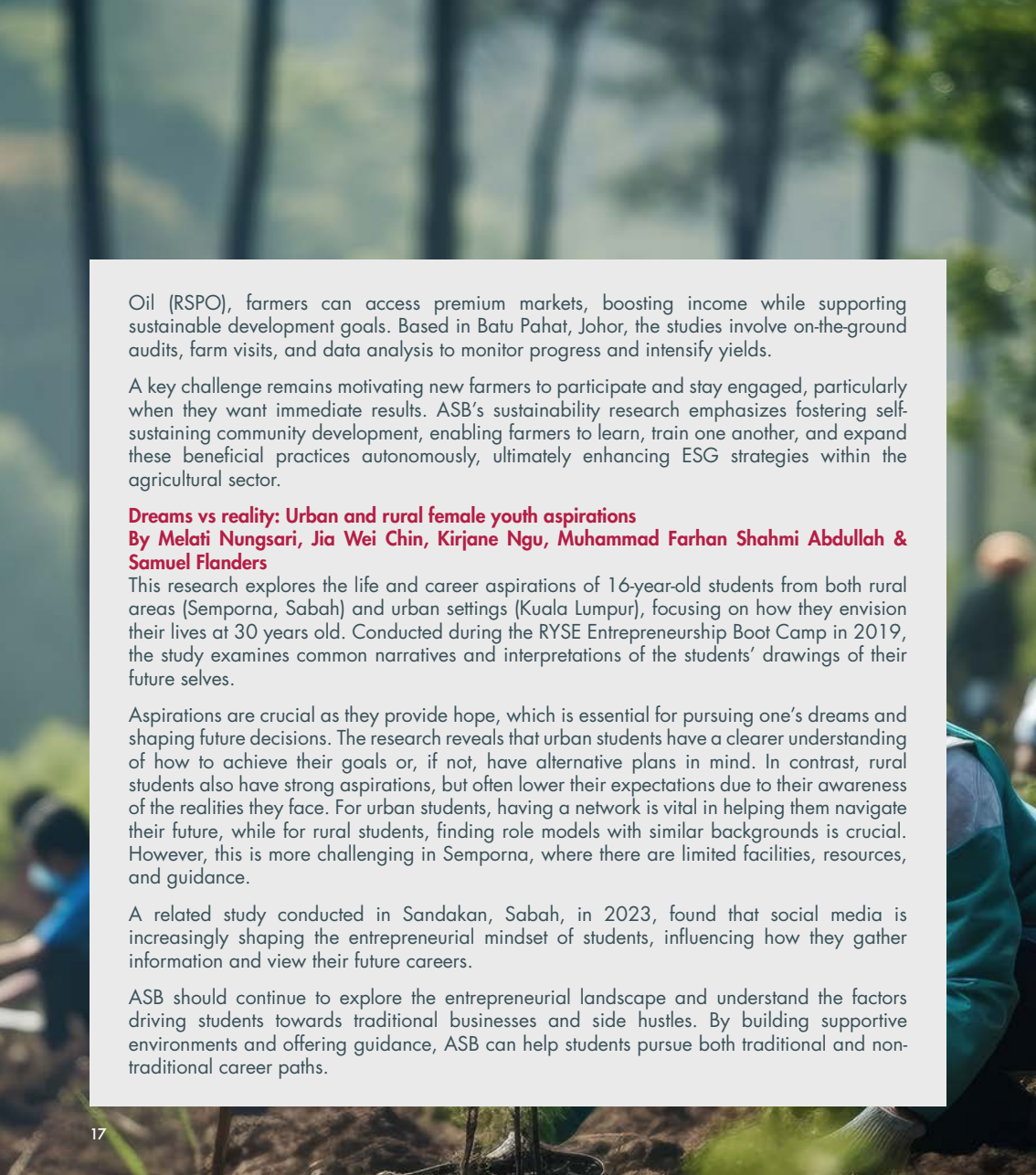
By Vasagi Ramachandran, Christopher Donough, Chua Soon Tat, Muhilan Ratnam, Rizal Mohamad, Saiful Azahar, Aiman Hashim, Hanafi Mansor, Thomas Oberthür, & Asad Ata

RISS Execution by an Independent Smallholder Association

By Asad Ata, Nursaiyidah Yusof, Nazifah Rosland, Vasagi Ramachandran, Nur Amanina Rashid, Zafiq Aziral Ali, Izzah Khairina, Aiman Hashim, & Saiful Azahar

Alongside addressing human rights and grievance mechanisms, these two papers by CSS focus on improving livelihoods through the implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) among Independent Smallholders (ISH). Many ISH lack access to critical information on sustainable farm management. While regulations such as NDPE (No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation) set guidelines, smallholders often struggle with limited knowledge on how to comply. This research addresses that gap by educating farmers on best practices for maximizing yield—the amount of palm oil fruit produced per unit of land area—and profitability in an environmentally friendly manner.

The CSS research team works closely with smallholders to teach sustainable practices, including the use of appropriate fertilizers, farm and waste management, proper storage and understanding local ecosystems. By meeting criteria for certifications such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm



Oil (RSPO), farmers can access premium markets, boosting income while supporting sustainable development goals. Based in Batu Pahat, Johor, the studies involve on-the-ground audits, farm visits, and data analysis to monitor progress and intensify yields.

A key challenge remains motivating new farmers to participate and stay engaged, particularly when they want immediate results. ASB's sustainability research emphasizes fostering self-sustaining community development, enabling farmers to learn, train one another, and expand these beneficial practices autonomously, ultimately enhancing ESG strategies within the agricultural sector.

Dreams vs reality: Urban and rural female youth aspirations

By Melati Nungsari, Jia Wei Chin, Kirjane Ngu, Muhammad Farhan Shahmi Abdullah & Samuel Flanders

This research explores the life and career aspirations of 16-year-old students from both rural areas (Semporna, Sabah) and urban settings (Kuala Lumpur), focusing on how they envision their lives at 30 years old. Conducted during the RYSE Entrepreneurship Boot Camp in 2019, the study examines common narratives and interpretations of the students' drawings of their future selves.

Aspirations are crucial as they provide hope, which is essential for pursuing one's dreams and shaping future decisions. The research reveals that urban students have a clearer understanding of how to achieve their goals or, if not, have alternative plans in mind. In contrast, rural students also have strong aspirations, but often lower their expectations due to their awareness of the realities they face. For urban students, having a network is vital in helping them navigate their future, while for rural students, finding role models with similar backgrounds is crucial. However, this is more challenging in Semporna, where there are limited facilities, resources, and guidance.

A related study conducted in Sandakan, Sabah, in 2023, found that social media is increasingly shaping the entrepreneurial mindset of students, influencing how they gather information and view their future careers.

ASB should continue to explore the entrepreneurial landscape and understand the factors driving students towards traditional businesses and side hustles. By building supportive environments and offering guidance, ASB can help students pursue both traditional and non-traditional career paths.

Interviews



"The methodology we used for this research involved asking the students to draw themselves at 30 years old. We did this to reduce the reliance on vocabulary and to understand what is on their minds through drawings. This approach helps mitigate the power imbalance present during interviews, where they might give answers they think we want to hear. So, we use drawing to empower them – which is what RYSE is all about."

- Jia Wei Chin, ARC and RYSE Researcher



"Research on social sustainability is important, whether it involves hawkers or laborers in the palm oil industry. Understanding past labor practices and policies, and how they have been formed, helps shed light and provide security for these workers. They are the foundation of businesses and must be treated fairly."

- Kar Yern Chin, ARC Researcher



"Many of these farmers are elderly and lack knowledge about new techniques to increase their income and yield from oil palm, which is a major source of various products. It's essential to continue raising awareness and improving their livelihoods. Public support and knowledge are needed, as these farmers are the ones actively producing the fruits and practicing sustainable methods."

- Vasagi Ramachandran, CSS Senior Researcher

Supporting underprivileged communities is crucial as it helps bridge gaps in social equity and provides opportunities for marginalized groups to participate fully in economic and social activities. Incorporating social sustainability into business practices also aligns with broader social responsibility goals and can lead to meaningful and lasting impact. It is essential for creating a balanced and just society where economic success goes hand in hand with the enhancement of human welfare and community development.



Yield intensification and
yield taking



ISH study trip to Sime Darby
Plantation Academy at
Pulau Carey



Entrepreneurs at the bazaar
in ASB



Students presenting at
the RYSE Sandakan Boot
Camp 2024



Students at the RYSE
Sandakan Boot Camp 2024



RYSE Semporna
Boot Camp 2019



**Meet the
Team**



Research Office

The ASB Research Office is pivotal in supporting and advancing ASB's research efforts. It serves as the primary liaison between ASB and research stakeholders, including funders, corporate partners, and other universities.

Additionally, as the central administrator and coordinator of ASB's research centers and projects, the Research Office is responsible for seeking opportunities and collaborations with the public sector, private sector, and academia.

Beyond administration, the Research Office coordinates the dissemination of research findings and actively engages with the broader research community to promote relevant and impactful research in Malaysia and beyond.





Research Centers

ASB's research centers conduct impactful research in emerging markets, business strategies, technology, and sustainability. Together, they foster innovation in the business landscape. There are currently four research centers in ASB.

1. The Center for Sustainable Small-owners (CSS)

The Center for Sustainable Small-owners (CSS) was established by funding from Procter & Gamble (P&G) in 2018 to deliver on its Ambition 2030 goals through the P&G smallholders initiative.

CSS aims to empower and improve the livelihoods of smallholders for oil palm through certification, compliance, training, and the implementation of sustainable and good agricultural practices.

CSS is coordinated by Professor Asad Ata



Dr Asad at Diffusion on
GAP awareness training



2. Center for Technology, Strategy & Sustainability (CTSS)

CTSS is a leading research center, empowered by Sapura Energy, positioning itself at the forefront of research focused on business strategies, technology, and the socio-political dynamics of emerging markets.

CTSS is coordinated by Professor Renato Lima de Oliveira



Dr Renato presenting at CTSS
Energy Transition Workshop



3. ASEAN Research Centre (ARC) & Rapid Youth Success Entrepreneurship/Employability (RYSE)

The ASEAN Research Center (ARC), endowed by Maybank, positions itself as the intellectual hub in Southeast Asia. The center focuses on impactful research about emerging markets in the ASEAN region.

Rapid Youth Success Entrepreneurship/Employability (RYSE) is a Malaysian research and social outreach project that empowers Malaysian youth through entrepreneurship and employability programmes. As part of ARC, RYSE aims to promote upward mobility and to lower youth unemployment rates, as well as expose, upskill and support youth through various programmes.

ARC and RYSE is coordinated by Professor Melati Nungsari



Dr Melati at ASB-UNHCR
Refugee Event



4. Central Banking Research Center (CBRC)*

CBRC is a newly established research center in ASB. The CBRC serves as a research platform for its fellows and affiliates, providing a venue for central bankers, scholars, and graduate students to conduct research aligned with its mission. The center fosters knowledge exchange among academics and practitioners through conferences, seminars, workshops, and public lectures.

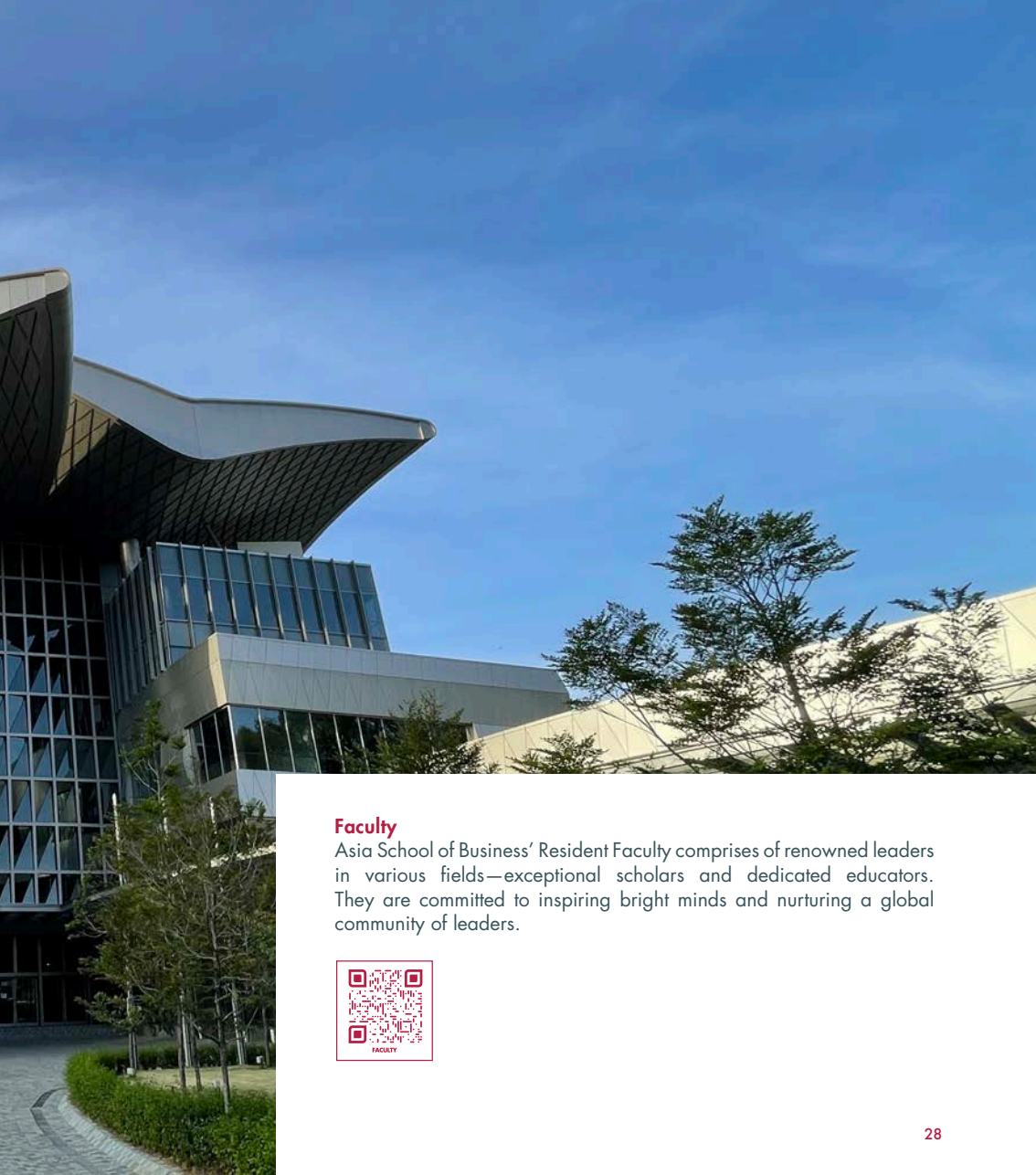
CBRC is coordinated by Professor Ozer Karagedikli

**CBRC will be renamed as Tun Ismail Ali Center of Excellence in 2025.*









Faculty

Asia School of Business' Resident Faculty comprises of renowned leaders in various fields—exceptional scholars and dedicated educators. They are committed to inspiring bright minds and nurturing a global community of leaders.





**Ongoing
Work**



“Striking a Balance: Harnessing AI’s Potential without Diminishing the Worth of Hard Work”

Alexander Eng

Assistant Professor, Asia School of Business in Collaboration with MIT Sloan

Sam Yam

Professor, National University of Singapore

In the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), understanding its impact on how we live, work, and play is crucial. Alexander Eng, Assistant Professor at the Asia School of Business, in collaboration with Sam Yam, Professor at the National University of Singapore, explore how AI is reshaping the nature of work. Their research focuses on the impact of AI on the perceived value of hard work and has found that, although AI undeniably enhances efficiency and the objective quality of work, it can make people feel that their own contributions and accomplishments are less significant. As AI continues to revolutionize the workplace, this ongoing research contributes to ASB’s commitment to sustainable business practices by exploring how organizations can leverage AI’s efficiency. It seeks to maintain the important and inherent value that people gain from their hard work and skill development, balancing technology with the fulfillment of human labor.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, ASB hopes to pursue its research efforts in sustainability - by integrating efforts across its research centers, faculty, and increasing public engagement. In business sustainability, ASB will be exploring innovative models and practices that balance profitability with environmental and social responsibility. For energy sustainability, our research will continue to focus on renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, and policies promoting clean energy. Social sustainability research will continue to address community development, equitable access to resources, and social justice. We hope that our collaborative projects with industry partners, government agencies, and community organizations will amplify the impact, ensuring that our research findings translate into actionable solutions for real-world challenges.





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Published by
Asia School of Business
(DU046(W))

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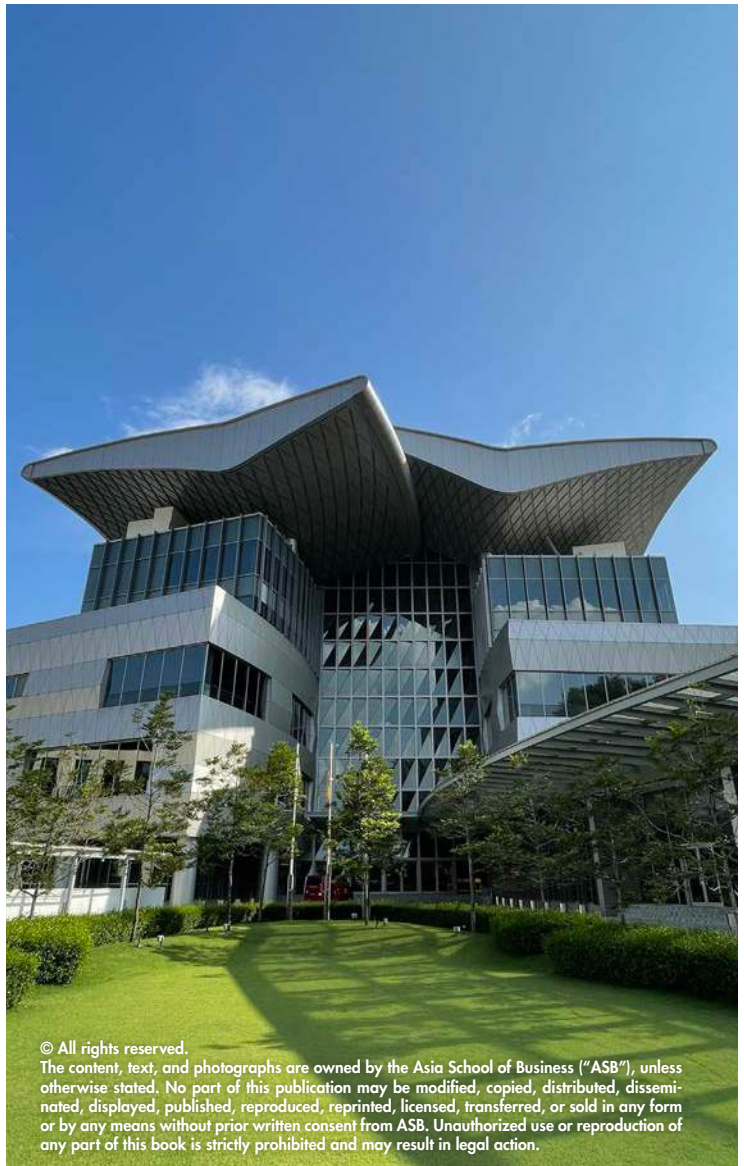
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