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IECEx event in Brunei attracts wide interest and large audience

More than 180 experts in the 'Ex' industry from nine countries attended the IEC Industry Symposium on 30-31 January 2008 in Seria, Brunei Darussalam, held under the auspices of the IEC System for certification to standards relating to equipment for use in explosive atmospheres ([IECEx](#)).

The Symposium, which was hosted by Brunei Asia Pacific Shell Learning Hub (BAPSLH), was organized by the Institute of Engineering and Technology ([IET](#)) [Brunei network](#) in collaboration with the IEC Regional Centre for Asia-Pacific ([IEC-APRC](#)). The event had been initiated by the Brunei National Standards Technical Committee (TECO Electrical) with the support of the Energy Division at the Prime Minister's Office, and the Construction Planning & Research Unit of the Brunei Ministry of Development.

Dignitaries opening the event were Haji Salleh Bostaman Bin Haji Zainal Abidin, Brunei Shell's Asset Director, and Yang Mulai Haji Ismail Bin Pehin Orange Kaya Pekerma Setia Dato Paduka Hj Hashim, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Energy Division at the Prime Minister's Office. The technical proceedings were opened by Dennis Chew from the IEC's Singapore office, who provided an overview of the Commission's work, and Chris Agius, Executive Secretary of IECEx, who underlined the importance and benefits of the IEC 'Ex' scheme.

The programme included specialists from the 'Ex' industry from Brunei Darussalam itself as well as Australia, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the UK. They represented the entire gamut of interested 'Ex' parties, including users, repairers, manufacturing, testing & certifying bodies, Ex Repair and Overhaul Workshops, as well as standards and regulatory bodies.

During the symposium, challenges on the determination of hazardous area classification and application of Ex equipment were presented and discussed. References were also made to the basis of risk management to ensure personal safety and technical integrity. The symposium was very interactive and constructive with questioning from the floor, clarifications, and proposed solutions to tackle unresolved issues from the two-day event. There were many discussions on the maintenance of asset integrity and certified Ex equipment, repair and overhaul of Ex equipment, staff development and competency assessment.

A presentation on the European 'ATEX' directives and International Standards provided attendees with a clearer picture on the various requirements. In presenting the manufacturer's perspective, Thorsten Arnhold from Stahl in Germany, commented on the preference to opt for a one-international-standard approach such as IECEx, rather than providing test certificates for each of the individual countries.



The positive outcome of the Symposium was Brunei's commitment to seek to participate actively in IEC TC 31 work and to adopt IEC TC 31 International Standards nationally. IEC membership beckons.