



MINISTRY OF ENERGY
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL FORESTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OF MALAYSIA 2021-2025





MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SOCIAL FORESTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OF Malaysia 2021-2025

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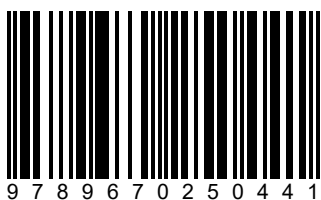


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Foreword

The establishment of the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 is timely to further kick off the agenda in reducing vulnerability, building resilience, and enhancing rural livelihoods by empowering communities and recognising the multiple values and functions of forests. This plan provides a holistic social forestry approach that could provide a solution to benefit both the indigenous peoples, local communities and the government in conserving the natural environment.



Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan salam sejahtera.

In the last few decades, forest management in Malaysia has gradually changed from the traditional approach of managing forest resources for timber production to that of multiple uses of forests. Forest ecosystem has increasingly been recognised to provide important support in socio-economic and cultural life.

Poverty, whether absolute or relative, remains to plague forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities. Therefore, the government has been giving increasing attention to the social aspects of forestry development. Social forestry practices have been expanded to other activities such as rehabilitation of coastal areas, ecotourism, recreational parks, establishing nurseries, and carrying out education programmes to raise awareness among the indigenous peoples and local communities. These initiatives aim to uplift the community livelihoods, improve the productivity of degraded land and forest cover, and raise the public awareness on the importance of conserving biodiversity.

It is my fervent hope that the vision of having an effective social forestry practice in Malaysia for the well-being of the people will be achieved through the implementation of this strategic plan.

Takiyuddin bin Hassan

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

Message

The strategic plan sets the direction for the nation's social forestry implementation for the next five years. It will also supports the implementation of the existing national policies and legislation, in particular the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, the 12th Malaysia Plan, the Malaysia Policy on Forestry and the National Policy on Biological Diversity 2016-2025.



Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan salam sejahtera.

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 is developed based on the socio-economic needs of the three regions: Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. It is in line with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 to make Malaysia as a nation that achieve sustainable growth along with fair and equitable distribution across income groups, ethnicities, regions, and supply chains.

Malaysia's efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of the indigenous peoples and local communities began in the early 1950s. Even though there have been past implementations of social forestry related projects, there was a lack of direction in the social forestry development, particularly at the national level. Therefore, formulating a national social forestry definition, vision and mission under this plan has finally overcome the plaguing issue. Hence, 26 strategies and 70 action plans have been drawn by the three regions to complement four strategic thrusts, namely Policy, Legislation and Governance, Awareness and Capacity Building, Financial Instruments, and Forest Resources Management.

I would like to thank everyone involved in formulating the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025. I hope that this strategic plan will be a helpful guide for implementing social forestry programmes in Malaysia.

Zurinah binti Pawanteh

Secretary General

Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources

Acknowledgements

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 was prepared with the support and close cooperation from the following agencies and organisations.

Government departments and agencies

- Department of Agriculture Sarawak
- Forest Department Sarawak
- Forest Research Institute Malaysia
- Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia
- Ministry of Rural Development
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Sarawak
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Urban Development, Sarawak
- Natural Resources and Environment Board, Sarawak
- Natural Resources Office, Sabah
- Sabah Forestry Department
- Sabah Native Affairs Department
- Sabah Wildlife Department
- Sarawak Biodiversity Centre
- Sarawak State Planning Unit
- Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation, and
- Sarawak Tourism Board

Universities

- Universiti Malaysia Sabah
- Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
- Universiti Putra Malaysia, and
- Universiti Teknologi MARA

Non-governmental and non-profit organisations

- Borneo Resources Institute Malaysia, Sarawak
- Forever Sabah
- Friends of Earth Malaysia
- Friends of Kuala Gula Mangrove
- Indigenous Peoples Network of Malaysia
- Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association, Sabah
- Land Empowerment Animals People
- Malaysian Nature Society

- Non-Timber Forest Product Exchange Programme
- Partners of Community Organisations in Sabah Trust
- Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association
- Ridge to Reef
- Sabah Social Forestry Working Group
- Sahabat Alam Tampik Janda Baik Association
- Sarawak Dayak Iban Association
- South East Asia Rainforest Research Partnership
- Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture
- World Wide Fund for Nature Sabah

Acronyms

B40	Bottom 40% of Malaysian household income
CBET	Community-based ecotourism
CEPA	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
CF	Communal forest
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CSIU	Community Service Initiative Unit
FDPM	Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia
FDS	Forest Department Sarawak
FR	Forest Reserve
FRIM	Forest Research Institute Malaysia
IPLCs	Indigenous peoples and local communities
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organisation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JFM	Joint forest management
KeTSA	Kementerian Tenaga dan Sumber Asli (Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources)
LC	Local communities
MESCOT	Model for Ecologically Sustainable Community Conservation and Tourism
NCR	Native customary rights
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
NSFWGC	National Social Forestry Working Group Committee
PFE	Permanent Forest Estate
PRF	Permanent reserved forest
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	Social forestry
SFD	Sabah Forestry Department
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SOP	Standard operating procedure
TPA	Totally protected areas

Strategic Framework

This strategic framework sets out social forestry goals and activities in Malaysia for 2021-2025. The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 prioritises seven principles, with four main strategic thrusts as accelerators. It seeks to leverage the power of various stakeholders as a means of implementation and people engagement. The strategic plan focuses on accelerating implementation and achieving a greater impact.

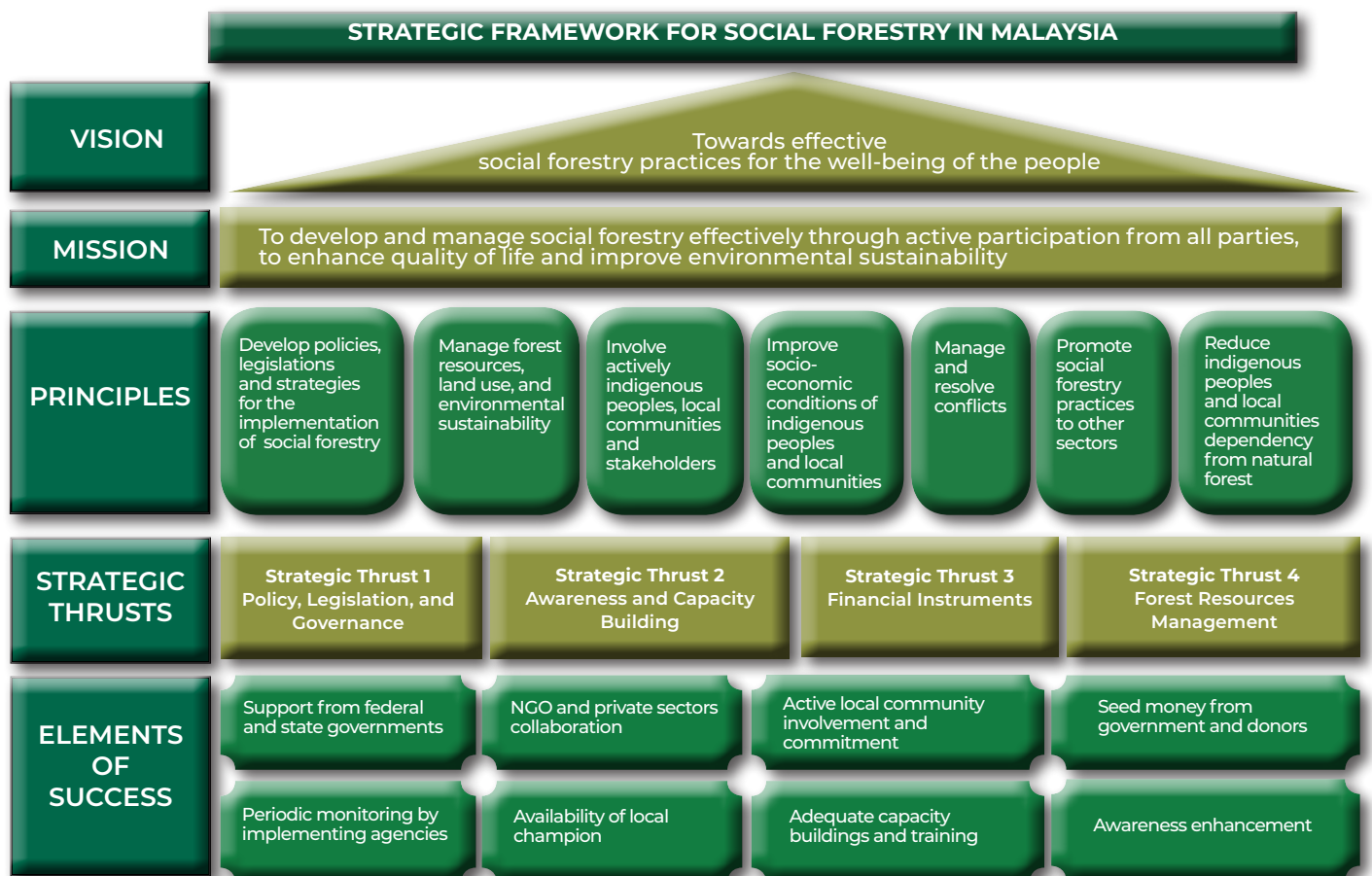


Figure 1 Strategic Framework for Social Forestry in Malaysia 2021-2025

Social Forestry in Malaysia

Definition

Vision

Mission

Definition

Social forestry is the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities on their own initiatives or in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in forest management from the aspects of social, economic, culture and environment for sustainable livelihoods.

Vision

Towards effective social forestry practices for the well-being of the people.

Mission

To develop and manage social forestry effectively through active participation from all parties, enhance the quality of life, and improve environmental sustainability.



View of Gunung Mulu National Park from a nearby village
Photo by Forest Research Institute Malaysia

Executive Summary

In the last few decades, forest management in Malaysia has gradually changed from the traditional approach of managing forest resources for timber production to that of multiple uses of forests. Amidst this change, there is also increasing awareness among policy makers and forest managers that a substantial proportion of the national population comprises the indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) (close to 14%)¹ who are still very much dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods.

The forest ecosystem is increasingly recognised to providing important social, economic, and cultural life support. It also ensures environmental stability and ecological balance, thus playing a special role in regulating climate change.

Malaysia's efforts to formulate the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 address its obligations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1993 - an international legally-binding treaty - with three main goals: conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. The strategic plan is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2016-2030.

Malaysia has been giving increasing attention to the social aspects of forestry development. Poverty, whether absolute or relative, remains to plague forest-dependent IPLCs. To alleviate poverty among villagers in these communities, various social forestry related efforts have been taken by the Malaysian Federal and State Governments, particularly through Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah Forestry Department, and Forest Department Sarawak. The Malaysian government's focus is to continue to uplift the living standards of these communities, which are also part of the B40 (bottom 40%) income group.

Even though there have been implementations of social forestry-related projects over the last few decades, there is a general lack of direction at the national level. While the three regions in Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak) have their definitions of social forestry, no definition exists at the national level. Formulating a national definition and strategy for social forestry is important for nation-building, incorporating policies, laws, projects, financing, and capacity building efforts to address national issues.

Recognising the absence of a national social forestry strategic plan, three regional and one national workshops on social forestry were held in 2016. The objectives of the workshops are to identify the issues and challenges, harmonise a definition of social forestry, and propose a social forestry strategic plan of action. In the concluding national workshop, a consensus was reached on the national definition, vision, and mission of social forestry. Based on the common understanding, the three regions outlined their strategic plan at the regional level. The strategic plan was finalised in 2021 after discussions with representatives from the three forestry departments: Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak.

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 consists of four strategic thrusts. The first thrust relates to policies, legislations and governance focusing on land-use and communal forest. The second thrust concerns awareness and capacity building, including education, partnership, expertise engagement, database, and social forestry model development. The third thrust covers financial instruments to ensure secured, continuous financing. The fourth thrust is on sustainable management of forest resources to uplift socio-economic livelihood and benefit-sharing.

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 provides the direction and framework for implementing social forestry programmes in Malaysia, and is aligned with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, the 12th Malaysia Plan, and other related policies and legislations.

Principles of Social Forestry Strategic Plan

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 aims to achieve the following:

1

Develop policies, legislation, and strategies for the implementation of social forestry in Malaysia

2

Manage forest resources, land-use and environmental sustainability

3

Involve actively indigenous peoples, local communities, and stakeholders in forest management

4

Improve the socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples and local communities

5

Manage and resolve conflicts

6

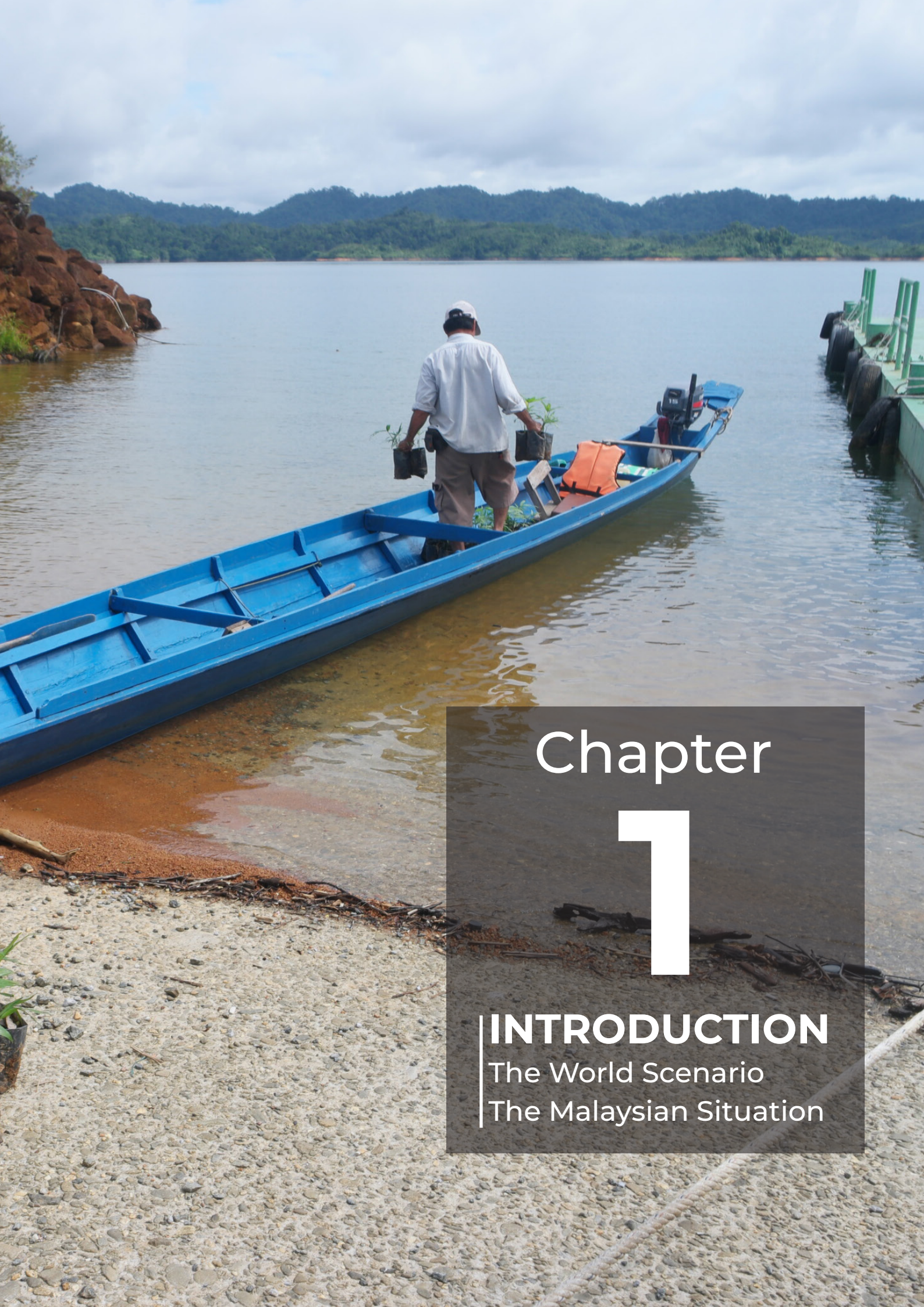
Promote social forestry practices to other sectors

7

Reduce indigenous peoples and local communities dependency on natural forest



Local community delivering rattan seedlings to one of the social forestry sites in Ulu Menyang, Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Chapter

1

INTRODUCTION

The World Scenario

The Malaysian Situation

Chapter 1 Introduction

The World Scenario

The 21st century is witnessing tumultuous changes in the Earth's biosphere, as the human population grows amidst declining natural resources and debilitating effects of climate change.

The world population of 7.6 billion in 2018 forecasted to grow to 9.8 billion by 2050. The corresponding global demand for food is estimated to grow by 50% between 2018 and 2050 (FAO 2018). This growth would result in further deforestation due to the conversion of forest land for agricultural and livestock use.

The Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), coordinated by FAO, found that the world's forest areas have decreased from 31.6% in 1990 to 30.6% in 2015 (FAO 2018).

In general, land-use changes result in the loss of valuable natural habitats, land degradation, soil erosion, decrease in clean water, and the release of carbon into the atmosphere.

This development threatens the livelihoods of peoples, especially the forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and the variety of life on our planet. One of the greatest challenges is increasing agricultural production and improving food security without compromising the forests.

From a global perspective, sustainable forest management is one of the solutions to this problem. Forest ecosystems support social, economic, and cultural aspects of human life and mitigate climate change by ensuring environmental stability and ecological balance.

The Malaysian Situation

About 13.6% of Malaysia's population is dependent on forests (Table 1). This group, mostly indigenous peoples, bears the brunt of climate change and is vulnerable to socio-economic impacts caused by ineffective management of natural resources.

Absolute poverty is mostly eradicated in Malaysia as its poverty incidence is currently less than 1%, found mainly in remote areas of the country. The current focus is on the B40 group, including the forest-dependent IPLCs which continue to sustain their daily living from forest resources.

Table 1 Overview and key statistics of three regions in Malaysia (2018)

	Peninsular Malaysia	Sabah	Sarawak	Malaysia
Population (2017)*	25,302,700	3,953,500	2,766,300	32,022,500
Land area (hectares)*	13,178,600	7,390,400	12,445,000	33,052,400
Population density (per hectare)	1.9	0.5	0.2	1.0
Forested area (hectares)	5,758,261	4,767,448	7,747,777	18,273,486
Calculated % of forest/land area	43.62%	64.51%	62.25%	55.31%
Indigenous population (2017)**	198,000	2,233,100	1,932,600	4,363,700
Calculated % of indigenous population	0.8	56.5	69.9	13.6

Source: *Department of Statistics Malaysia, <https://www.dosm.gov.my>

**International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA),
<https://www.iwgia.org/en/malaysia>

Since its formation in 1963, Malaysia has been giving increasing attention to social forestry. The development of social forestry in Malaysia results from the increasing awareness and recognition that the rural poor living within and adjacent to the forests have been sustaining themselves with forest resources for many generations. They have been using their customary land, legally recognised or implicitly respected, even before the enactment of land laws.

As production is generally low and the market is relatively far from these populations, traditional use of this land has been associated with rural poverty. Poverty, absolute or relative, remains to plague these forest-dependent IPLCs.

Recognising the need to alleviate poverty among the IPLCs living within and adjacent to forest reserves, social forestry-related efforts have been made by the Malaysian Federal and State Governments, the private sectors, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In the early 1990s, with support from the Federal Government, the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah Forestry Department, and Forest Department Sarawak initiated special social forestry projects to uplift the living standards of the rural poor.

Over the years, despite past implementations of social forestry-related projects, direction for social forestry development is generally lacking, particularly at the national level. In 2013, the following efforts were made by the three regional forest departments, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources with support from the ASEAN Social Forestry Network, Centre for People and Forests, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Table 2: Social forestry-based programmes that led to the establishment of the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025

Programmes	Year
Assessment of Best Practices from Selected Social Forestry Sites in Malaysia	2013
National Workshop on Social Forestry and Climate Change 2013 with the theme “Social Forestry and Related Initiatives”	October 2013
National Training on Social Forestry Issues and Good Practices	October 2013
National Training on Social Forestry Issues, Conflict Management, and Local Engagement	December 2013

These events revealed that while Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak, each has its definition of social forestry, none exist at the national level. Recognising the absence of a national social forestry strategic plan, the three regions met in 2015 to discuss a roadmap for social forestry in Malaysia. Subsequently, in 2016, three regional and one national workshops on social forestry were held to formulate a national social forestry definition and roadmap with participation from government agencies, NGOs, IPLCs, and the private sectors. A consensus was reached on the national definition of social forestry with vision and mission.

A National Social Forestry Working Group Committee (NSFWGC) meeting was conducted in 2017. During the meeting, FRIM was requested to document inputs on social forestry programmes in the three regions.

Continuous discussions were held between 2017 and 2021 to enhance and update documentation and inputs on social forestry programmes in the three regions and other stakeholders. The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021–2025 was drafted in 2018 and revised to meet the changing needs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on common understanding, each region outlined its strategic plan at a regional level. The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021–2025 was finalised in 2021.

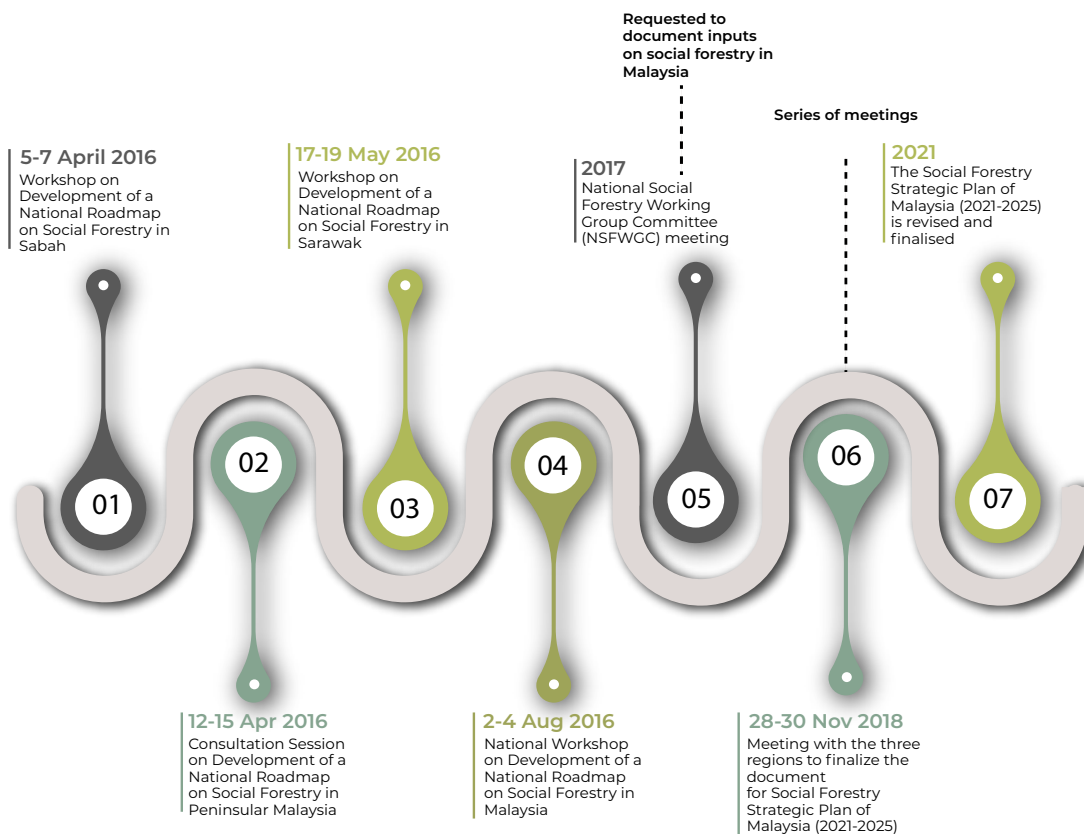


Figure 2 Timeline of events leading to the establishment of Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025



Ulu Tampik Waterfall is one of social forestry sites in Peninsular Malaysia
Photo by Forest Research Institute Malaysia

Chapter

2

SOCIAL FORESTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Shared Prosperity Vision 2030

12th Malaysia Plan 2021-2025

11th Malaysia Plan 2016-2020

Malaysia Policy on Forestry

National Policy on Biological Diversity 2016-2025

National Forestry Act 1984

Forestry Policy of Peninsular Malaysia

Sabah Forest Policy 2018

Sarawak Forest Policy 2019

Forest Enactment 1968, Sabah

Forest Ordinance 2015, Sarawak

Chapter 2

Social Forestry in the Context of a National Development

The establishment of the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025 will support the policies and legislation below:



Shared Prosperity Vision 2030

Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 aims to make Malaysia achieve sustainable economic growth and fair, equitable, and inclusive economic distribution across all income groups, ethnicities, regions, and supply chains.

Principle 15.5 in Guiding Principle 15 emphasises “strengthening environmental conservation and natural resources in development planning.”

KEGA15 of Strategic Thrust 2 proposes “agrotourism and ecotourism as tourism-integrated activities under Key Economic Growth Activities. These activities encourage efforts to improve local content and business, provide benefit to environmental rehabilitation and enhance health services as well as celebrate Malaysia’s cultural diversity.”



12th Malaysia Plan 2021-2025

Strategy B3, Priority Area B, Chapter 8, Theme 3 aims to ensure and strengthen sustainable utilisation and equitable benefits from natural resources utilisation.

“Natural resources must be sustainably utilised throughout the whole Diversifying Conservation Funding value chain to optimise their values. The benefits from utilising these resources must also be distributed equitably among different segments of society. In this respect, efforts will strengthen the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, enhance mineral resources management, diversify conservation funding, and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits. These initiatives will ensure benefit sharing and sustainable use of natural resources, in line with Goals 2, 14 and 15 of the 2030 Agenda.”

“In order to promote sustainable tourism, an assessment on the carrying capacity of terrestrial and marine tourism sites will be conducted. Industry players will be encouraged to adopt green practices to ensure the tourism activities are sustainable.”

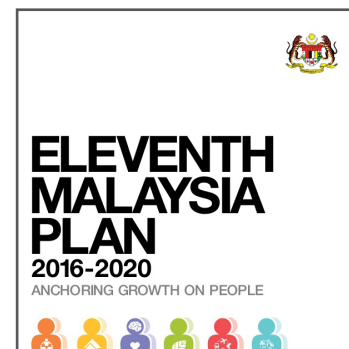
Strategy C1 and C3 under Priority Area C, Chapter 8, Theme 3, focuses on strengthening environmental governance and instilling a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

11th Malaysia Plan 2016-2020

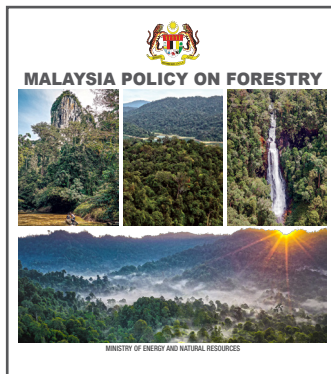
Strategy C2 of Strategic Thrust 6 states, “Enhancing alternative livelihood for indigenous and local communities by involving them in biodiversity conservation and empowering them for alternative economic opportunities.”

“The Eleventh Plan reaffirms the Government’s commitment to a vision of growth that is anchored on the prosperity and well-being of its rakyat.”

“The peoples’ economy will be given priority, reinforcing the Government’s commitment to bring further development to the people by enriching their lives, providing people dignity, and



uplifting their potential to partake in the prosperity that is generated. All segments of society must benefit from the country's economic prosperity to create an advanced economy and inclusive nation by 2020."

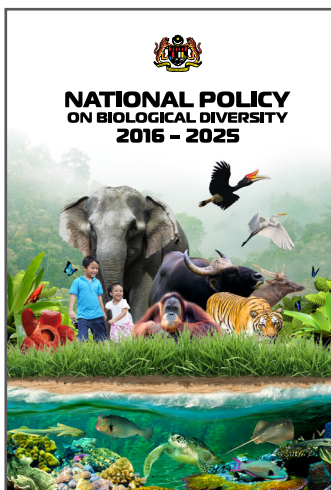


Malaysia Policy on Forestry

The Malaysia Policy on Forestry aims to manage the permanent reserved forest to maximise social, economic, and environmental benefits in the nation's interest and in line with the principles of sustainable management.

The policy states its goal to "increase the involvement of local communities to actively participate in various forestry development projects and maintain their involvement in forest farming programmes."

"Develop a community forestry programme to meet the needs of society both inside and outside the city."



National Policy on Biological Diversity 2016-2025

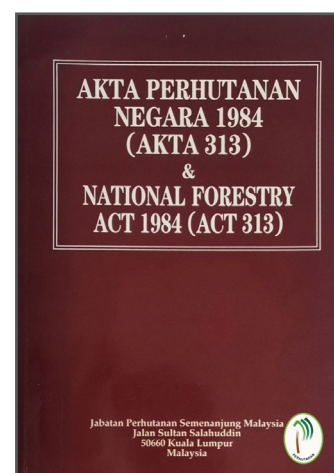
Malaysia is committed to conserving its biological diversity, promoting its sustainable use, and ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of biological resources.

Goal 1 Target 2 states that "by 2025, the contribution of indigenous people and local communities, civil society, and the private sectors to the conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity will have increased significantly."

National Forestry Act 1984

The National Forestry Act aims to provide for the administration, management, and conservation of forests and forestry development within the States of Malaysia and for connected purposes.

“In exercising the powers under section 45, the State Authority shall give due consideration to the necessity of protecting the forest and the environment and to the recreational and other needs of the public.” (Section 46).



Forestry Policy of Peninsular Malaysia

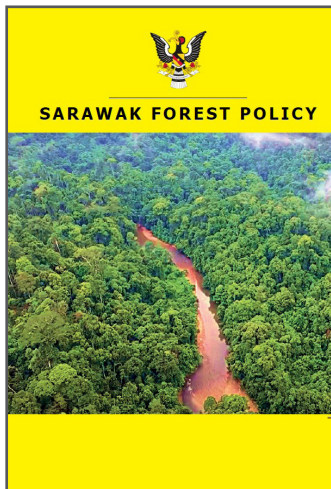
The Forestry Policy of Peninsular Malaysia provides directions to the forestry sector in Peninsular Malaysia, enable it to strengthen its role in supporting economic growth and also providing prosperous life stability to the people. Emphasis towards forest management, development, conservation, and restoration will be sustainably given in tandem with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 initiatives.



Sabah Forest Policy 2018

Social forestry is well supported and promoted by the Sabah Forestry Department. The Sabah Forest Policy 2018 consists in Thrust 5: Social Welfare, promoted social forestry with the objective of strengthening the involvement of local communities in the implementation of forest management activities. In this Thrust, there are two strategies outlined, namely: (1) to recognise community involvement in forest management in forest management activities and (2) to encourage indigenous participation in the forestry industry.





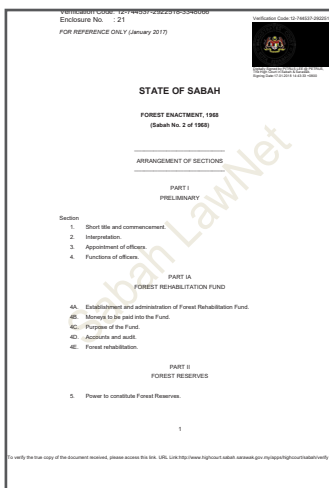
Sarawak Forest Policy 2019

The Sarawak Forest Policy aims to manage permanent forest estates that benefit the economy, society, and environment under the principles of sustainable forest management.

One of the objectives of the Policy is to foster community and urban forestry programmes for community well-being through ecotourism, education, and training.

Strategic Thrust 8 on Social and Urban Forestry states that the “social forestry programme is beneficial to the communities that depend on forests as a source of livelihood. Urban forest programme seeks to improve the communities’ quality of life while providing recreational facilities and serve as ‘green lung’ to the cities”.

Forest Enactment 1968, Sabah



The Sabah’s Forest Enactment 1968 replaces the law relating to the preservation of forests and the regulation and control of dealing with forest produce. This enactment provides power to exercise native rights while practising social forestry programmes.

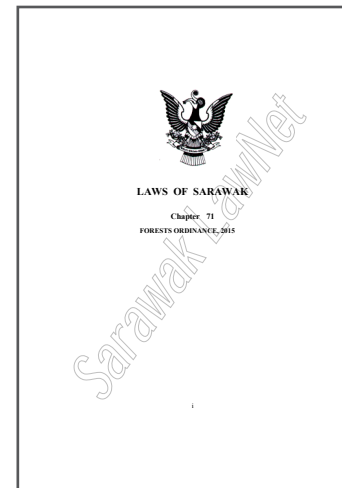
“Subject to any provisions of the rules prohibiting or regulating the cutting or removal of any specified form of forest produce or prohibiting or regulating the cutting or removal of all or any forest produce in any specified locality, nothing in this Enactment shall be deemed to prohibit the cutting and removal from State land which is not for the time being in the lawful occupation of some person or, with the permission of the owner thereof, from alienated land, by any native of any timber, atap or other forest produce which may be necessary – (a) for the construction or repair of a dwelling-house for the abode of himself and his family; (b) for the

construction of fences and temporary huts on any land lawfully occupied by him; (c) for the construction or repair of native boats; (d) for the upkeep of his fishing stakes and landing places; (e) for firewood to be consumed for his domestic purposes; or (f) for the construction and upkeep of clinics, schools, community halls, places of worship, bridges, and any work for the common benefit of the native inhabitants of his kampung.” (Section 41: Saving of Native Rights).

Forest Ordinance 2015, Sarawak

The Forest Ordinance 2015, Sarawak provides power to constitute a communal forest. Part IV of the ordinance touches on all laws related to the constitution of communal forest in Sarawak.

“The native community shall undertake to maintain the communal forest in a condition of sustained yield in such a manner as the Director or any forest officer authorised by him may direct, and for this purpose, the Director or any forest officer authorised by him may regulate the method and extent of any felling or other operations.” (Section 36: Community to Maintain Communal Forest).





Local community restoring degraded riparian in Kampung Batu Putih, Sabah
Photo by MESCOT/KOPEL

A group of people are engaged in social forestry practices in a forest clearing. In the center, a man wearing a white t-shirt with a colorful graphic, grey trousers, a blue headband, and glasses stands holding a long wooden staff. To his left, a man in a black shirt and yellow rubber boots is crouching, working on the ground. To the right, a man in a white shirt and a black cap is standing, looking down. In the foreground, another person in a red shirt is crouching, working on the ground. The background is filled with lush green vegetation, including tall grasses and trees. The ground is dirt and covered with some dry leaves and twigs.

Chapter 3

SOCIAL FORESTRY PRACTICES IN MALAYSIA

Social Forestry Practices in General
Social Forestry Practices in Peninsular Malaysia
Social Forestry Practices in Sabah
Social Forestry Practices in Sarawak

Chapter 3

Social Forestry Practices in General

The social forestry practices differ among the three regions in Malaysia. It is generally given more emphasis in Sabah and Sarawak, where relatively more forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) are found. As shown in Table 1, less than 1% of the population in Peninsular Malaysia are indigenous peoples compared to 57% in Sabah and 70% in Sarawak.

In general, the social forestry practices in Malaysia include agroforestry, joint forest management (JFM), ecotourism, biodiversity conservation, forest restoration and rehabilitation, awareness-raising, capacity building, income generation, and infrastructure development.

Malaysia has played an active role in social forestry development at the international level. In 2014, Malaysia organised the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) 5th Conference and 8th Meeting with the theme “Enhancing Livelihood and Conservation Benefits from Social Forestry towards a Green ASEAN Community.”



The Asean Social Forestry Network Meeting and Conference at Kota Kinabalu, 2014
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Social Forestry Practices in Peninsular Malaysia

The social forestry initiatives in Peninsular Malaysia began in the 1950s from a small scale agroforestry practice for forest rehabilitation purposes. This practice is known as the taungya system. This practice was introduced in Mata Ayer Forest Reserve in Perlis, which involved planting cash crops, mainly hill paddy and tobacco, between rows of teak seedlings. Subsequently, it was further expanded to northern Perak with the planting of *Gmelina arborea* (yemane) intercropped with tobacco in an area of about 200 hectares.

The first Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia agroforestry project at a bigger scale was in Kenaboi, Gallah, and Setul forest reserves in Negeri Sembilan, covering an area of 780 hectares from 1968 to 1974. The project involved planting indigenous and exotic trees species, mainly *Shorea spp*, *Dryobalanops aromatica*, *Anthocephalus chinensis*, *Toona sureni*, *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Pinus spp.* and *Araucaria spp.* interrow with other agricultural cash crops such as banana, papaya, pineapple, chilli, pumpkin, maize, groundnut, sweet potato, watermelon, yam, and ginger.

The social forestry practices have expanded to other activities such as rehabilitation of coastal areas through the Tree Planting Programme with Mangroves and other Suitable Species along National Coastlines. The programme received participation from local communities and was conducted in several states in Peninsular Malaysia every year. Other social forestry practices in Peninsular Malaysia include community-based ecotourism in recreational parks, the establishment of nurseries by the local community, and awareness and education programmes. These practices were organised by government agencies, private sectors, and other stakeholders to raise awareness among IPLCs on social forestry.

The social forestry programmes implemented comprised of four main pillars:

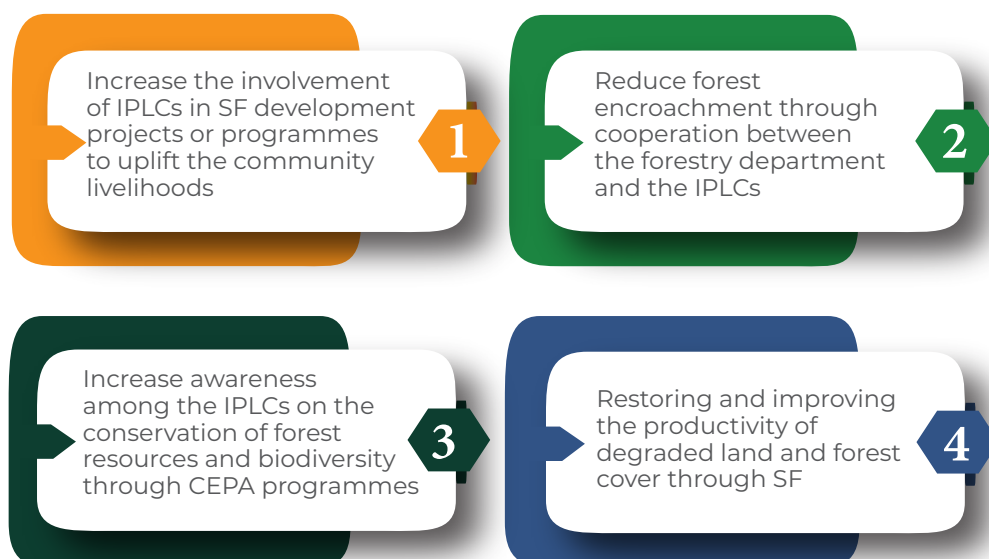


Figure 3 Pillars of social forestry in Peninsular Malaysia

Conservation of Mangrove Forest through the Involvement of Local Community in Kuala Gula, Perak (2005-present)

Kuala Gula is a fishing village located on the northern coast of Kuala Kurau, Kerian District, Perak. There are six permanent reserved forests adjacent to Kuala Gula with a total area of 11,304 hectares. The Perak State Forestry Department sustainably and strategically manages these forests through a 10-yearly Matang Mangrove Forest Management Plan. Kuala Gula has become a popular stopover habitat for migratory birds such as *Mycteria cinerea* (milky stork) and *Leptoptilos javanicus* (lesser adjutant), listed as vulnerable under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Realising the socio-economic and environmental importance of mangrove forests, the Kuala Gula community has taken the initiative to conserve and preserve the coastal area by establishing the Kuala Gula Mangrove Forest Friends Association in 2005. The association's main activity is planting trees in open mangrove areas. The tree planting activity involves the Kuala Gula community and includes volunteers from primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, private companies, NGOs, and government agencies.

To ensure the supply of mangrove seedlings is always sufficient, the Kuala Gula community established a Community Nursery Site. The Kuala Gula community collectively does nursery work. Members of the local community who carry out the work are paid an allowance by the Kuala Gula Mangrove Forest Friends Association. The operation of the nursery indirectly creates job opportunities and side income for the local community. The Kuala Gula community is also actively involved in raising awareness of the residents who participate in programmes continuously organised by the forestry department.

The Kuala Gula community have achieved multiple successes in preserving and conserving the mangrove forest. Among them are:

- ① Planted approximately one million mangrove trees in open areas;
- ② Produced forest-based local food products (such as jeruju tea, jeruju crackers, piai chips, berembang jam and api-api fruits);
- ③ Produced handicraft products from clamshells and snail shells; and
- ④ Increased local community monthly income between RM100 to RM300 for some households.



Local community transferring mangrove seedlings to be planted
Photo by Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia



Tree planting programme as one of social forestry activities conducted by local community in Kuala Gula, Perak
Photo by Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia

Perlis State Park Restoration Community Project (PSPResQ) and Perlis State Park Forest Guide (PSPFG), (2017-present)

Established in 1997 and gazetted in 2008, the Perlis State Park is the first state park established in Peninsular Malaysia. It is situated on the longest continuous range of limestone hills in the country, the Nakawan Range. The range is well-known for its heavily forested slopes, sheer cliff faces, streams, and extensive cave systems.

Some of the major attractions in the Perlis State Park include various caves such as Gua Kelam and Gua Wang Burma, located within the 500 million-year-old Setul limestone. The park consists of Mata Ayer Forest Reserve and Wang Mu Forest Reserve with about 5,000 hectares, providing living habitats for the unique stump-tail macaque and plants like ginger, ferns, and balsams.

To conserve the uniqueness of the Perlis State Park, FDPM, in collaboration with the Perlis Forestry Department, implements PSPResQ and PSPFG, aiming to raise awareness on the role of the local community in sustainable forest management that would indirectly enhance local livelihoods.



Project implementors - Perlis Forest Department and the local community of Kampung Wang Kelian

Photo by Perlis State Forestry Department

This project involves the local community from Kampung Wang Kelian, the only village close to the park, focusing on establishing a nursery, providing planting materials and equipment, and conducting nursery related training.



Nursery built with participation from local community near Wang Kelian Forest Reserve, Perlis
Photo by Perlis State Forestry Department

Community members are also trained as nature guides who provide study tour services to visitors.



Jungle trekking is one of the activities practiced in this social forestry site
Photo by Perlis State Forestry Department

Conservation of Ulu Tampik Waterfall, Lentang Forest Reserve, through Community-based Ecotourism Project in Janda Baik, Pahang, (2016-present)

Ulu Tampik Waterfall (UTW), located in Compartment 51, Lentang Forest Reserve, is managed by the Bentong District Forest Office, Pahang. It is known for its seven-tier waterfall and close vicinity (50 kilometres) to the metropolitan city of Kuala Lumpur. The UTW has become a popular recreational and ecotourism destination among visitors who enjoy outdoor activities. Along the way to the top of the falls, various flora and fauna can be found. Among the high-value timber in the UTW includes *Shorea platyclados* (meranti bukit), *Shorea leprosula* (meranti tembaga), *Shorea pauciflora* (meranti nemesu), *Ochanostachys amentacea* (petaling), *Blumeodendron tokbrai* (gaham badak), *Archidendron clypearia* (jering bukit) and many more. Fauna species that could be observed include *Macaca nemestrina* (southern pig-tailed macaque), *Lariscus insignis* (three-striped ground squirrel), *Halcyon gularis* (white-throated kingfisher), *Pycnonotus plumosus* (olive-winged bulbul), *Oriolus xanthonotus* (dark-throated oriole), *Enicurus ruficapillus* (chestnut-naped forktail), *Xenophrys longipes* (long-legged horned frog), and many more.



Local community conducting visit to Ulu Tampik Waterfall, Lentang Forest Reserve, Pahang in 2018
Photo by Forest Research Institute Malaysia

The villagers' interest in conserving the UTW has resulted in an ecotourism-based conservation programme implemented by the local community, with support from the Pahang State Forestry Department, Forest Research Institute Malaysia, and Tourism Pahang, in addition to international organisations such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and ASEAN Social Forestry Network Strategic Response Fund to create financial incentives for strengthening local community involvement in biodiversity conservation.

Activities carried out at the UTW include the following:

- ① Baseline research studies (2016);
- ② Stakeholder consultations at the local level (2018);
- ③ Establishment of JFM mechanisms through Sahabat Alam Tampik Janda Baik Association (2018); and
- ④ Workshops on ecotourism development and capacity building (2019).



Tree tagging for preparation of interpretation trail in Janda Baik, Bentong, Pahang in 2019
Photo by Forest Research Institute Malaysia

Ecotourism and Recreation Activities by Malim Gunung Dungun Association, (2016-present)

The Chemerong-Berembun-Lansir (CBL) climbing activity in Dungun, Terengganu, involves Mount Chemerong, Mount Berembun, and Mount Lansir. The total distance of the climbing route is approximately 13 kilometres. This activity is one of the attractions for domestic and foreign tourists to visit Terengganu. Based on the Terengganu State Forestry Department (TSFD), the CBL trail has received a total of 4,662 visitors in 2019 and 1,322 visitors in 2020. The decreasing number of visitors in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world.

The TSFD has implemented the Pilot Project of Mountain Guide, also known as Malim Gunung of CBL, from 2016 to resolve mountaineering issues and improve existing forest management such as enforcement and conservation. In 2018, TSFD granted a Use Permit to the Malim Gunung Dungun Association for an area of six hectares. The permit enables the association to manage matters related to the CBL mountain climbing, besides assisting the TSFD in the conservation, cleanliness, and safety of the mountain. Each climbing application will use the services provided by the Malim Gunung Dungun Association with a ratio of one Malim Gunung for a maximum of 12 climbers. However, to preserve the CBL's sustainability, climbers are limited to 60 people per day.

The Malim Gunung Dungun Association has also attended a basic rescue course organised by the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Team to ensure that all Malim Gunung are trained and can act quickly in an emergency. Each Malim Gunung is also provided with a first aid box during the climb. Most of the members of this association are volunteer fire fighters.



A group of local guides trained as Malim Gunung
Photo by Terengganu State Forestry Department



Local community trained as nature guide assisting visitors while going downhill the Chemerong-Berembun-Langsir trail
Photo by Terengganu State Forestry Department



Chemerong Waterfall, major attraction spot at the top of Chemerong-Berembun-Langsir trail
Photo by Terengganu State Forestry Department

Social Forestry Practices in Sabah

Social forestry is part of Sabah's sustainable forest management (SFM) strategy to achieve the three pillars of SFM, viz. environmental, economic, and social objectives. The development of social forestry in Sabah is closely related to poverty, especially in rural areas. In the 1980s, SFD identified that most of the hardcore poor people were those living adjacent to and within the forest reserves practising subsistence agriculture. Since then, SFD began to emphasise the social aspects of forestry. In 1984, SFD promoted social forestry to alleviate the hardcore poverty of villagers living within and around forest reserves. The social forestry approach was viewed as more favourable in tackling 'encroachments' in forest reserves occupied by local communities. Several social forestry projects have been implemented, including the following:

The Sabah EU - REDD+ Project - Tackling Climate Change through SFM and Community Development, (2014 - 2021)

This project is designed to meet the needs of Sabah by building capacity and understanding on ways to engage local communities in forest management and rehabilitation effectively, both on Government and community land. The project adds to the State's experience developing and implementing the planned Sabah REDD+ Strategy.

It is jointly carried out by the Sabah Forestry Department, Sabah Parks, and Sabah Wildlife Department on several villages of IPLCs in collaboration with relevant stakeholders (particularly KOPEL Berhad and Sawit Kinabalu).



Forest restoration efforts in Gana Forest Reserve by Kampung Gana community
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

This programme aims to demonstrate community-based forest management initiatives and REDD+ in Sabah. The programme's overarching objective is to contribute to the sustainable and low carbon development of Sabah, while its specific objective is to improve Sabah's REDD+ readiness and implementation through REDD+ demonstration activities to strengthen community engagement in forest protection and pro-poor sustainable forest management. The target groups are IPLCs living in Kg. Gana, Kinabatangan Corridor, and Kinabalu Ecolinc. The final beneficiaries are the forest-based or forest-dependent communities and the related government agencies in Sabah.

Sustainable forest management is conducted within three pilot geographical areas in partnership with the local communities to enhance community benefits. The five activities are as follows:

- ① Documentation and sharing of community forest protection, management and livelihood experiences;
- ② Community-based protection and rehabilitation of water catchments in Gana Forest Reserve and community-based agroforestry in degraded lands in and adjacent to Lingkabau Forest Reserve;
- ③ Development of REDD+ strategy for forest conservation in the Kinabatangan Corridor;
- ④ Enhancement of forest protection and rehabilitation within the Batu Puteh-Deramakot-Malua-Segaliud Lokan forest landscape; and
- ⑤ Establishment and restoration of community conserved areas (CCAs) and development of sustainable agriculture and forest-related community tourism options to support forest management.



Carbon Stock Assessment by the community of Kampung Gana community at the Heritage Forest Community-Conserved Area
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



Community development programs under the EU-REDD+ initiatives
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

MESCOT and KOPEL Initiatives, Kinabatangan, (1997 – present)

The MESCOT Initiative (Model for Ecologically Sustainable Community Conservation and Tourism) is a community-based ecotourism programme established in 1997. KOPEL Bhd. was established much later in 2003 by the local communities from four villages (with about 300 members, mostly unemployed villagers and youths) to carry out ecotourism, homestay, and forest restoration activities on behalf of MESCOT.

The immediate aims are to relieve the pressure on the remaining forest resources and address the issue of rural poverty in the area. Strategies adopted are (1) developing alternative and sustainable income sources; (2) empowering local communities to protect their cultural and natural heritage; and (3) taking responsibility for the conservation of the forest.

The major activities include the following:



Figure 4 Major activities of social forestry under the Model for Ecologically Sustainable Community Conservation and Tourism and KOPEL initiatives



Riparian forest restoration by locals through Model for Ecologically Sustainable Community Conservation and Tourism initiatives using local riparian species
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



Boat tour along the Kinabatangan river guided by locals is one of the ecotourism activities under Model for Ecologically Sustainable Community Conservation and Tourism initiatives
Photo by Forest Research Institute Malaysia

Kelawat Forest Reserve Joint Forest Management Project, Kota Belud (1990 – present)

Kelawat Forest Reserve (KFR) was gazetted as a Class I-Protection Forest in 1962. Its size is only 201 hectares but plays a very important role as a water catchment area to three villages. The area is hilly with steep terrain. It consists of two main watersheds draining to the east (Kelawat River) and south (Lapai River). KFR stands as an “island” of forest within the cultivated agricultural landscape.

In the late 1980s, approximately 75% of KFR was devoid of natural vegetation due to fire and farming activities for more than a decade by migrating local communities. As a result, its natural ecological conditions and biodiversity were significantly altered and drastically reduced its watershed function. This created conflicts between SFD, the migrating community, and wet-paddy farmers living around KFR.

The initiated joint forest management (JFM) programme sought to develop partnerships between SFD and the communities to manage KFR sustainably, based on trust and mutually agreed defined “rights” and responsibilities to achieve the following intended outcomes:

- 1 The remaining natural forest rehabilitated and conserved;
- 2 Biodiversity and watershed functions in denuded areas restored by adopting an agroforestry system; and
- 3 Livelihood and income stability of individual households improved.



The happy community of Kampung Ponopuan, Kelawat Forest Reserve
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

The solution to the conflicts was implementing a social forestry programme based on a JFM approach through collaborative forest management between SFD and the local communities.

The JFM initiative led to the reinstitution of biodiversity and the function of KFR as a water catchment area. At the same time, the initiative improved the living standards of the local communities. The project has shown success in restoring forest cover and income stability of the communities. The local communities have demonstrated the value of ecological and technical, and socio-cultural control of resources.

The success of JFM in KFR is made possible as SFD was able to cooperate effectively with the local communities on an equal basis. Thus, KFR has become the model for future JFM projects in Sabah.

The central philosophy behind the social forestry programme is the perception that it is possible to uplift the quality of life of the rural poor through community participation and engagement. In particular, the social forestry programme has helped the disadvantaged, the weak, and the resource-poor, who are the voiceless and marginalised people living within the forest reserve. Over the years, the treated forest would resemble a “natural forest” with a high and closed canopy, dense undergrowth, and a high level of biodiversity.



Photo of Kelawat Forest Reserve in 1991
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



Kelawat Forest Reserve in 2008. The Joint Forest Management between Sabah Forestry Department and Kampung Ponopuan community successfully restored the previously bald hills of Kelawat Forest Reserve within 10 years
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Sabah Social Forestry and Climate Change Project (2018-2022)

The Sabah Social Forestry and Climate Change Project is a collaborative effort between the State Government represented by the Sabah Forestry Department and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) regarding mutually agreed areas of research, training, capacity development, project implementation, outreach, and dissemination of research results.

The objectives of the project include:

- 1 To understand the dynamics, policies, and socio-economic drivers of landscape changes, climate events and inclusive governance, and the management of forests, including through social forestry;
- 2 To examine the various impacts of climate and landscape changes on local livelihoods, and land and resource use practices; and
- 3 To identify climate-resilient livelihood and resource management practices in the region through collaboration with stakeholders and explore the climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

A partnership was established between CIFOR and the Sabah Association for Social Forestry (SASOF) to coordinate activities conducted by the project. SASOF is a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement and coordination of social forestry in Sabah, whereby the current members are the Sabah Forestry Department, PACOS Trust, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), LEAP Spiral, JOAS, and Future Law.

The project has successfully trained students from UMS and representatives from each member of SASOF on CIFOR methodologies for social research. The project is also producing a book namely the 'Sabah Profile on Social Forestry'. Two postgraduate students were sponsored under this project. They had presented their respective studies on social forestry at the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Knowledge Sharing and Closing Event in Jakarta, Indonesia, in February 2020.

The activities are as highlighted below:

Research collaboration between SASOF and CIFOR

This activity was carried-out with the Orang Sungai communities of Mukim Kuamut, Tongod District. Activities such as Focus Group Discussions, Household Surveys, and Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the local communities from Kg Tungkuyan, Kg Tulang-tulang, Kg Kuamut, and Kg Desa Permai.



Aerial view of Kampung Tungkuyan, an Orang Sungai community practising farming and fishing

Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



The research team which consist of Sabah Association for Social Forestry members and post graduate students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



The research team with the local community from Kampung Kuamut, after completing the Focus Group Discussion
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Capacity Building Training



Sabah Association for Social Forestry members, students and lecturers were given training on Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) methodologies on social forestry research by Dr Moira Moeliono, Dr Daisuke Naito and Ms Cynthia Maharani from CIFOR. Practical session was conducted with a community at Tamparuli, Sabah
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Heart of Borneo (HoB) Roadshow for Community (2014-present)

The Rainforest Discovery Centre (RDC), one of the nature centres of the Sabah Forestry Department, has been organising activities designed to promote awareness of HoB since its inception. The activities are targeted at teachers, students, and the local communities living near forest reserves. The main activity in the roadshow is the HoB role-play game. Apart from that, additional activities include grass composting and an environmental treasure hunt.



The communities participated in the Heart of Borneo role-play game. In this picture, the community is playing the role of one of the stakeholders near their village.
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



The community participated in the Grass Composting activity organised by Rainforest Discovery Centre
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department



Group comprising of women from the village during the Heart of Borneo role-play game.
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Social Forestry Practices in Sarawak

Of the total 12.4 million hectares of land area in Sarawak, 7.9 million hectares (64%) are under forest cover, comprising totally protected areas (TPA), permanent forest estate (PFE), and state land.

In 2017, the population of Sarawak was 2.8 million, comprising 28 ethnic communities, of which 70% were indigenous people. The major ethnic groups are Iban, Chinese, Malay, Bidayuh, Melanau, and Orang Ulu.

Despite modern influences, 1.93 million indigenous peoples in Sarawak still live under a subsistence livelihood with high dependency on the forest. They depend on the forest for food, housing materials (ramu), handicraft materials, herbs, and medicinal plants. The forest also serves as a burial site and the source of water supply.

The first social forestry project carried out by FDS in the late 1980s was agroforestry with the involvement of IPLCs at the Sabal Forest Reserve. Replanted forests established on formerly abandoned shifting cultivation areas were also used for livestock grazing and planting rice, cash crops, and fruit trees.

In 1992, as part of an initiative to further strengthen SFM policies and practices, FDS collaborated with ITTO to implement two projects, namely the 'Development of Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary as a Totally Protected Area', and 'Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation: the Pulong Tau National Park'. Both projects aimed to uplift livelihoods through community development.

FDS later formed a Community Service Initiative Unit (CSIU) in January 2011 to align with the efforts of the Sarawak Government in its rural and forestry development. The main objectives of CSIU were to coordinate community projects and complement social development activities implemented by the divisions and units in FDS. The unit was reformed to become the Social Forestry Division in 2016. Various social forestry programmes have benefited communities living within and near TPAs and PFE. The social forestry programmes implemented comprises five main pillars, which are:



These five pillars are the main guidelines in planning, implementing, and managing social forestry programmes in Sarawak. The implementation of social forestry programmes under these pillars provides IPLCs in Sarawak with more opportunities to explore, learn, and gain knowledge and skills. These experiences help meet their socio-economic, cultural, and environmental needs through sustainable management of forest resources with the cooperation of relevant stakeholders.

The community-based activities aim to improve the livelihood of IPLCs. The social forestry programmes also aim to achieve world recognition in SFM, precision forestry, and viable projects for sustainable development.

Highlights of the social forestry practices being implemented in Sarawak are as follow:

The Pulong Tau National Park (PTNP) Project (2005 – 2017)

This project is an ITTO-supported project that aims to secure the forest for use by indigenous communities, strengthen the protection of PTNP, and improve the livelihood of the Penan community with support from relevant stakeholders. Among the social forestry programmes implemented were:

- ① a 15-unit housing project and basic amenities for Penan in Ba' Medamot;
- ② training and capacity building in basic carpentry; and
- ③ the construction of a 32-metre long suspension bridge across Kubaan River in Long Semirang, Upper Baram, Miri.



Finish product of 32-metres long suspension bridge across the Kubaan River in Long Semirang, Upper, Baram, Miri, Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

Hill Salt Processing Facilities (2015 – present)

The hill salt processing facilities in Buduk Bui, Ba'Kelalan was officially launched in April 2017 to replace and upgrade the old facilities. The upgraded facilities comprise four building blocks equipped with a salt processing furnace, two burning stoves, one firewood storage hut, and other basic facilities. The new facilities can accommodate 1,600 litres of salt water compared to only 100 litres per day previously. The project has since helped uplift the livelihood and income level of the local communities from the sales at the airport and retails shops around Limbang and Miri. It is also one of the ecotourism products in the area.



Two photos vertically left - Old hill salt processing facilities
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

Two photos vertically right - Upgraded hill salt processing facilities
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

Tagang System (2009 – present)

The tagang system of restoring fish stocks in natural rivers has been introduced to the longhouse communities in Ulu Engkari, Ulu Menyang, and Ulu Mujok for quite some time. This system divides a selected river into three demarcated zones: red, yellow, and green. The red zone is for spawning, where fishing is strictly prohibited, the yellow zone is for controlled fishing, and the green zone is permitted for normal fishing. This system reduces the dependency of the local communities on forest resources while conserving the river ecosystem and improving their income. Eight longhouses have adopted this system.



Zoning application in tagang system in Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Monitoring of fisheries resources by indigenous peoples and local communities who practise tagang system in Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) Development Programmes (2016 – present)

The development of NTFP comprises two components: organising the annual NTFP Carnival and running the enrichment planting programme. The carnival is an annual social forestry programme organised by FDS since 2016, enabling the IPLCs in Sarawak to exhibit, sell, promote their NTFP, and establish networking with potential buyers. More than 200 local communities usually participate in the carnival with an average annual sale of more than RM80,000.00. With regards to the second component of the NTFP programmes, since July 2018, FDS has been collaborating with the Sarawak Energy Berhad in an enrichment planting programme in Murum Resettlement with the involvement of the local communities. Some of the NTFPs planted are rattan and agarwood (gaharu).



Exhibition and sell of handicrafts made by indigenous peoples and local communities during the Non-Timber Forest Products Carnival
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Pua kumbu made by a local in Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

In-situ Education Project (2014 – present)

The Environmental Gallery and Herbs and Medicinal Plants Garden at SK Kampung Seberang, Kuala Lawas, is part of an in-situ education project collaborating with various timber companies within the area. The project was officially launched on 22nd August 2017 with a total area of 13,500 square feet, where more than 120 species of herbs and medicinal plants were planted. The gallery exhibits information on the forest for education and awareness purposes. Similar projects were done in Sarikei for SK Adin, SK Ba'Kelalan, SK St. Andrew, and SK Abang Haji Matahir. In-situ education projects were implemented by establishing galleries, herbs and medicinal plants gardens, nature trails, and greenhouse programmes. These projects aim to provide continuous learning concepts to school children, teachers, and nearby communities.



Environmental Galley and Herbs and Medicinal Plants of SK Kampung Seberang, Kuala Lawas
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

Restoration and Rehabilitation Projects (2018 – present)

The restoration of degraded forest areas through social forestry aims to ensure the continuous supply of forest resources and promote the involvement of IPLCs in restoration activities. Several nurseries are currently being revived in the Sabal Agroforestry Centre, Sarawak Tree Improvement Centre in Sibul, Niah Forest Research Station in Miri, Bintawa Nursery, Semenggok Nursery, Lundu Nursery, and Kem Kelesa Nursery. Some of the seeds and seedlings were bought from the local communities to provide additional income and educate them on forest restoration. Working opportunities are offered to the local communities to prepare and transport the seedlings and maintain the nurseries. As of September 2021, more than 220,000 seedlings from various timber and non-timber species collected from all over Sarawak were grown in the nurseries. The seedlings were then supplied and distributed to schools, higher learning institutions, and various agencies for education, awareness, and restoration purposes.



Engkabang (*Shorea macrophylla*) seeds collected by the local communities in Ulu Mujok, Julau, Sarawak

Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Nursery established with involvement of locals in Sarawak Tree Improvement Centre (STIC) Oya, Sibu, Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

Capacity Building Programme (2012 – present)

The objective of the human capital development programme is to enhance the knowledge and skills of the IPLCs for application in daily life, subsequently uplifting their livelihood. Some of the programmes implemented include:

- 1 Basic carpentry and electrical courses for 312 Penan (2016) and Iban longhouses communities in Batang Ai (2018), and Murum Resettlement (2016);
- 2 Handicraft training participated by 108 local communities from all over Sarawak (2012, 2017, 2018, and 2019);
- 3 A workshop for 18 local communities on “Community Engagement and Consultation at Gunung Lesong National Park” (2018);
- 4 Ecotourism-based Reskill Upskill Training Programme for local communities in Ulu Engkari; and
- 5 A workshop on the construction of fibreglass boats for 40 local



Reskill Upskill Training Programme in Ulu Engkari, Lubok Antu, Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Local community participated in carpentry training in Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Increasing awareness through Communication, Education and Public Awareness programmes
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Chapter

4

THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL SOCIAL FORESTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

Issues and Challenges
Opportunities

Chapter

4

The Need for a National Social Forestry Strategic Plan

Addressing the issues and challenges and recognising potential opportunities of social forestry practices are essential in implementing the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021–2025.

Issues and Challenges

The issues and challenges of social forestry practices identified during the regional and national social forestry workshops comprise the followings:

1 National policies, regulations, or guidelines on social forestry development

Malaysia has no national policies, regulations, or guidelines on social forestry development, which are important for planning various social forestry programmes.

2 Coordination between agencies in social forestry programmes implementation

Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak have different social forestry development directions. Consequently, there is a lack of coordination in implementing social forestry programmes at the national level.

3 Community involvement in social forestry programmes

Many local communities are not aware of the availability of social forestry programmes, and hence, their involvement is minimal. There is a need to raise local awareness.

4 Public awareness and publicity on the importance of social forestry

The general public is also not aware of the importance of social forestry development to the local communities, who are very much dependent on forest resources to sustain their daily livelihood. Consequently, implementation of any new, local project often neglects the presence of social forestry programmes.

5 Market inaccessibility of social forestry products and services

Many local communities reside in remote areas. Even though they have products and services to offer, marketing them is challenging. Marketing is a constrain to improving their socio-economic livelihood.

6 Clear boundary of social forestry projects

Currently, local communities' practice various social forestry-related activities. However, for certain social forestry sites, there are no clear boundaries.

7 Financial resources to implement social forestry programmes

Even though the three regions have their social forestry programmes, they did not have adequate financial resources to implement all programmes. Consequently, the social forestry programmes did not meet the expected outcome.

8 Documentation about social forestry-related customs, culture, and beliefs of the IPLCs

A successful understanding of the local communities' social, cultural, and religious livelihood is important for the effective implementation of social forestry programmes. However, there is a lack of information regarding this matter.

9 Existing social forestry generates limited revenue

Due to limited market access and financial resources constrain, the current social forestry activities do not generate much income for the local communities. The inability to generate enough income has led to the migration of youths to urban areas.

10 Land-use conflicts in the implementation of social forestry programmes

Lack of proper planning on social forestry programmes often brings about land-use conflict at the local level, hindering the development of such programmes.

Recognising these issues is crucial to developing an operational strategic plan to implement social forestry programmes and activities.



Boundary re-marking of Winokok Native forest by Bundu Tuhan villager themselves
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Opportunities

Over the years, social forestry has been increasingly seen as imperative in Malaysia's rural development strategy. Appropriate development of social forestry is a potential pathway to alleviate poverty among the rural populations, considering environmental conservation at the same time. This development is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. There are vast opportunities for social forestry development to uplift rural livelihoods and strengthen national resilience to climate change effects in the following ways:

1 Generating income, creating employment, and eradicating poverty

Nature provides the underlying foundation for good quality of life (Pascual et al. 2017). Social forestry development creates employment opportunities and provides an important source of income and livelihood. Social forestry activities involve forest product collection, processing and trading of NTFPs, and ecotourism. These activities contribute to employment creation, income generation, and poverty alleviation among the IPLCs.



Local exhibiting handicraft products in Non-Timber Forest Products carnival
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Locals conducting periodical monitoring around Tagal Hutan Winokok, Bundu Tuhan, Sabah
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

1 Contributing to Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

- Social forestry is regarded as one of the major components of SFM;
- Social forestry has been used as an approach to deal with local conflicts through JFM; and
- Social forestry is the link to involve the IPLCs in forest conservation, restoration, utilisation, and protection.

2 Contributing in reducing illegal harvesting of timber

- Raising the standards of living and increasing social forestry activities of the rural poor can reduce illegal timber harvesting by the IPLCs; and
- Increasing awareness on the importance of conserving the forest for the IPLCs livelihoods (for water, building materials, medicinal plants, and others) through social forestry.

3 Increasing food security and production

- Utilising forest resources acts as a 'safety net' for the IPLCs in times of crop failures and economic slow-downs;
- Using forest plants, fruits, and roots by the rural communities as food, medicine, and building materials for generations; and
- Providing an important source of income through sales of forest products in times of need.

4 Adaptation and mitigation of climate change

IPLCs living within or at the fringe of the forest areas can play a specific role in influencing microclimates. JFM is important in reducing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather conditions. JFM can also contribute to the same microclimate benefits in crop and livestock production. This is achieved through:

- Conserving and protecting forest biological resources (which complements biodiversity conservation, protection, and rehabilitation) by IPLCs;
- Increasing awareness and education to IPLCs on the importance of conservation;
- Enhancing carbon stock by increasing the number of trees planted, especially in degraded forests by IPLCs; and
- Creating a sense of ownership for specific forest areas among IPLCs.

5 Contributing to Convention on Biological Diversity

The forest-dependent IPLCs are important in terms of:

- Playing a role in forest resource conservation;
- Ensuring the sustainable utilisation of forest resources; and
- Attaining fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of forest resources through cooperation with other stakeholders.

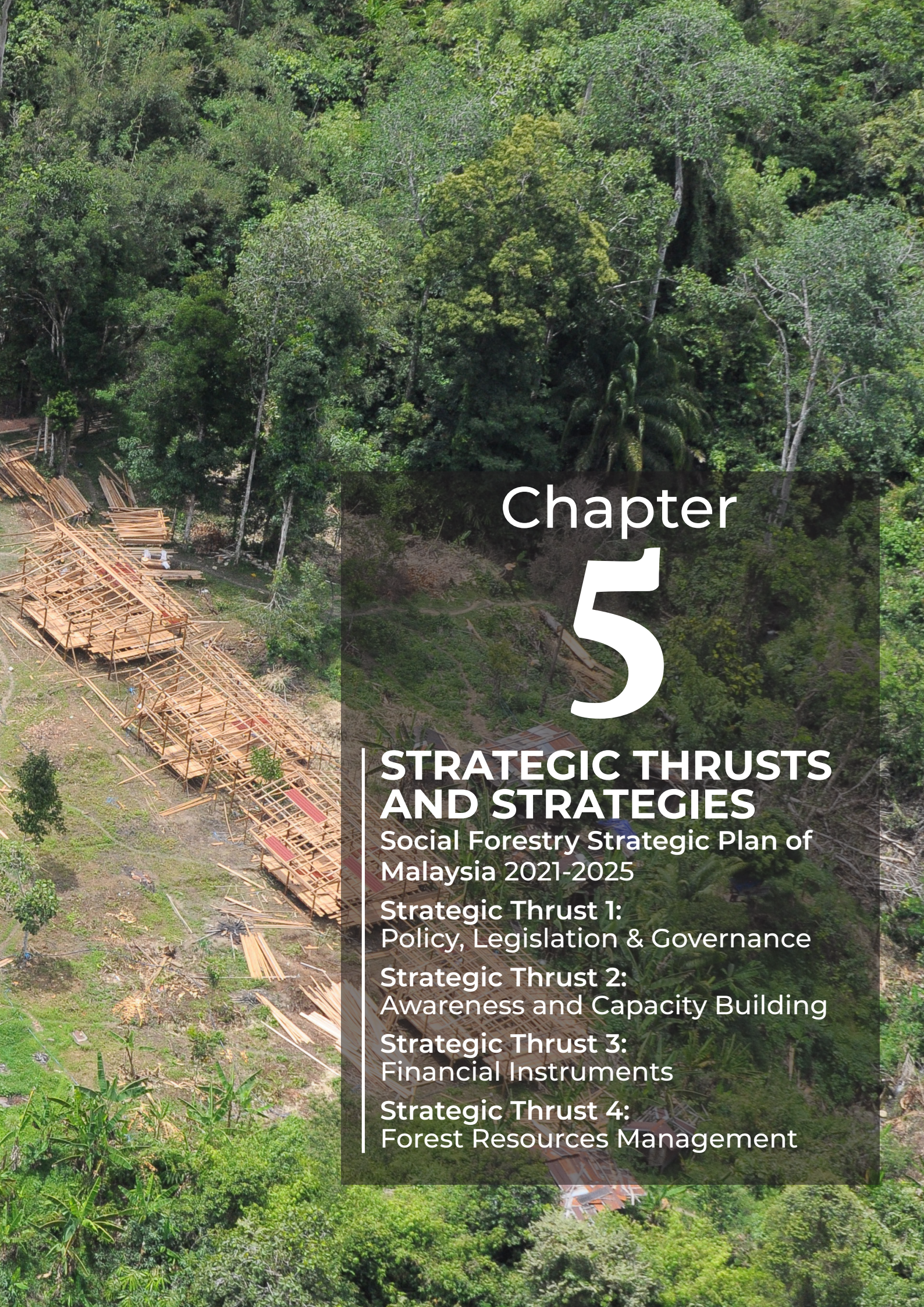
6 Contributing to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

SF activities also contribute in attaining the SDGs through:

- Contribution to socio-cultural sustainability and providing additional income to the IPLCs;
- Increasing crop production of IPLCs through agroforestry projects; and
- Contribution to SFM by the IPLCs.



Construction of houses to improve the livelihood of Penan community in Ba'Medamot, Sarawak
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest. In the lower-left foreground, there is a logging site with several large piles of cut timber and wooden scaffolding structures. The rest of the image is filled with dense, vibrant green trees and foliage.

Chapter 5

STRATEGIC THRUSTS AND STRATEGIES

Social Forestry Strategic Plan of
Malaysia 2021-2025

Strategic Thrust 1:
Policy, Legislation & Governance

Strategic Thrust 2:
Awareness and Capacity Building

Strategic Thrust 3:
Financial Instruments

Strategic Thrust 4:
Forest Resources Management

Chapter 5

Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021-2025

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021–2025 is developed based on the socio-economic needs of Malaysia’s three regions (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak).

The plan comprises four strategic thrusts, namely:



The strategies, action plans, collaborating partners, time frame, and expected outcomes are outlined in each strategic thrust.

STRATEGIC THRUSTS AND STRATEGIES

Strategic Thrust 1: Policy, Legislation & Governance

National policy, legislation, and governance are essential for the long-term planning and implementation of social forestry programmes in Malaysia. These involve establishing a clear social forestry policy statement, developing a social forestry model for best practices, resolving land-use issues, coordinating integrated governance, establishing social forestry guidelines, and formulating SOPs on social forestry.

This thrust focuses on the need for a social forestry policy statement in resolving land-use issues and how best to implement relevant activities. Under this thrust, the strategies for the three regions are outlined below:

Strategic Thrust 1: Policy, Legislation and Governance				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA				
(1) Establish a clear SF policy statement	(a) Form a committee (b) Hold stakeholder consultations	Related government agencies, NGOs, private sector and IPLCs	2021 - 2022	Policy statement on SF approved by the government
SABAH				
(1) Resolve land use issues	Establish (a) State technical working group on NCR land (b) Community forestry committee (c) NCR land mapping committee	NGOs, licensees, government agencies, and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) State technical working group formed (b) Native customary land claimed resolved (c) Technical Working Group and guidelines on NCR conflict resolution established (d) NCR land mapped

Strategic Thrust 1: Policy, Legislation and Governance				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
SABAH				
(2) Establish integrated governance	Formulate community protocol based on customary law to govern SF area	IPLCs, government, NGOs, and community-based organisations	2021 - 2025	Protocol established and recognized by government and Native Court
SARAWAK				
(1) Develop SF guidelines and formulate SOP on CF management	(a) Conduct baseline study (b) Form technical working committee (c) Organise stakeholder consultations (d) Formulate guidelines with IPLCs involvement (d) Exchange knowledge through workshops, trainings and study tours	Federal and Sarawak governments, private sector, NGOs, IPLCs and all relevant stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) Guidelines on innovative and sustainable management of SF established (b) SOP on CF formulated (c) SF incorporated in forest management plans

Strategic Thrust 2: Awareness and Capacity Building

Raising awareness of social forestry among the stakeholders and forestry staff is important in achieving the planned activities. This strategic thrust is meant to raise awareness through education and partnership. It also covers capacity building by engaging experts and developing a database and a social forestry model.

Under this thrust, the strategies and actions are outlined below:

Strategic Thrust 2: Awareness and Capacity Building				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA				
(1) Develop a SF model for best practices	(a) Establish a selection committee (b) Document SF model (c) Establish SF pilot model	FDPM, IPLCs and relevant agencies	2021 - 2022	Model on best practices on SF developed
(2) Develop expertise in SF	(a) Identify appropriate trainings on SF (b) Establish working group on SF	FDPM, IPLCs and related stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) Knowledge and skills in SF among stakeholders enhanced (b) A working group on SF is established
(3) Develop database on SF	(a) Identify and record existing SF projects	FDPM, FRIM, and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) Planning and implementation of effective SF (b) Data is incorporated into national SF database

Strategic Thrust 2: Awareness and Capacity Building

Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA				
(4) Increase community awareness on SF and strengthen actions on integrated enforcement	(a) Implement CEPA activities (b) Create enforcement network (c) Create monitoring agent among IPLCs	IPLCs and relevant enforcement agencies	2021 - 2025	(a) Community awareness increased (b) Forest is protected
(5) Increase and strengthen community involvement in SF activities	(a) Incorporate SF scope in Forest Management Plan (b) Identify intermediary within communities (c) Achieve consensus between communities and government agencies (d) Acknowledge community involvement (e) Share SF experience (f) Promote activities on social media	FDPM, relevant agencies, NGOs, and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) More SF manpower employed (b) Integrated SF monitoring system established (c) Joint impact monitoring implemented (d) Programmes on human development and environmental education implemented (e) Improved capacity building and participation in SF
SABAH				
(1) Increase human resources and development in SF management and enforcement	(a) Increase manpower in the relevant departments and agencies, hiring IPLCs when possible (b) Establish integrated monitoring system (c) Implement joint impact monitoring with involvement from IPLCs (d) Implement programmes on human development and environmental education (e) Conduct capacity building for Community Development Officer (f) Enhance participation and capacity building for women in forest management	SFD, relevant agencies, NGOs, and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) More SF manpower employed (b) Integrated SF monitoring system established (c) Joint impact monitoring implemented (d) Programmes on human development and environmental education implemented (e) Improved capacity building and participation in SF

Strategic Thrust 2: Awareness and Capacity Building				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
SABAH				
(2) Enhance public awareness programme	(a) Establish SFM & SF information and interpretation centre (b) Promote public awareness through road shows, dialogue, and social media	SFD, relevant agencies, NGOs, and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) Information and interpretation centre established (b) Public awareness increased
(3) Enhance collaboration in the establishment and implementation of SF at all levels	(a) Establish multi-stakeholder SF committee (b) Develop user-friendly Terms of Reference for collaboration to inculcate the sense of responsibility through community protocol	SFD, IPLCs, relevant agencies, and NGOs	2021 - 2025	(a) Collaboration in the establishment and implementation of SF enhanced at all levels
(4) Develop database on SF	(a) Identify and record existing SF projects	SFD and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) Data incorporated into national SF database
SARAWAK				
(1) Conduct socio-economic and demographic profiling of IPLCs	(a) Collect, compile and analyse the data on communities living in the vicinity of Totally Protected Areas (TPAs) & Permanent Forest Estate (PFE) and within the areas affected by logging and Hydro Electric Power projects (b) Identify the IPLCs suitable for SF projects	Federal and Sarawak governments, private sector, NGOs, IPLCs and all relevant stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) IPLCs suitable for SF projects identified (b) Data incorporated into national SF database

Strategic Thrust 2: Awareness and Capacity Building

Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
SARAWAK				
(2) Raise SF awareness of stakeholders	(a) Implement outreach programme (b) Develop training modules and hold trainings (c) Build trust among stakeholders	All relevant stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) Level of SF awareness raised among stakeholders (b) 100 FDS staff trained
(3) Increase community participation in social aspects of forest management	(a) Identify problems related to forest resource management and utilisation (b) Hold dialogues and organise SF site visits & study tours (c) Implement conservation and environmental awareness programme (d) Develop SF projects with community participation (e) Conduct trainings	Sarawak government, relevant agencies, private sector, IPLCs and all relevant stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) SF accepted by communities (b) Multi-stakeholder participation in SF (c) SF projects implemented with active community participation
(4) Develop database on SF	(a) Identify and record existing SF projects	FDS and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	Data incorporated into national SF database

Strategic Thrust 3: Financial Instruments

The availability of the financial resource is crucial for a successful, long-term implementation of social forestry activities.

Strategic Thrust 3 emphasises providing long-term sustainable financial funding to ensure the local communities benefit from implementing social forestry programmes, thus raising their living standards.

Strategic Thrust 3: Financial Instruments				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA				
(1) Provide and expand funding	(a) Secure and allocate funding by the federal and state governments under various Malaysia Plans and international funds	Federal and state governments	2021 - 2025	(a) Proposals for government and international funding are prepared (b) Funding received
SABAH				
(1) Ensure that sustainable financial resources are available	(a) Incorporate SF financing into federal government and Sabah government policies (b) Establish SF Trust Fund at National, Sabah and community levels (c) Establish SF financial governance system at community level (d) Create a system of incentives to encourage active participation of relevant stakeholders in SF	Economic Planning Unit, Ministry, Sabah government, relevant agencies, NGOs, and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	(a) Trust Funds at federal and Sabah levels established (b) Fund for SF projects channeled to IPLCs (c) Community SF fund established (d) SF financial governance system at community level established (e) Active participation from all relevant parties

Strategic Thrust 3: Financial Instruments				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
SARAWAK				
(1) Ensure sustainable funding	(a) Obtain funding from various sources to implement SF projects (b) Enhance collaboration with related agencies for funding and implementation of SF projects	Federal government, Sarawak government, private sector, NGOs, and international donor agencies	2021 - 2025	(a) Funding secured (b) Collaboration enhanced (c) SF projects implemented

Strategic Thrust 4: Forest Resources Management

To meet the international and national aspirations, the management of forest resources involving IPLCs is important in ensuring the gratification of socio-economic benefits by the IPLCs besides attaining sustainable forest management.

The strategies under this thrust aim for increased income of the IPLCs, developing an effective mechanism for benefit sharing, planning the use of forest resources, and implementing forest resource management plan at a community level as depicted in the table below:

Strategic Thrust 4: Forest Resources Management				
Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA				
(1) Pioneer the inclusive business model (IBM) for SF	(a) Introduce business plan methodology, and marketing for products and services (b) Develop business networking	NGOs, People's Trust Council (MARA), Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga (TEKUN), Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KPLB), Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC)	2021 - 2025	Household income of IPLCs increased
(2) Develop an effective mechanism for benefit sharing	(a) Conduct stakeholder consultations (b) Develop business plan as a guide in benefit sharing	Village Safety and Development Committee (JPKK), district office, Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), MOTAC, local authorities, NGO, FDPM and FRIM	2021 - 2025	Household income of IPLCs increased

Strategic Thrust 4: Forest Resources Management

Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
SABAH				
(1) Plan the use of forest resources	(a) Assess and document forest resource use by communities (b) Map land and resource use by IPLCs (c) Plan sustainable livelihood for IPLCs	Sabah government, relevant agencies, NGOs and IPLCs	2021 - 2025	Forest resource use documented
(2) Develop and implement forest resource management plan at the community level	(a) Assist IPLCs to develop a local plan on sustainable forest resource management (b) Enhance capacity building to develop the local plan (c) Identify potential NTFP and services for income generation (d) Develop and implement method for joint forest resource management and benefit sharing	Sabah government, relevant agencies, NGOs, IPLCs and private sector	2021 - 2025	(a) Forest resource management plan at community level built (b) Local forest resource management plan implemented. (c) Method for joint forest resource management and benefit sharing developed and implemented
SARAWAK				
(1) Conduct baseline study and assessment on forest resource utilisation by communities	(a) Conduct survey on forest resource utilisation by IPLCs (b) Analyse and map the data on forest resource use by IPLCs	Sarawak government, relevant agencies, private sector, IPLCs and all relevant stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) Baseline data on forest resource utilisation by communities compiled (b) Information used for planning and implementation of SF projects

Strategic Thrust 4: Forest Resources Management

Strategy	Action	Partners	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
SARAWAK				
(2) Develop and implement forest resources utilisation and management plan	(a) Develop forest resource utilisation and management plan (b) Restoration of forest resources with the involvement of communities	Sarawak government, relevant agencies, private sector, IPLCs and all relevant stakeholders	2021 - 2025	(a) Forest resources utilisation and management plan implemented (b) Knowledge and skills of communities enhanced (c) Sustainable forest resource utilisation implemented



The locals crossing Kubaan River without bridge facility before bridge construction
Photo by Forest Department Sarawak



Chapter 6

WAY FOWARD

Elements of Success
Monitoring Progress
Mid-term Review 2023
Conclusion

Chapter 6

Way Forward

The way forward for social forestry development in Malaysia is to establish a social forestry model that enhances local community livelihood and ensure sustainable management of forest resources.

Establishing this model would require addressing crucially the elements of success, project monitoring, and reviews. Once these elements are achieved, the local communities will be able to escape poverty and, in the meantime, ensure forest resources are well managed and protected.

Elements of Success

To ensure long-term planning and implementation of social forestry activities in Malaysia, it is important to identify key elements of success. These elements are outlined below:

- 1 Support from federal and state governments**
This is the most important element for a successful social forestry project implementation. Without support from the federal and state governments, it is difficult for the social forestry project to succeed.
- 2 NGO and private sectors collaboration**
The NGOs and private sectors have a specific role in achieving social forestry objectives. With their collaboration, the IPLCs could participate more effectively in implementing the project.
- 3 Active involvement and commitment of local community**
The IPLCs could play an important role in land-use planning, management, and forest protection. Their participation would ensure they commit to social forestry programmes and projects.

4 Seed money from government and donors

Sustainable funding is crucial in ensuring the long-term implementation of social forestry programmes and projects. The financial resources could be derived from international donor agencies, the Government and private sectors.

5 Periodical monitoring by implementing agencies

Many social forestry projects failed due to a lack of monitoring and evaluating the expected outcomes. It requires the commitment of various agencies to work together to achieve intended targets.

6 Presence of local champions

Local leadership is equally important in any project implementation. The involvement of local leaders and their supporters would ensure success.

7 Adequate capacity building and training

Without capacity building and training, local communities will not be able to participate effectively in implementing social forestry projects. Regular training in capacity building is essential to enhance the knowledge and skills of the people.

8 Enhanced awareness on the importance of social forestry

Enhancing awareness of the importance of social forestry among all stakeholders is crucial to project planning and implementation. The staff of related agencies need to realise the necessity of the local communities to use forest resources for consumption. On the other hand, the local communities need to be aware of sustainable forest management.

Monitoring Progress

In line with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 and 12th Malaysia Plan, the implementation of the Social Forestry Strategic Plan will be monitored. KeTSA will monitor the progress through a methodology deliberated by the National Social Forestry Working Group Committee (NSFWGC). NSFWGC will determine and adopt methods to measure and verify all indicators under the strategic thrusts. KeTSA will collate the baseline data necessary for tracking key indicators at the earliest stage possible to ensure a smooth monitoring process.



Winokok villager confiscating hand-sawn timber left by illegal feller
Photo by Sabah Forestry Department

Mid-term Review 2023

It is important to have a mid-term review of all the strategies and action plans implemented by the three regions to assess achievement.

The Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021–2025 will be reviewed in 2023 to examine the gaps in achieving expected outcomes. KeTSA will coordinate this mid-term review. After identifying new challenges and weaknesses, the forestry departments need to re-strategise their work plan to achieve the 2025 expected outcomes.

The review will provide a progress report to the Federal and State Governments to plan their direction for social forestry development after 2025. The progress report will also enable KeTSA to state social forestry programmes in Malaysia at the international fora.



Social forestry campaigns to enhance awareness on social forestry efforts in Peninsular Malaysia

Photo by Forest Department of Peninsular Malaysia

Conclusion

With the formulation of the Social Forestry Strategic Plan of Malaysia 2021–2025, the country has achieved a new milestone towards attaining sustainable forest management and ensuring the socio-economic development of its people, especially the forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities.

Through effective implementation of the strategic plan, Malaysia's efforts towards conserving forest resources are enhanced while protecting the marginalised groups.

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