

Country Name	<b>Project on Sustainable Development for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation in Sabah</b>
Malaysia	

**I. Project Outline**

Background	<p>Sabah State is one of the few places on earth still blessed with mega-biodiversity, which is not only vital to the sustainable socio-economic development of the State but also a treasure for all humankind. Conservation of its biodiversity and ecosystems is of utmost importance. JICA supported the Malaysian Federal and Sabah State Governments through the Programme for Bornean Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation (BBEC) Phase 1 and 2 as technical cooperation projects. The Programme Purpose of BBEC/Phase 1 (February 2002–January 2007) was “Comprehensive and sustainable approach for conservation is established,” while BBEC/Phase 2 (October 2007–September 2012) aimed “A system for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in Sabah is strengthened and Sabah State becomes capable of extending knowledge and skills on biodiversity conservation to other states of Malaysia and foreign countries.” The authorities concerned of the Government of Malaysia had set the implementation of the Sabah Biodiversity Strategy (SBS), prepared under BBEC/Phase 2, as a next step to be taken and requested the Government of Japan for this project, which is known as SDBEC.</p>												
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through 1) strengthening management system of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in Sabah, 2) sharing Sabah’s experiences in biodiversity and ecosystem conservation nationally and internationally, the project aimed at promoting biodiversity and ecosystem conservation for sustainable development in Sabah, thereby contributing to making Sabah become known as the Asian Centre of Excellence for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development nationally and internationally.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall Goal: Sabah is known as the Asian Centre of Excellence for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development nationally and internationally.</li> <li>Project Purpose: Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation for sustainable development in Sabah is promoted with national and international recognition.</li> </ol>												
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Site: State of Sabah, especially (i) Core and Buffer Zones of Lower Kinabatangan and Segama Wetlands (LKSW) – Ramsar Site – and its River Basin and (ii) Core, Buffer and Transition Zones of Croker Range Biosphere Reserve (CRBR) under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Main Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting necessary revision of the SBS, developing a monitoring system for the SBS, preparing the CRBR management plan, collaborating with other programmes and donor agencies; piloting livelihood improvement in Tudan Village and Suntuong-Tuong/Kiporing Village in the Buffer Zone of CRBR, organizing training in Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA), etc.</li> <li>Compiling Sabah’s experience into documents, undertaking studies on sustainable financing mechanisms for biodiversity, participating in/hosting national and international conferences, sharing experience to policy formulation processes at the national level, supporting organizations for publicity and media strategy, etc.</li> </ol> </li> <li>Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Malaysian Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) Experts: 38 persons</td> <td>1) Staff Allocated: Staff from 15 different agencies</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Trainees Received: 66 persons</td> <td>2) Land and facilities: Project office, telephone line, and other office maintenance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Equipment: PCs, Portable GPS, Spectrophotometer, Laboratory equipment for soil analysis</td> <td>3) Local Cost: International workshop-related Cost etc.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) Local Cost: Construction of the Tudan community hall etc.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </li> </ol>			Japanese Side	Malaysian Side	1) Experts: 38 persons	1) Staff Allocated: Staff from 15 different agencies	2) Trainees Received: 66 persons	2) Land and facilities: Project office, telephone line, and other office maintenance	3) Equipment: PCs, Portable GPS, Spectrophotometer, Laboratory equipment for soil analysis	3) Local Cost: International workshop-related Cost etc.	4) Local Cost: Construction of the Tudan community hall etc.	
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Project Period	(ex-ante) February 2013 – January 2017 (actual) July 2013 – June 2017	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 236 million yen, (actual) 208 million yen										
Implementing Agency	<p>Sabah State Government Agencies: Natural Resources Office (NRO), Sabah Biodiversity Center (SaBC), Sabah Forestry Department (SFD), Sabah Parks (SP), Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), Environment Protection Department (EPD), Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID), etc. Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (ITBC-UMS)</p>												
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Ministry of Environment												

**II. Result of the Evaluation**

## &lt;Constraints on Evaluation&gt;

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to collect information from some of the implementing agencies. The field survey was not possible for the same reason. Therefore, this evaluation is based on the limited information provided by some of the implementing agencies, which managed to cooperate with the study under difficult circumstances.

## &lt;Special Perspectives Considered in the Ex-Post Evaluation&gt;

- Series of third country training programmes (TCTPs), namely, “Integrated Biodiversity” (FY2013–2015) and “Integrated Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation” (FY2016–2019) were implemented, and a JICA Partnership Project (JPP), “Establish Local ESD Activity Bases for Sustainable Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Services” (2019–2022) is undergoing in the Sabah State. The counterpart agencies/personnel of this project (SDBEC) have been continuously engaged in the above-mentioned programmes and project. Also, the terminal evaluation team’s

<sup>1</sup> The BBES Phase 1 and 2 supported the registration of these areas under international initiatives. LKSW was registered as a Ramsar Convention site in 2008, and CRBR was to be declared as a Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO MAB Programme at the time of ex-ante evaluation of this project.

recommendations for SDBEC have been followed up in the TCTPs and the JPP. Therefore, they may have contributed to the outcomes and impacts of this project.

## 1 Relevance

### <Consistency with the Development Policy of Malaysia at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

This project was consistent with development policy at both the Federal and State levels at the time of ex-ante evaluation. At the Federal level, the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011–2015) set out “valorization of our environmental endowments” as one of the “10 big ideas.” The plan also identified the “five drivers” to transform the nation into a high-income economy, and one of them was “creating an environment that improves the quality of life.” Under this driving force, the “seven focuses” were identified. One of them was “to ensure that modern Malaysians fulfill their responsibilities to future generations through the wise management and conservation of existing resources.” At the State level, the Direction of Sabah State Development and Advancement (development plan of the state) (2003) stipulates that certain areas should be reserved for the conservation of natural resources to support healthy ecosystems with introducing the concept of zoning.

### <Consistency with the Development Needs of Malaysia at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

This project was consistent with the needs for conserving Sabah’s biodiversity and ecosystems, such as through the implementation of the SBS as mentioned in “Background” above. Also, after the BBEC Phase 1 and 2, more emphasis was given to sustainable development to accomplish conservation.

### <Consistency with Japan’s ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

This project was consistent with Japan’s ODA policy. One of the priority areas for ODA policy to Malaysia at the time of ex-ante evaluation was to “Support balanced development toward becoming a developed country” that included environmental conservation.<sup>2</sup>

### <Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

## 2 Effectiveness/Impact

### <Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the Time of Project Completion>

The project achieved its Project Purpose by the time of project completion. The SBS, prepared under the BBEC Phase 2 and approved by the Sabah State Cabinet in December 2014, was revised with the support of this project and launched in October 2016. The project’s activities contributed to the SBS implementation through the pilot projects<sup>3</sup> (Indicator 1). Although the State Government’s official endorsement of the CRBR management plan prepared by this project was delayed due to institutional issues, the pilot projects were virtually deemed to be part of the implementation of the CRBR management plan, which was an element of the SBS. The progress of the SBS implementation was monitored and reported to the Sabah Biodiversity Council (Indicator 2). As the project proactively disseminated Sabah’s experience and knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation through domestic and international conferences etc., some are referred to as good practices in National Policy on Biological Diversity in Malaysia (2016–2025) (Indicator 3). Two additional sites were registered under international initiatives of biodiversity conservation – (i) CRBR as a Biosphere Reserve (BR) for the UNESCO MAB Programme (June 2014) and (ii) Kota Kinabalu Wetland as a Ramsar Convention site (October 2016) (Indicator 4).

### <Continuation Status of Project Effects at the Time of Ex-Post Evaluation>

The project effects have continued to the time of ex-post evaluation. SaBC has monitored the SBS progress annually, and the reports were presented to the Sabah Biodiversity Council. SaBC acts as the secretariat and monitoring body, and the Council acts as the steering committee. The CRBR management plan has yet to be endorsed by the State Government: the plan requires approval by the State Cabinet, but it is difficult to reach approval because of the jurisdiction of multiple agencies. Nevertheless, the annual plan of the CRBR management plan, which only requires approval by the steering committee, has been approved, implemented, and monitored regularly. UMS has been involved in CEPA. In the former pilot project sites, livelihood activities have continued with support from the Department of Agriculture and ITBC-UMS. The NRO, ITBC-UMS, and other government agencies, together with NGOs, continued to organize the TCTP up to 2019. The TCTP was financially supported by the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, and JICA. In addition, there has been significant progress on financing mechanisms that the project studied: the concept of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and Conservation Finance was approved by the Sabah State Cabinet in 2018, and a way to the introduction and regulation of the ecosystem conservation fee has been opened through the drafting of an enactment known as the Ecosystem Conservation Authority Enactment 2020 for the purpose of and in relation to the sustainable financing or funding of conservation, management, protection and rehabilitation of the ecosystem and natural resources.

### <Status of Achievement of the Overall Goal at the Time of Ex-Post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal has been achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation. At least 635 researchers visited Sabah for studies on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development from 2017 to 2020 (Indicator 1). More than six visitors visited Sabah for media coverage on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development from 2019 to 2021 (Indicator 2). More than six articles were published in international scientific journals regarding Sabah’s experiences/initiatives on sustainable development and biodiversity conservation from 2018 to 2021 (Indicator 3). Sabah’s contribution to the achievement of the Aichi Target (included in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 adopted at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)) was evidenced in the Sixth National Report of Malaysia to the CBD in 2019 (Indicator 4).

### <Other Impacts at the Time of Ex-Post Evaluation>

Negative impacts were not observed. As a positive impact, SaBC mentioned women empowerment: through the pilot project in Tudan Village, women from the village were involved in the capacity development activities. Currently, several of the women are leading several activities and the village management committee. Also, one of the main counterpart Prof. Charles S. Vairappan, Professor of Natural Products Chemistry at the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, received the Foreign Minister’s Commendation in recognition of his contribution in promoting education and research between Japan and Malaysia including activities through this project.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “ODA Country Data Collection” (2012).

<sup>3</sup> The pilot projects aimed to balance conservation and sustainable development through incentive creation and livelihood improvement in communities adjacent to the protected areas and included activities such as compost and biochar making, bee-keeping and mulberry cultivation and processing.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is high.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results	Source																											
<p>(Project Purpose) Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation for sustainable development in Sabah is promoted with national and international recognition.</p>	<p>Indicator 1 The project activities contribute to SBS Implementation.</p>	<p>Status of the Achievement (Status of the Continuation): achieved (continued) (Project Completion) The SBS was revised with the support of this project and launched in October 2016. The project's activities contributed to the SBS implementation through pilot projects. (Ex-Post Evaluation) The SBS has been implemented.</p>	<p>source: Terminal Evaluation Report, Questionnaire with SaBC</p>																											
	<p>Indicator 2 Indicator 2: The progress of SBS is monitored in the formalized way and reported to the Biodiversity Council/Chief Minister.</p>	<p>Status of the Achievement (Status of the Continuation): achieved (continued) (Project Completion) The revised SBS includes a monitoring system. The progress of the SBS implementation was monitored and reported to the Sabah Biodiversity Council. (Ex-Post Evaluation) SaBC has monitored the SBS progress annually, and the reports were presented to the Sabah Biodiversity Council.</p>	<p>source: Terminal Evaluation Report, Questionnaire with SaBC</p>																											
	<p>Indicator 3 Sabah's experience and knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation are referred as good practices nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Status of the Achievement (Status of the Continuation): achieved (continued) (Project Completion) The National Policy on Biological Diversity in Malaysia (2016–2025) refers to the SBS as a good practice of gazetted protected areas and the Tagal (traditional fisheries resource management in Sabah) as a good practice of using fishery resources sustainably while conserving biodiversity. (Ex-Post Evaluation) See the Overall Goal Indicators 1 and 2.</p>	<p>source: Terminal Evaluation Report, Questionnaire with SaBC</p>																											
	<p>Indicator 4 At least 1 additional site is registered under international initiatives on biodiversity conservation and/or existing site(s) is expanded.</p>	<p>Status of the Achievement (Status of the Continuation): achieved (continued) (Project Completion) Two additional sites. (i) CRBR was declared as a BR for the UNESCO MAB programme in June 2014. (ii) Kota Kinabalu Wetland was registered as a Ramsar Convention site in October 2016. (Ex-Post Evaluation) These registration statuses have not changed up to the time of the ex-post evaluation.</p>	<p>source: Terminal Evaluation Report, Questionnaire with SaBC</p>																											
<p>(Overall Goal) Sabah is known as the Asian Centre of Excellence for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Indicator 1 At least 20 researchers visit Sabah for studies on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in 5 years.</p>	<p>(Ex-Post Evaluation) achieved</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="571 1229 1321 1397"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No. of international researchers newly visited Sabah for study</td> <td>172</td> <td>173</td> <td>200</td> <td>90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Theme of studies</td> <td colspan="4">Ecology (tropical, wildlife, marine, terrestrial), Taxonomy, Wildlife Management, Wildlife Monitoring, Conservation Genetics</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2017	2018	2019	2020	No. of international researchers newly visited Sabah for study	172	173	200	90	Theme of studies	Ecology (tropical, wildlife, marine, terrestrial), Taxonomy, Wildlife Management, Wildlife Monitoring, Conservation Genetics				<p>source: Questionnaire with SaBC, Government of Malaysia</p>												
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<p>Indicator 2 At least 5 visitors visit Sabah for media coverage on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in 5 years.</p>	<p>(Ex-Post Evaluation) achieved</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="571 1460 1321 1930"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of the media</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Volume/pages/</th> <th>Topic, outline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Daily Express (local newspaper)</td> <td>December 22, 2019</td> <td>1</td> <td>Sabah's Conservation rated 'satisfactory'</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Star Online</td> <td>June 19, 2018</td> <td>1</td> <td>Time to protect biodiversity</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Judi Dench's Wild Borneo Adventure Airing Tonight</td> <td>July 2, 2019</td> <td>TV (2-part series)</td> <td>Judi Dench's Wild Borneo Adventure Airing Tonight</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Strait Times</td> <td>August 20, 2021</td> <td>1</td> <td>Conservation and Covid-19 issues main focus in strengthening US-Sabah ties</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Strait Times</td> <td>April 8, 2021</td> <td>1</td> <td>Degraded forest reserves in Sabah can be restored through tree-planting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TV1 RTM</td> <td>May 26, 2021</td> <td>Episode 7 (S8) in Rona Sabah</td> <td>'Herba Hutan Asal Bukit Mahawis' dalam Rona Sabah (Sabah Indigenous Herbs Garden in Timbou, Tambunan District, Sabah).</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name of the media	Date	Volume/pages/	Topic, outline	Daily Express (local newspaper)	December 22, 2019	1	Sabah's Conservation rated 'satisfactory'	The Star Online	June 19, 2018	1	Time to protect biodiversity	Judi Dench's Wild Borneo Adventure Airing Tonight	July 2, 2019	TV (2-part series)	Judi Dench's Wild Borneo Adventure Airing Tonight	New Strait Times	August 20, 2021	1	Conservation and Covid-19 issues main focus in strengthening US-Sabah ties	New Strait Times	April 8, 2021	1	Degraded forest reserves in Sabah can be restored through tree-planting	TV1 RTM	May 26, 2021	Episode 7 (S8) in Rona Sabah	'Herba Hutan Asal Bukit Mahawis' dalam Rona Sabah (Sabah Indigenous Herbs Garden in Timbou, Tambunan District, Sabah).	<p>source: Questionnaire with SaBC and ITBC-UMS</p>
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<p>Indicator 3 At least 5 articles are published at international scientific journals regarding Sabah's experiences/initiatives on sustainable development</p>	<p>(Ex-Post Evaluation) achieved Many articles including the following were published.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="571 2004 1321 2157"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of the article</th> <th>Year</th> <th>Name of the journal</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sustainable development and environmental stewardship: the Heart of Borneo paradox and its implications on green economic transformation in Asia (a chapter in Routledge Handbook of Sustainable Development in Asia)</td> <td>2018</td> <td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name of the article	Year	Name of the journal	Sustainable development and environmental stewardship: the Heart of Borneo paradox and its implications on green economic transformation in Asia (a chapter in Routledge Handbook of Sustainable Development in Asia)	2018	Taylor & Francis	<p>source: Questionnaire with SaBC</p>																						
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and biodiversity conservation in 5 years.	Exploring Tourists' Knowledge, Perceptions and Willingness to Pay on Biodiversity Conservation: Insights from Kinabalu Park, Borneo	2021	IOP Science Conference Series
	The Practice of Biodiversity -related Indigenous Knowledge in Kota Belud, Sabah: A Preliminary Study	2019	Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities
	Integrating Sunda clouded leopard ( <i>Neofelis diardi</i> ) conservation into development and restoration planning in Sabah (Borneo)	2019	Science Direct
	The Impact of Environmental Education (EE) on the Society's Awareness, Responsibility, and Attitude towards the Development of a Lifelong Attitude of Pro-Conservation Behaviour in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah	2021	IOP Conference Series
Indicator 4 Visible evidence is observed in the report to be prepared by the Malaysian Government regarding Sabah's contribution to the achievement of Aichi Target.	(Ex-Post Evaluation) achieved The Sixth National Report of Malaysia to the CBD (December 2019) mentions the contribution of Sabah on multiple pages.		source: Questionnaire with SaBC and the mentioned report

### 3 Efficiency

The project cost and the project period were within the plan (the ratio against the plan: 88% and 100%, respectively). The outputs of the project were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is high.

### 4 Sustainability

#### <Policy Aspect>

Conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem in Sabah have been supported by the National and State Governments as evidenced in the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021–2025) (under “Socio-Economic Development in Sabah and Sarawak”) and Sabah’s Strategic Long Term Action Plan (2016–2035) (under “Sabah as a Smart Green State: Towards Green Industry and Services”). Also, the concept of PES and Conservation Finance was approved by the State Cabinet in 2018. Furthermore, the Department of Agriculture (DOA)’s certification of good agriculture practices such as myGAP (for good agricultural practices) (2001–) and myOrganic (for organic farming) (2007–) promotes conservation of resources and biodiversity.

#### <Institutional/Organizational Aspect>

There have not been any big changes in the organizational structure/setting to promote conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, i.e., SaBC (under NRO) as the secretariat for the SBS and the Sabah Biodiversity Council as the Steering Committee. The DOA and ITBC-UMS are also continuously involved in capacity development in sustainable development and awareness (CEPA), respectively. Regarding staffing, SaBC stated that the number of staff is not enough to continue necessary activities. SaBC is in the process of increasing the number of staff, although it is challenging as the appointment of new staff need to go through the approval of the Ministry of Finance and the Sabah Public Service Commission.

#### <Technical Aspect>

According to SaBC, the technical level has been sustained with necessary skills through continuous training.

#### <Financial Aspect>

According to SaBC, the Federal Government and the State Government have allocated the necessary budget according to the Malaysia Plan and the State Government’s Action Plan, respectively. Also, through the MTCP, the Federal Government allocated a budget to implement the TCTP 2019 through a cost-sharing basis with JICA. ITBC-UMS has secured its funding from the Ministry of Higher Education and financial assistance from private funding bodies.

#### <Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, a slight problem has been observed in terms of the institutional aspects of the implementing agency. Therefore, the sustainability of the project effects is fair.

### 5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project achieved the Project Purpose by the end of the implementation period as the biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in view of sustainable development was promoted in Sabah through the implementation support of the SBS, the pilot livelihood projects, and sharing of their experiences and knowledge. After project completion, the project effects have continued through the implementation of the SBS with various activities, including livelihood improvement and CEPA in the target areas. The Overall Goal has been achieved as Sabah has been known for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in both academic and press. As for sustainability, a slight understaffing problem was found in the institutional/organizational aspect, but all the other aspects were in adequate condition. Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory.

### III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

#### Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

Counterpart agencies are recommended to continue cooperating to keep Sabah known as the Asian Centre of Excellence for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development nationally and internationally.

#### Lessons Learned for JICA:

- It was found that one of the main counterpart Prof. Charles S. Vairappan, Professor of Natural Products Chemistry at the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, received the Foreign Minister’s Commendation in recognition of his

contribution in promoting education and research between Japan and Malaysia. Such a good practice was made possible by continuously keeping good relationship utilizing JICA schemes.

- While making an environment project successful is generally challenging due to its nature of involving various stakeholders, this project has achieved the expected outcomes, which might have largely attributed to the long-term cooperation between JICA and Malaysia in Sabah.



Skeleton of Borneo Elephant was reconstructed in the project. It is used for an environmental education after the project.



Plantation activities for reversing oil palm farm to natural forestry by “Establish Local ESD Activity Bases for Sustainable Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Services”