

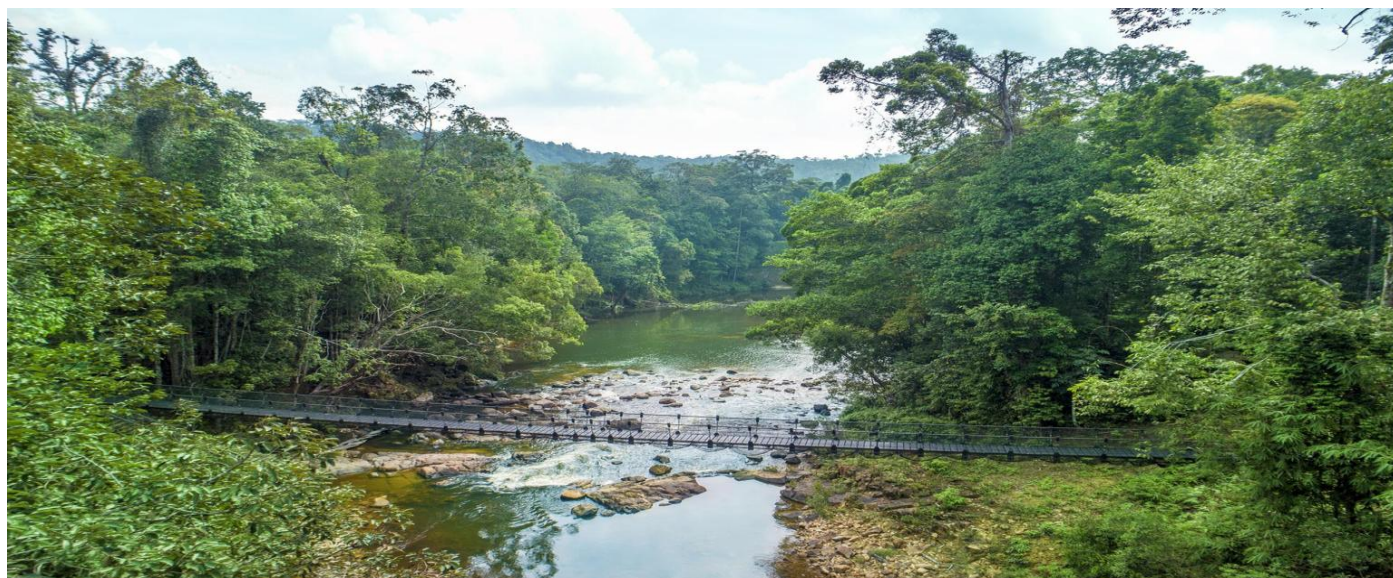


OPERATIONAL PHASE 8 (OP8)

SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY (CPS)

MALAYSIA

2026 - 2029





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OP8 Financial Resources - SGP Country Programme (estimated US\$)¹

Total SGP Grants to date since Country Programme start date (1999)	USD 10,905,651.11
OP8 GEF Core Funds	USD 675,565
OP8 GEF STAR Funds	USD 2,200,000
ICCA GSI Phase 2	USD 250,000
Other funds (expected/to be mobilized)	-

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eighth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme (SGP OP8) builds on 30 years of successful experience in empowering local civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in designing and leading community driven initiatives that have enhanced household wellbeing, increased awareness and resilience regarding environmental threats, and generated global environmental benefits. With economic development pressures intensifying in many parts of the developing world and the associated rising inequalities, local communities, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are becoming more and more marginalized, unable to cope with threats associated with ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change. Lessons learned and experience gained in previous SGP Operational Phases have demonstrated that integrated, landscape-seascape approaches are effective in mobilizing multiple stakeholder collaboration, linking local CSOs/CBOs with enabling partners and achieving mutually supportive livelihood and environmental outcomes at scale.

The objectives of the SGP OP8 is to engage local CSOs/CBOs in landscape-seascape approaches across the world, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance wellbeing and socioeconomic conditions and generate global environmental benefits.

The OP8 objectives reflect the key features of GEF Small Grants Programme 2.0, including new approaches to support youth, women and Indigenous Peoples, linking up with complementary mechanisms, such as the Microfinance Initiative and CSO Challenge Programme, cooperating with other GEF Agencies, and leveraging opportunities with GEF strategies, including the delivery of the GEF-8 Integrated Programmes. In addition, OP8 will facilitate opportunities for innovation and scaling up, catalyze multi-stakeholder alliances to test new approaches through CSOs, and leverage its dialogue platforms towards greater impact. OP8 will also align and contribute to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025).

¹ The level of SGP OP8 resources is an estimated total of: (a) the GEF8 core grant allocation; (b) approved STAR resources; as well as (c) other sources of cost sharing & co-financing (country, regional and/or global levels). SGP countries with remaining OP7 balances that have not been pipelined will be expected to use these balances in line with the OP8 strategic approach in order to be coherent in terms of SGP programming and results expected.



2. COUNTRY PROGRAMME SUMMARY: Key results and achievements

2.1 The GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Malaysia was launched in 1999 and has since supported community-based initiatives addressing biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, sustainable land management, chemicals and waste management, and community resilience.

Over the course of its implementation, SGP Malaysia has evolved from individual project-based interventions to a more integrated, landscape-focused approach under the Seventh Operational Phase (OP7), implemented within the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) framework.

Since inception, SGP Malaysia has supported:

- **294 projects** (262 GEF-funded and 32 non-GEF projects)
- **USD 10,032,951.11** in total grant commitments
- **USD 18,765,969** in total project-level co-financing (cash and in-kind)

The strong co-financing ratio reflects sustained engagement from civil society organisations (CSOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), government agencies, private sector partners, and other stakeholders.

Table 1. SGP Malaysia portfolio (1999-2025)

Country programme	Malaysia		
Year started	1999		
Portfolio profile	GEF	Non-GEF	Total
Number of projects	262	32	294
Grant amount committed	10,032,951.11	872,700	10,905,651.11
Project level co-financing in cash	12,493,980		12,493,980
Project level co-financing in kind	6,271, 989		6,271, 989
Total co-financing*			18,765,969

Source: Global SGP database (2024-2025); *Total co-financing = Total project co-financing (in cash and in kind) + Non-GEF amount committed. Amounts in USD.



2.2 Summary of Key Results and Accomplishments

The results achieved across Operational Phases (particularly under OP7) demonstrate SGP Malaysia's contribution to biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation, land restoration, participatory governance, and inclusive development.

1. Strengthened Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration

SGP Malaysia has significantly contributed to the restoration and improved management of degraded ecosystems across rural and urban landscapes.

Under OP7:

- A total of **5,413 hectares of degraded land** have been restored, surpassing the end-of-project target by 541%, with most restoration achieved in the Upper and Middle Baram landscape.
- A total of **19,514 hectares of landscapes** are currently under improved management practices, representing 45% of the end-of-project target, with ongoing efforts focused on community forest management and sustainable land-use practices.

These achievements reflect strong community uptake of restoration initiatives, particularly in forested and agro-forest landscapes. The programme has supported participatory conservation models in buffer zones, Indigenous territories, and production landscapes, reinforcing biodiversity protection while sustaining livelihoods.

2. Climate Change Mitigation and Low-Carbon Co-Benefits

SGP Malaysia's landscape interventions are projected to deliver substantial greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation benefits through forest restoration, sustainable land management, and improved agricultural practices.

Progress on renewable energy deployment was limited as target communities had already received electrification support through other national and donor-funded programmes. However, SGP contributed to advancing low-carbon development through the Carbonscore initiative, which catalysed a pilot collaboration with the Ministry of Education to develop a national blueprint for low-carbon school buildings.

3. Community Beneficiaries and Social Inclusion

Across earlier operational phases (OP2–OP6), SGP Malaysia reached approximately 54,000 direct beneficiaries, with women comprising 53% of total beneficiaries.



Under OP7, the programme managed to achieve 4,241 beneficiaries with 2,211 being women (52% of the total of beneficiaries).

Gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed across all projects. Women-led CBOs are actively engaged in participatory conservation, sustainable livelihood initiatives, and governance platforms. The programme continues to promote equal access to natural resources, leadership opportunities, and economic participation.

4. Strengthened Partnerships and Landscape Governance

A key innovation under OP7 is the institutionalisation of the landscape approach.

To date:

- More than **70 new partnerships** have been established between CBOs (including **3 women-led organisations**) and enabling stakeholders to support participatory conservation and restoration initiatives across the landscapes.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement platforms have been developed and strengthened to facilitate collaboration among communities, civil society organisations, government agencies and technical partners.
- These partnerships bring together diverse actors working across conservation, restoration and sustainable land management initiatives.

These mechanisms contribute to a strengthened governance framework for coordinated landscape-level interventions. The collaboration among CSOs, Indigenous communities, local authorities, protected area managers and technical partners enhances coherence, reduces fragmentation and supports the scaling-up of conservation and restoration initiatives. While many partnerships are formed around specific project activities, sustained impact will require longer-term collaboration, shared objectives and continued engagement among partners.

5. Knowledge Management and Replication

SGP Malaysia has invested in documenting best practices, strengthening traditional knowledge systems, and promoting cross-learning among landscapes.

Knowledge products, community documentation initiatives, and policy-oriented studies have:

- Enhanced recognition of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs).
- Strengthened traditional knowledge documentation systems.
- Facilitated dialogue between grassroots actors and policymakers.

The landscape-based model adopted under OP7 has created stronger foundations for replication and integration into broader development planning processes.



2.3 Lessons Learned

The design of SGP OP8 in Malaysia builds upon lessons generated from previous operational phases of the programme. Experience from earlier implementation cycles highlights several operational and strategic considerations that are important for strengthening programme effectiveness, improving community participation, and enhancing landscape-level impact. These lessons provide practical guidance for refining implementation approaches and ensuring that OP8 interventions respond more effectively to evolving environmental, socio-economic, and governance contexts.

1. Integrating Conservation with Livelihood Systems Is Essential for Long-Term Sustainability

Experience under OP7 highlighted that environmental conservation initiatives are most effective when closely linked with community livelihood systems. In many landscapes, communities depend on agriculture, fisheries, and natural resource use for income and food security. Where conservation interventions were implemented without viable economic alternatives, sustaining environmental outcomes proved difficult. This experience underscores the importance of designing conservation initiatives that simultaneously support sustainable production systems and livelihood diversification.

2. Strengthening the Capacity of Community-Based Organisations Is Critical for Effective Grant Delivery

OP7 implementation demonstrated that many community-based organisations require substantial support in proposal development, financial management, reporting, and project implementation. This challenge was particularly evident in remote and underserved landscapes, where limited connectivity and administrative capacity affect programme participation. Structured mentoring, proposal development support, and capacity-building mechanisms are therefore essential to enable communities and local organisations to fully participate in SGP grantmaking and sustain project outcomes.

3. Landscape-Level Programming Requires Strong Coordination and Institutional Alignment

The transition from individual project-based interventions to a landscape approach revealed the importance of effective coordination among civil society organisations, government agencies, and other stakeholders. While partnerships strengthened project implementation in several landscapes, coordination mechanisms were not always clearly structured or aligned with existing policy processes. Strengthening platforms that facilitate collaboration, dialogue, and problem-solving among stakeholders is therefore essential to support integrated landscape management.

4. Knowledge Documentation and Learning Systems Need to Be Strengthened

Experience under OP7 showed that while many projects generated valuable local knowledge and successful community-led models, these lessons were not always systematically documented or



shared across landscapes. As a result, opportunities for replication and scaling were sometimes missed. Strengthening knowledge management systems, including documentation of community practices and structured learning exchanges, will be critical to ensure that project experiences inform broader policy dialogue and programme design.

5. Participatory Landscape Assessments Enhance Programme Relevance and Stakeholder Alignment

The Baseline Assessment Workshops conducted during the CPS preparation process demonstrated the value of participatory approaches in generating shared understanding of landscape conditions. Through the application of the SEPLS resilience indicators, stakeholders jointly assessed ecosystem integrity, biodiversity trends, livelihoods, knowledge systems, and governance dynamics. These participatory processes not only provided evidence-based inputs for programme design but also strengthened stakeholder ownership and alignment around OP8 priorities.



3. COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

3.1 Alignment with national priorities

Table 2. List of relevant conventions and national/regional plans or programmes

Conventions + national planning frameworks	Date of ratification / completion
GEF-8 National Dialogues	Completed: 8–10 May 2023
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)	Signed: 12 June 1992 Ratified: 24 June 1994 (entered into force 22 Sept 1994)
CBD National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	First National Policy on Biological Diversity launched in 1998; updated NPBD 2022 - 2030 serves as Malaysia's current NBSAP.
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)	It acceded to the Nagoya Protocol on 5 November 2018; Protocol entered into force for Malaysia on 3 February 2019.
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	Signed: 9 June 1993 Ratified: July 1994 (Non-Annex I Party) Malaysia have submitted NDC 3.0 to UNFCCC following the Cabinet's agreement on the new target on 24 October 2025
UNFCCC National Communications	Report Submissions Year: NC3 - 2018, BUR2 - 2020, BUR3 - 2021, BUR4 - 2022, NC4 - 2024



Conventions + national planning frameworks	Date of ratification / completion
	BTR1 - 2024 (shift to the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), BUR replaced by BTR)
UNFCCC Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)	Not Applicable
UNFCCC National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA)	Not Applicable
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Paris Accord	Malaysia have submitted NDC 3.0 to UNFCCC following the Cabinet's agreement on the new target on 24 October 2025: Absolute GHG emission reduction target of 15 to 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2035 from Malaysia's peak emission level
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	Signed: 6 October 1995 Ratified on 25 June 1997 (Annex II: Asia Party)
UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAP)	Malaysia has initiated engagement with the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD to support ongoing efforts related to the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programmes. Following this, the invitation for expressions of interest was circulated to relevant and interested consultants. While several submissions were received, the applicants generally did not meet the required criteria, with one of the key factors being the limited funding availability, which may have constrained the pool of qualified candidates.
Stockholm Convention (SC) on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	Signed: 16 May 2002 Has not yet ratified the Convention.
SC National Implementation Plan (NIP)	NIP is still under preparation; Malaysia is strengthening capacity and POPs inventory work in anticipation of eventual ratification.



Conventions + national planning frameworks	Date of ratification / completion
Minamata Convention (MC) on Mercury	Signed: 24 September 2014 Has not yet ratified the Convention.
UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Malaysia, together with 192 UN member states, adopted the 2030 Agenda and SDGs on 25 September 2015; SDGs are integrated into national plans (e.g. 11MP, 12MP, SDG Roadmap).
Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the UN SDGs	Submitted in 2017 and 2021; a third VNR will be presented in July 2025.
Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for shared international waterbodies (IW)	Participated in regional GEF International Waters SAPs, notably: ● Sulu–Celebes Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (SCS-LME/SSME) SAP (around 2013–2014) with Indonesia and the Philippines. ● Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) SAP (2015) with eight coastal countries. These SAPs guide regional cooperation on fisheries, marine biodiversity and pollution affecting Malaysian waters.”
Others (list) as relevant: Convention and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)	Signed: 3 September 2025 under the United Nations (UN) Convention. Has not yet ratified

Note: These inputs were compiled by the project team through desktop research and were subsequently reviewed and confirmed by NRES during the FGD session. Further details can be found in the compilation of the FGD Notes in Annex 2.



3.2 Gaps and opportunities

Across the various engagements with multistakeholders through clinic sessions, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and the Validation Workshop, several recurring themes emerged that shape Malaysia's positioning under OP8. The selection of Malaysia's strategic priorities for OP8 was guided by alignment with key national policy frameworks, as well as the landscape priorities summarised in Table 3. In particular, the programme directions reflect the strategic objectives outlined in the *Dasar Agromakanan Negara 2021–2030* (DAN 2.0), the *Pelan Hala Tuju Malaysia ke arah Sifar Plastik Sekali Guna 2018–2030*, and the National Policy on Biological Diversity 2022–2030.

In addition, consultations and discussions with stakeholders highlighted several recurring implementation challenges and opportunities related to these priorities. Four key gaps and corresponding opportunities were identified, which will guide the strategic positioning and implementation approach of the OP8 programme in Malaysia.

1. Gap: Conservation Efforts Not Sufficiently Linked to Livelihood Systems

Stakeholders repeatedly emphasised that environmental protection cannot be separated from community income and food security. Forest, peatland and marine conservation efforts face pressure where communities depend on agriculture, fisheries and natural resource extraction without viable sustainable alternatives.

Opportunity SGP OP8 Malaysia to be explored further:
SGP OP8 Malaysia will adopt an integrated approach that connects ecosystem protection with sustainable production systems. Projects will be encouraged to link forest, river, peatland and marine conservation efforts with agroforestry, natural farming, improved fisheries management and livelihood diversification. This ensures that environmental outcomes are reinforced by viable economic practices, rather than implemented as stand-alone protection measures. Programme design and partnership models will prioritise community ownership and livelihood-linked conservation actions.

2. Gap: Limited Capacity of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)

Discussions highlighted that many community groups face constraints in proposal development, financial compliance, reporting and long-term project management. Remote communities are particularly affected by limited access, connectivity and administrative capacity.

Opportunity SGP OP8 Malaysia to be explored further:
SGP OP8 Malaysia will incorporate structured capacity-building support, clearer grant cycle timelines, planning grants and mentoring mechanisms to strengthen implementation readiness. Governance arrangements will integrate onboarding guidance, capacity screening and flexible monitoring approaches suited to remote and underserved contexts. Strengthening community capacity is essential to ensure that conservation and sustainable production initiatives are delivered effectively and sustained over time.



3. Gap: Fragmented Coordination Between CSOs, Government and Private Sector

Stakeholders noted that coordination platforms sometimes lack clarity of purpose and alignment with state and national programmes. There is a need for practical coordination mechanisms rather than approval-focused forums.

Opportunity SGP OP8 Malaysia to be explored further:

SGP OP8 Malaysia will strengthen landscape-level dialogue platforms as coordination and problem-solving mechanisms, aligned with existing state and national processes. The National Steering Committee (NSC) will play a bridging role to ensure policy coherence and institutional continuity. This approach enables conservation and sustainable livelihood initiatives to align with broader land-use planning, biodiversity strategies and climate adaptation frameworks.

4. Gap: Weak Knowledge Management and Scaling of Lessons

Workshop and FGD inputs highlighted that project-level learning is often not systematically documented, retained or scaled. Community knowledge and successful models risk remaining localised without influencing wider practice.

Opportunity SGP OP8 Malaysia to be explored further:

SGP OP8 Malaysia will strengthen knowledge documentation, community-based learning exchanges and integration of lessons into dialogue platforms and national forums. Monitoring and evaluation systems will focus on practical, landscape-relevant indicators that support evidence-based decision-making. This improves adaptive management and enables successful models in conservation and sustainable production to inform broader policy and practice.

Conclusion

The issues identified through the consultations point to a clear need for stronger integration between ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods, community capacity and institutional coordination. These recurring themes provide the strategic context for Malaysia's OP8 programming and shape the direction of the Country Programme Strategy.

Building on these identified gaps and opportunities, the subsequent section outlines the selected strategic focus areas that will guide SGP OP8 implementation in Malaysia.



3.3 OP8 strategic priorities of the SGP Country Programme

Building on the gaps and opportunities identified through various engagements with multi-stakeholders, it has been agreed that Malaysia’s OP8 Country Programme will focus on two strategic priorities under the SGP OP8 Malaysia framework. These priorities were determined through multi-stakeholder consultations and reflect the most pressing socio-ecological needs identified across the selected landscapes and beyond.

The selected strategic priorities provide a focused yet integrated direction for OP8 implementation, ensuring that interventions address ecosystem degradation while strengthening sustainable livelihoods and food security. Together, they form the core programming framework for grantmaking, governance arrangements and monitoring under this Country Programme Strategy.

The two selected OP8 Strategic Priorities are:

- 1. **Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species**
- 2. **Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security**

To ensure a focused and manageable implementation under OP8, Malaysia has prioritised these two strategic priorities to avoid overstretching resources and to maintain effective programme delivery. Experiences from previous operational phases indicated that the breadth of proposals received through open calls often exceeded the programme’s capacity to support them effectively. By concentrating on these two strategic priorities, the programme can provide more targeted technical and financial support while ensuring that available resources are utilised efficiently. At the same time, the selected priorities align closely with Malaysia’s national biodiversity conservation efforts, as well as its food security ambitions, enabling the programme to balance its limited budget with interventions that contribute meaningfully to ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods in agriculture & fisheries, and food security.

The following table provides a detailed explanation of each priority, including its relevance to national context, identified gaps, and expected focus areas under OP8.



Table 3. SGP Country Programme's alignment with SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives and country priorities/projects/programmes

SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives - Global	SGP Country Programme's OP8 Priorities (choose priorities among the SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives on the left column. Some are mandatory and already included.)	SGP Country Programme's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programmes (identify related projects/ programmes for cooperation)
<i>Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species</i> 1) Improve the effectiveness of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and management through equitable governance systems by recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. 2) Improve community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches, including promoting blue economy approaches (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.). 3) Enhance community led actions for protection of threatened species.	<i>Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species</i> This strategic priority focuses on strengthening community participation in protecting threatened ecosystems and species within the selected landscapes and seascapes. The activities emphasise local stewardship, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity monitoring, which are consistent with Malaysia's national priorities on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection. Prominent activities include: 1. Community-led protection of key biodiversity habitats Example activities: • Community stewardship of forest reserves, wetlands, mangroves, and coral reef areas • Community patrols and monitoring to reduce illegal logging, poaching, or destructive fishing practices 2. Restoration of degraded ecosystems Example activities: • Mangrove restoration in coastal areas • Rehabilitation of degraded forest buffer zones and riverbanks	Aligned with UNDP CPD Outcome 2 on biodiversity conservation, climate action and ecosystem management. SGP supports community-led conservation in the OP8 landscapes of Pahang–Johor, North Sabah and Southwest Sarawak by strengthening Indigenous Peoples' and local community governance systems, biodiversity-friendly livelihood practices and protection of threatened species. These initiatives contribute to Indicator 2.1.2 on protected areas, OECMs and landscapes under improved management practices. SGP interventions complement national biodiversity priorities under the National Policy on Biological Diversity (NPBD) 2022–2030, as well as GEF-supported initiatives such as The Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program in Sabah and Sarawak; and forest connectivity programmes, by providing last-mile community-level implementation.



	• Coral reef restoration initiatives 3. Community monitoring of threatened species and biodiversity Example activities: • Community biodiversity monitoring programmes • Citizen science initiatives to track wildlife populations and ecosystem health • Documentation of local ecological knowledge 4. Conservation of ecological corridors and critical habitats Example activities: • Protection of wildlife corridors connecting fragmented forest landscapes • Habitat protection for endangered species within community-managed areas 5. Community awareness and capacity building for biodiversity conservation Example activities: • Training local communities as conservation stewards or eco-guards • Community education programmes on biodiversity and ecosystem protection These activities contribute to strengthening ecosystem protection and species conservation efforts, in line with Malaysia's National Policy on Biological Diversity which promotes community participation and ecosystem-based conservation approaches.	
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<i>Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security</i> 1) Increase efficiency and effectiveness of overall food production and value chain, including in vulnerable ecosystems (mountains, island ecosystems, etc.). 2) Increase diversification and livelihood improvement. 3) Remove deforestation from the supply chain and expand restoration of degraded lands.	<i>Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security</i> This strategic priority supports sustainable livelihood practices that enhance food security while reducing pressure on natural ecosystems. The focus is on improving agricultural and fisheries practices through community-led initiatives that promote sustainable resource management and resilient food systems. Prominent activities include: 1. Promotion of sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture Example activities: • Agroecology and organic farming practices • Climate-smart agriculture techniques • Integrated farming systems that improve soil health and productivity 2. Sustainable community fisheries management Example activities: • Community-based fisheries resource management • Establishment of community-managed fishing zones • Monitoring of fish stocks and responsible fishing practices 3. Sustainable aquaculture development Example activities: • Small-scale sustainable aquaculture systems • Integrated aquaculture practices that minimise environmental impacts	Contributes to CPD Output 1.2 on green and blue economy pathways and resilient local economic development. SGP promotes sustainable smallholder agriculture, community fisheries management and diversified livelihood opportunities in vulnerable ecosystems including coastal, island and highland landscapes. These interventions complement the GEF-funded FOLUR Malaysia programme by supporting responsible commodity production and sustainable landscape management while strengthening community participation in value chains. SGP initiatives also reinforce national priorities under the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP) to promote sustainable rural development and biodiversity-friendly production systems.
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	4. Strengthening local food systems and value chains Example activities: • Community processing and marketing of local agricultural and fisheries products • Development of local food markets supporting sustainable production 5. Capacity building for sustainable food production Example activities: • Training farmers and fishers on sustainable production practices • Knowledge sharing on improved farming and fisheries technologies These activities support national strategies aimed at strengthening sustainable agrofood systems and improving food security through modern, resilient, and environmentally responsible production practices.	
Community-Based Adaptation (CBA Phase 3) (only applicable to CBA Phase 3 participating countries) (with DFAT funding) 1) Reduce vulnerability and improve the adaptive capacity of communities. 2) Provide countries with concrete ground-level experience on Climate Change Adaptation and CBA. 3) Provide clear policy lessons and mainstream CBA within national processes.	Community-Based Adaptation (CBA Phase 3) Malaysia is a participant of the CBA programme with funding ending June 2026 and has been supporting community-based climate adaptation approaches through initiatives that focus on ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-resilient livelihoods that strengthen community resilience to climate change impacts. 5 projects have been supported through this funding and complemented Malaysia's national priorities on biodiversity conservation, sustainable food systems, and disaster risk reduction.	Aligned with CPD Outcome 2 and Output 2.1 on climate adaptation and resilience. CBA initiatives will strengthen ecosystem-based adaptation and enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities within OP8 landscapes, particularly in flood-prone river basins and coastal areas. These projects generate practical lessons and locally tested adaptation models that contribute to national climate adaptation planning processes. They also complement broader UNDP-supported climate resilience and adaptation programmes while strengthening the resilience of Indigenous Peoples and smallholder communities.



Global ICCA Support Initiative (ICCA GSI Phase 2) (only applicable to ICCA GSI Phase 2 participating countries) (with BMUV IKI funding) 1) Work Package 1: Provide national level ICCA small grants. 2) Work Package 2: Provide legal and governance assistance to ICCAs. 3) Work Package 3: Network exchange and knowledge management for ICCAs.	Global ICCA Support Initiative (ICCA GSI Phase 2) (only applicable to ICCA GSI Phase 2 participating countries) (with BMUV IKI funding) Work Package 1: Provide National-Level ICCA Small Grants Support community-led conservation initiatives through small grants that strengthen stewardship of ICCA territories and ecosystems. Key activities include: • Supporting participatory community mapping and biodiversity baseline assessments to identify and document ICCA territories. • Establishing ICCA demonstration sites through community-led land-use planning and ecosystem restoration activities such as reforestation and rehabilitation. • Promoting sustainable livelihood models linked to biodiversity conservation, including eco-tourism, agroforestry, and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) development. • Documenting traditional ecological knowledge and community governance practices to strengthen local conservation systems. Work Package 2: Provide Legal and Governance Assistance to ICCAs Strengthen the enabling policy and institutional environment for the recognition and governance of ICCAs in Malaysia. Key activities include:	Supports CPD Output 2.1 on biodiversity conservation and implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Through ICCA small grants and governance support, SGP strengthens recognition, documentation and protection of Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved territories within OP8 landscapes. These initiatives contribute to Malaysia's commitments to expand Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and enhance community-based governance of conservation areas. The initiative also strengthens knowledge exchange and networking among ICCA actors at national and global levels.
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	• Supporting the expansion and operationalisation of the ICCA Malaysian Consortium and thematic working groups. • Developing policy recommendations and frameworks for Indigenous Peoples' biodiversity governance. • Promoting the integration of ICCA principles into national biodiversity strategies and development planning processes. • Facilitating mechanisms for conflict mediation and equitable benefit-sharing related to community conserved areas. Work Package 3: Network Exchange and Knowledge Management for ICCAs Strengthen regional and global collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange among ICCA stakeholders. Key activities include: • Facilitating intergenerational learning platforms for Indigenous leaders, youth, and women. • Conducting capacity building and technical training on governance, biodiversity monitoring, and ICCA management. • Supporting regional and global knowledge exchanges and networking platforms among ICCA communities, organisations, and technical partners. • Promoting women and youth-led initiatives to strengthen inclusive participation in ICCA governance and conservation activities.	
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<i>CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms</i> 1) Promote/enhance community voices and participation in global and national policy, strategy development related to global environment and sustainable development issues.	This initiative focuses on strengthening structured coordination and partnership-building across the selected landscapes through CSO–Government–Private Sector Dialogue Platforms. Facilitated by the SGP Secretariat in coordination with the National Steering Committee (NSC), these platforms will support alignment between community-led initiatives, state development priorities, and national environmental frameworks. Key priorities include: • Establishing landscape-level dialogue platforms to coordinate actions among CSOs, local communities, government agencies, and private sector actors. • Engaging relevant institutions such as local NGOs, community groups, Rukun Tetangga, PIBG, UPEN, and sectoral agencies related to forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and environmental management. • Strengthening collaboration with private sector stakeholders (e.g., plantation and fisheries actors) to promote sustainable production practices. • Using dialogue platforms to identify implementation challenges, mobilise partnerships, and support scaling of successful community-led initiatives. • Supporting the formation or strengthening of community-based governance mechanisms, such	Aligned with CPD Output 3.1 on institutional strengthening and inclusive governance. SGP facilitates dialogue platforms that promote participation of civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities in national and subnational policy discussions on biodiversity conservation, sustainable commodity production and climate action. These platforms strengthen collaboration among government, private sector and community stakeholders while complementing multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms under other UNDP and GEF programmes such as FOLUR where the development of integrated landscape management systems with multi-stakeholder participation for effective land-use planning and management in Sabah and Sarawak, are key goals.
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	as watershed committees or landscape coordination groups. Through these mechanisms, the initiative will strengthen cross-sector coordination, improve policy alignment, and create pathways for scaling community-based environmental solutions across the selected landscapes.	
Enhancing social inclusion 1) Promote inclusive targeted initiatives. 2) Mainstream social inclusion in all projects. (e.g. women/girls, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and persons with disabilities).	Enhancing social inclusion This initiative prioritises mainstreaming social inclusion across the SGP grant portfolio to ensure that women, Indigenous People and Local Communities, youth, and persons with disabilities are actively engaged in project design, implementation, and benefit-sharing. The approach recognises the different governance and socio-economic contexts across the selected landscapes, including challenges related to customary land recognition in the Pahang–Johor landscape and implementation gaps affecting Native Customary Rights (NCR) in Sabah and Sarawak. Key priorities include: • Integrating gender equality and social inclusion requirements across the grant cycle, including inclusive participation in project design and implementation.	Implements the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle across CPD outcomes. SGP ensures inclusive participation and equitable benefit-sharing by prioritizing Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and marginalized communities within OP8 landscapes. Interventions promote FPIC-based approaches and strengthen the socio-economic empowerment of community groups through sustainable livelihood opportunities. These efforts align with inclusive development priorities under the Ekonomi MADANI framework and the Green and Resilient Recovery (GRR) Local Action Grant project, implemented by UNDP Malaysia, funded by the Ministry of Finance Malaysia.



	• Requiring projects to report sex- and age-disaggregated beneficiary data and demonstrate equitable participation and benefit-sharing. • Providing capacity-building and orientation sessions to strengthen gender-responsive project design and inclusive monitoring. • Introducing positive incentives in project selection to encourage leadership roles and decision-making participation for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. • Supporting community governance and recognition of customary land use, including Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs). • Strengthening engagement with women-led organisations, youth initiatives, and Indigenous community networks to expand participation and leadership opportunities. Through these measures, the initiative aims to strengthen inclusive participation, enhance community ownership of environmental initiatives, and ensure that conservation and sustainable livelihood interventions deliver equitable and long-term benefits across the selected landscapes.	
Knowledge Management (KM) 1) Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities.	Knowledge Management This initiative focuses on systematically capturing, sharing, and utilising knowledge and lessons generated across SGP-	Supports knowledge generation and learning under CPD Output 3.2 on data, innovation and evidence-based policy development. SGP captures lessons and best practices from community-level interventions and strengthens the



2) Improve capacities of CSOs/CBOs. 3) Conduct South-South Exchanges to promote technology transfer and replication of good practices.	supported projects within the selected landscapes. Facilitated by the NC in coordination with the NSC, knowledge management will be embedded as a core requirement across all grants to ensure that community-driven results contribute to broader learning, replication, and policy influence at the state and national levels. Key priorities include: • Capturing knowledge and lessons from projects and activities through a defined process, with expected outputs including case studies, lessons learned reports, toolkits, policy briefs, and site demonstration materials. • Developing and refining a knowledge management product guideline document for grantees through the planning grant to ensure consistent and quality knowledge outputs. • Embedding knowledge product identification and documentation requirements within the grant process and project lifecycle. • Conducting the annual CSO–Government–Private Sector dialogue platform in each landscape as a dedicated knowledge management and dissemination event, incorporating site demonstrations, knowledge fairs, and lessons learned sharing. • Utilising the NSC as a policy bridge to channel community-generated evidence into national policy processes and strategic direction.	capacities of CSOs and community organizations through training, peer learning and South-South knowledge exchanges. Knowledge generated from OP8 landscapes will contribute to national reporting processes and UNDP-supported knowledge platforms to promote replication and scaling of successful models.
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	Through these mechanisms, knowledge management will convert community-level results into scalable models and position SGP OP8 Malaysia as a contributor to evidence-based policy at the national level.	
Results Management, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) 1) Administer new M&E strategy in Country Programme and project design, implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms.	Results Management, Monitoring & Evaluation This initiative focuses on implementing a Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL) approach across all SGP-supported projects and the Country Programme. Drawing on lessons from OP7, where community-based organisations, Indigenous groups, and elderly-led initiatives struggled with heavy administrative and reporting requirements, the OP8 M&E framework places clear emphasis on simplification, targeted capacity building, and collaborative monitoring processes that are practical for community partners to manage. Key priorities include: • Administering a new M&E strategy in Country Programme and project design, implementation, and overall decision-making using participatory mechanisms, implementing the "do no harm" principle and requiring Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) when working with Indigenous People and Local Communities. • Conducting mandatory M&E Inception Workshops for all grantees prior to project implementation to align tracking and reporting with GEF-8 core indicators.	Aligned with the UNDP CPD Results Framework and national reporting obligations under the CBD and UNFCCC. SGP OP8 Malaysia implements participatory monitoring and evaluation systems that strengthen community-level data collection and contribute to tracking progress on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and climate action indicators. Monitoring results will contribute to Indicator 2.1.2 and related national environmental indicators, while complementing UNDP-supported programme evaluations. The approach supports adaptive management and evidence-based decision-making across OP8 landscapes.



	• Adopting a Cluster Monitoring approach, grouping site visits geographically across the three dispersed landscapes to coordinate joint monitoring missions with state agencies or UNDP Country Office representatives. • Developing simplified M&E tracking sheets in Bahasa Malaysia using tick-box formats and numerical inputs, with provisions for alternative reporting such as geolocated video logs, audio recordings, or WhatsApp photo updates for grantees in remote areas, subject to global discussions on reporting flexibility. • Allocating strategic grants to capable NGOs to train regular grantees on M&E practices and coordinate monitoring activities within each landscape. • Establishing a pool of academics and partner consultants from local institutions such as Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, or universities in the Klang Valley to conduct independent end-of-phase Country Portfolio Reviews. Through these measures, M&E will support continuous learning, evidence-based decision-making, and adaptive management throughout the programme cycle.	
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Note: These inputs were compiled by the project team through the multiple clinic sessions and FGD sessions with the SGP Malaysia's multistakeholders. Further details can be found in the compilation of the Clinic Session Notes as well as FGD Notes in Annex 2.



4. OP8 PRIORITY LANDSCAPES/SEASCAPES & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

4.1 Grantmaking within the priority landscape/seascapes

In preparation for OP8 implementation, Malaysia carried out a structured and participatory process to identify priority landscapes and seascapes where most grantmaking resources will be focused. The process included technical screening against OP8 selection criteria, multi-stakeholder consultations, boundary-setting exercises and national validation. This approach ensured that the selected areas were ecologically significant, socio-economically relevant, and supported by active local stakeholders. Overall, the process provided a clear and transparent basis for prioritisation.

To strengthen the selection, SEPLS (Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes) baseline assessments were conducted in the three selected landscapes/seascapes. These assessments involved community members, local district representatives and CSOs, and were designed to capture real conditions on the ground, including ecosystem pressures, livelihood challenges, governance gaps and resilience capacity. The findings, presented in Annex 1, form the foundation for OP8 implementation and clearly identify the specific needs and vulnerabilities within each landscape/seascape.

Based on these findings, approximately 70% of OP8 grantmaking resources will be concentrated within the selected priority landscapes/seascapes to ensure focused and meaningful impact. The remaining resources will be allocated outside the priority areas to address emerging national priorities, support innovative initiatives, and respond to urgent environmental needs aligned with GEF objectives. This approach ensures targeted support where needs are clearly identified, while maintaining flexibility at the national level.

a) Process for selecting priority landscapes and seascapes

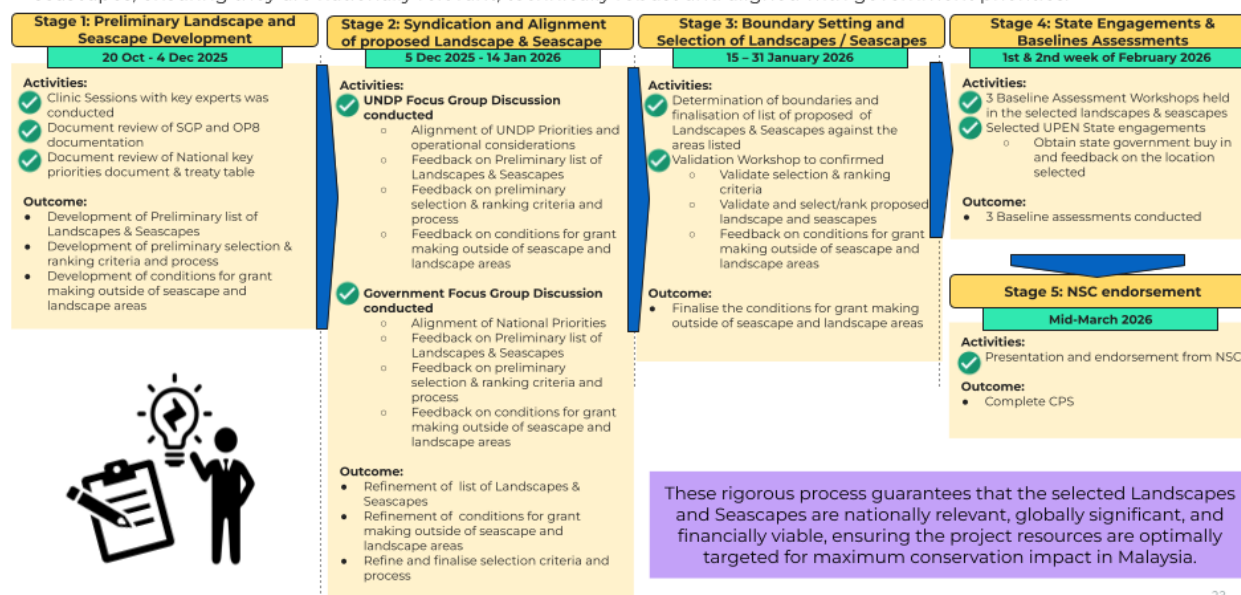
In accordance with UNDP and GEF OP8 requirements, Malaysia was required to identify priority landscapes and/or seascapes to guide focused grantmaking under this phase. To ensure that the final selection was credible, nationally relevant and aligned with both global and local priorities, a structured and multi-stage process was undertaken. The approach combined technical document review, institutional consultation, spatial boundary refinement and formal validation to ensure that the proposed landscapes/seascapes were ecologically significant, socio-economically relevant and operationally feasible.

The selection process was therefore not based on a single assessment, but developed progressively through clearly defined phases, each building upon the previous stage. The diagram below summarises the key stages undertaken to develop, refine and validate Malaysia's OP8 priority landscapes and seascapes.



Landscapes/Seascapes selection process

The selection process follows five structured stages to develop, refine and validate Malaysia's OP8 landscapes and seascapes, ensuring they are nationally relevant, technically robust and aligned with government priorities.



● Stage 1: Preliminary Document Reviews and Technical Screening

The process began with a structured desk-based review conducted in parallel with targeted engagements with key experts. This stage aimed to establish a strong technical foundation before any landscape/seascape was shortlisted.

Three key activities were undertaken concurrently:

- 1. Clinic sessions with 10 key experts**, involving technical discussions on landscape priorities, implementation considerations and grantmaking conditions;
- 2. Review of SGP and OP8 documentation**, including past SGP portfolios and OP8 strategic guidance;
- 3. Review of 23 national priority documents and relevant treaty tables**, to ensure alignment with Malaysia's biodiversity, climate and environmental commitments. The national document review covered, among others:
 - National biodiversity strategies and action plans;
 - Forest and marine conservation frameworks;
 - Central Forest Spine and ecological corridor initiatives;
 - Climate adaptation and land degradation priorities;
 - Socio-economic vulnerability indicators, including Indigenous and marginalised communities;
 - Relevant international environmental commitments linked to OP8.



As a result of this stage, a preliminary list of 95 potential landscapes and seascapes across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak was developed. Initial selection and ranking criteria were also formulated, together with preliminary considerations for grantmaking outside priority landscapes and seascapes. These outputs provided a structured starting point for further refinement and institutional consultation in the subsequent stage.

Note: Further documentation of the clinic sessions, document review summaries, and preliminary listings is provided in the compilation of the Clinic Session Notes and the Validation Workshop Report in Annex 2.

- **Stage 2: Clinic Sessions and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with UNDP and Government (NRES)**

Building on the preliminary long list and initial selection criteria developed in Stage 1, Stage 2 focused on testing and refining the proposed landscapes and seascapes through structured stakeholder engagements. This phase ensured that the preliminary assessment was aligned with UNDP operational priorities and national policy directions before spatial boundaries were formally defined.

Two main sets of focus group discussions were conducted:

1. **UNDP Focus Group Discussions (four rounds held on 9 December 2025, 23 December 2025 and 14 January 2026)**

The UNDP sessions reviewed the preliminary shortlist, refined the selection and ranking criteria, and discussed conditions for grantmaking both within and outside the proposed landscapes/seascapes. These discussions also examined implementation feasibility and alignment with OP8 strategic priorities.

2. **Government Focus Group Discussion with NRES (held on 16 December 2025).**

The session with NRES further aligned the proposed landscapes/seascapes with national environmental agendas and policy frameworks. Feedback was obtained on institutional readiness, coordination mechanisms and the strategic representation of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak within the OP8 framework.

Through these engagements, the preliminary shortlist was refined, selection criteria were strengthened, and key considerations for grantmaking conditions were clarified. This stage provided institutional validation and policy alignment before moving into the boundary-setting exercise in Stage 3.

Note: Further documentation can be found in the compilation of the Clinic Session Notes and the FGD Notes in Annex 2.

- **Stage 3: Boundary Setting and Multistakeholders Validation**



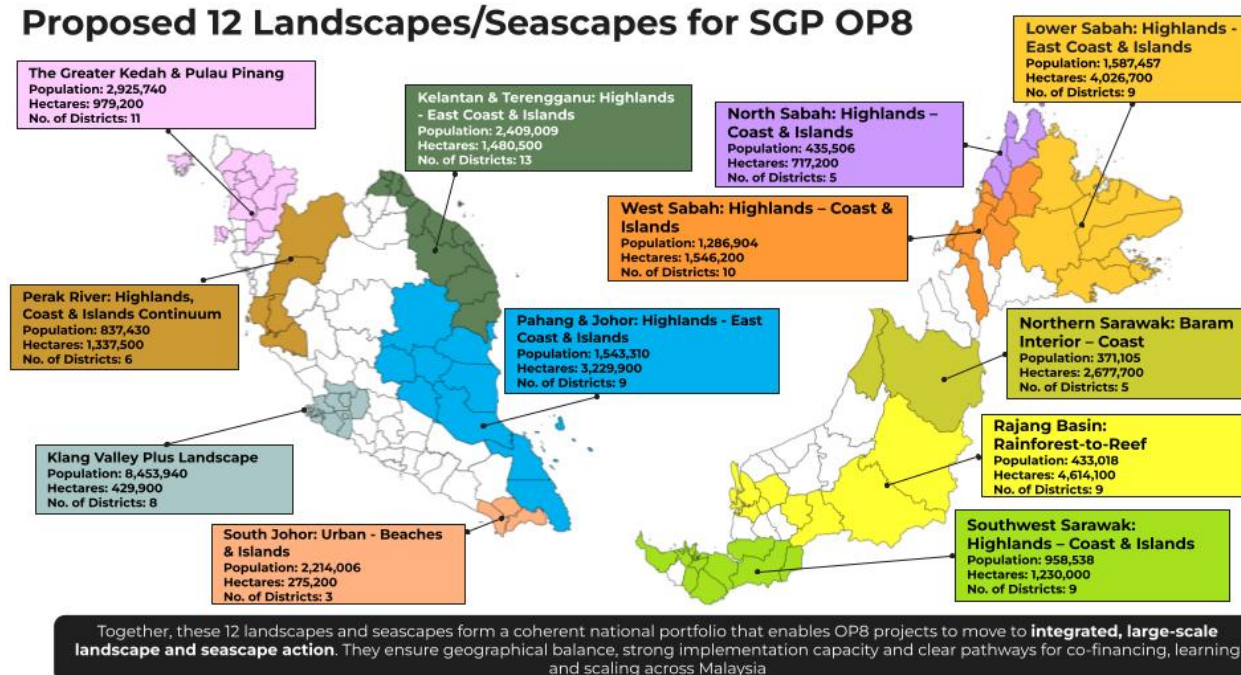
Stage 3 focused on translating earlier analyses and stakeholder inputs into clearly defined landscape and seascape boundaries, as well as the filtering process, followed by formal validation through a multi-stakeholder workshop.

1) Boundaries-Setting Exercise & Filtering process

Building on the document review and technical clinic sessions conducted in the earlier stages, a broad pool of potential areas was first identified across Malaysia. The document review identified 74 locations, while insights from the clinic sessions contributed 44 additional locations. After consolidating overlaps and clustering related areas, a preliminary list of 95 potential locations was established.

This preliminary list was subsequently reviewed through Focus Group Discussions with government agencies and UNDP, where feedback recommended consolidating related locations into larger and more coherent landscape and seascape systems. A structured boundary-setting and feasibility assessment was then conducted to ensure each proposed area had clear ecological boundaries, community presence, and implementation feasibility. Through this filtering process, twelve (12) landscapes and seascapes across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak were identified for further validation under the SGP OP8 programme.

Proposed 12 Landscapes/Seascapes for SGP OP8



In determining the boundaries, the following considerations were applied:



- Ecological coherence, including river basins, forest complexes and marine ecosystem connectivity (rainforest to reef approach);
- Administrative alignment at state and district levels to support coordination and implementation;
- Presence of communities and accessibility for ground-level engagement;
- Feasibility of coordinated and focused grantmaking within clearly delineated spatial units.

This exercise resulted in a consolidated master list of twelve proposed landscapes/seascapes with defined geographical scope.

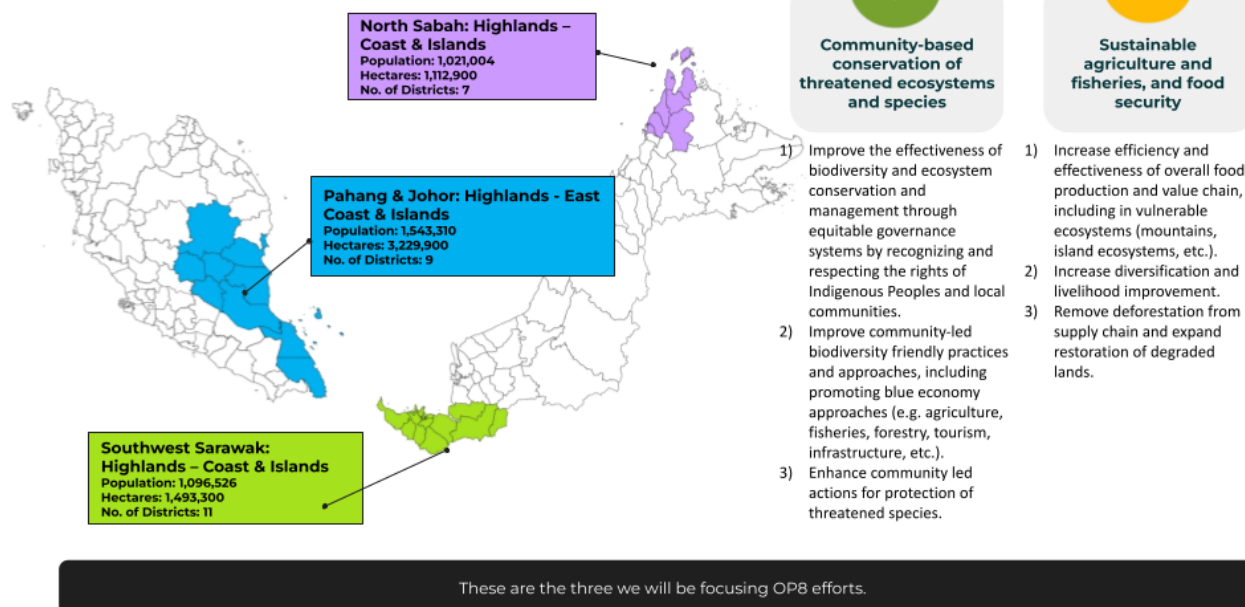
2) Multistakeholders Validation Workshop

The twelve proposed landscapes and seascapes were subsequently presented at the National Validation Workshop for confirmation of boundaries, selection and ranking. The workshop validated the proposed spatial definitions and incorporated in-depth discussions on governance considerations and implementation readiness. From the twelve proposed areas, three landscapes and seascapes were endorsed by attending multistakeholders for OP8 implementation. Following the workshop, the selected landscapes and seascapes were further refined based on stakeholder feedback, including adjustments to certain district boundaries to strengthen ecological coherence and implementation practicality.

To ensure a focused and manageable implementation under OP8, Malaysia has prioritised two strategic priorities for programme implementation. This approach reflects lessons from previous operational phases, where the breadth of proposals received through open calls often exceeded the programme's capacity to support them effectively. By concentrating on these priorities, the programme can provide more targeted technical and financial support while ensuring that available resources are utilised efficiently. At the same time, the selected priorities align closely with Malaysia's national biodiversity conservation efforts and food security ambitions, enabling the programme to balance its limited budget with interventions that contribute meaningfully to ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods in agriculture and fisheries, and food security.



The 3 selected landscapes/seascapes



Note: Further documentation can be found in the Boundaries Setting Documentation and the Validation Workshop Report in Annex 2.

• Stage 4: Baseline Assessment Workshops (SEPLS-Based Ground Validation) with States Multistakeholders Engagement

Following the endorsement of the three selected landscapes/seascapes at the Validation Workshop, Stage 4 focused on establishing on-the-ground baseline conditions through participatory baseline assessment workshops.

Three (3) Baseline Assessment Workshops were conducted in the selected areas:

1. Kuching, Sarawak – Southwest Sarawak: Highlands–Coast & Islands
2. Kuantan, Pahang – Pahang & Johor: Highlands–East Coast & Islands
3. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah – North Sabah: Highlands–Coast & Islands

These workshops applied the SEPLS (Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes) framework to capture structured, community-based assessments of ecological conditions, livelihood challenges, governance gaps and resilience capacity. Participants included representatives from *Bahagian Perancangan Ekonomi Negeri (BPEN)*, local government agencies, NGOs, CSOs and community members.



The objective at this stage was not to reselect the landscapes, but to understand their real conditions on the ground, including pressures faced by communities, ecosystem vulnerabilities, institutional constraints and priority support needs. The discussions generated consolidated baseline scores with documented justifications, providing an evidence-based starting point for OP8 implementation.

Additional follow-up discussions were conducted after the completion of the Baseline Assessment Workshops. Following the workshops across the three selected landscapes/seascapes, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held with the UNDP Malaysia SGP Secretariat on 6 March 2026 to review the outcomes and prepare the next steps. During this session, the compiled Baseline Assessment Workshop (BAW) reports capturing participants' feedback, perceptions and scoring under the SEPLS framework were presented and submitted. The discussion also focused on consolidating the findings and refining the drafting of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS) document prior to its submission and presentation to the National Steering Committee (NSC) for endorsement.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in Section (b): Selected Landscapes/Seascapes for OP8.

- **Stage 5: National Steering Committee (NSC) Endorsement**

Following the completion of the boundary-setting exercise, multi-stakeholder validation, and baseline assessment workshops, the consolidated Country Programme Strategy (CPS), including the three selected priority landscapes/seascapes, was presented to the National Steering Committee (NSC) for endorsement.

This endorsement formally concluded the landscape/seascape selection process and confirmed the three selected areas as the focus for OP8 implementation, supported by documented technical analysis, stakeholder validation and on-the-ground baseline evidence.

b) Selected landscapes/seascapes for OP8

Following the structured selection process described in Section (a), three priority landscapes/seascapes were identified and validated through multi-stakeholder engagement. As part of Stage 4 of the process, participatory Baseline Assessment Workshops (BAWs) were conducted in each of the three selected areas using the SEPLS (Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes) framework.

The workshops aimed to ground-truth the selected landscapes by capturing participants' perceptions of on-the-ground conditions. Representatives from state agencies (BPEN and Districts Representatives), NGOs, CSOs and local communities assessed ecosystem pressures, livelihood dependence, governance gaps and resilience capacity within their respective landscapes/seascapes. The SEPLS assessment was carried out based on participants' experience and knowledge of the local socio-ecological systems, reflecting perspectives from both urban and rural districts within the landscape/seascape areas.



The process generated consolidated baseline scores with documented justifications, capturing a synthesis of stakeholder perceptions and local insights on ecological and socio-economic conditions. These findings provide structured evidence on priority vulnerabilities and support needs, forming the operational foundation for OP8 implementation within the selected landscapes and seascapes. A summary of each landscape/seascape is presented below.

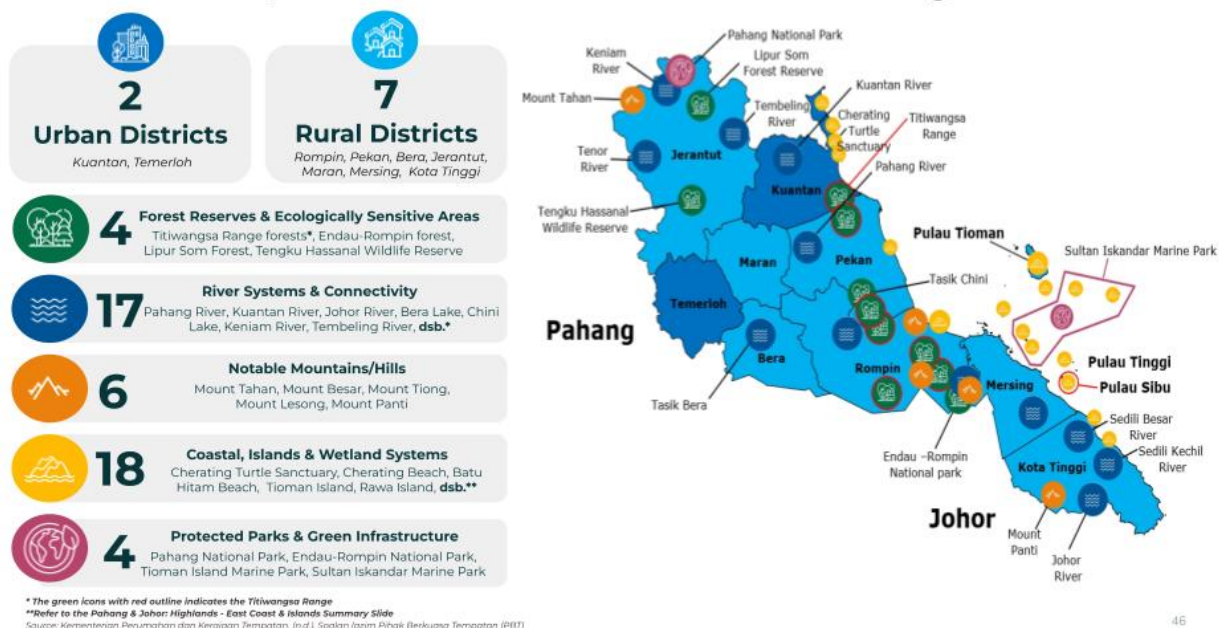
1. Pahang & Johor: Highlands – East Coast & Islands (Peninsular Malaysia)



The Pahang & Johor Landscape represents a continuous rainforest-to-reef socio-ecological corridor linking inland forest reserves and river basins to coastal zones and offshore islands. Anchored by the Pahang River system and extending through Endau-Rompin forests to Tioman and the east coast marine areas, the landscape integrates highland forests, floodplains, mangroves, beaches and island ecosystems into a single interconnected system.



The Mosaic Map and Districts Jurisdiction for Pahang & Johor



The landscape covers 7 districts in Pahang and 2 districts in Johor, comprising both urban (Kuantan, Temerloh) and predominantly rural districts (Jerantut, Maran, Bera, Pekan, Rompin, Mersing, Kota Tinggi). Total area: 3,229,900 hectares which included:

- 4 Forest Reserves & Ecologically Sensitive Areas (including Titiwangsa Range and Endau-Rompin forest)
- 17 River systems and connectivity corridors (Pahang, Kuantan, Johor rivers and major tributaries)
- 6 Notable mountains/hills
- 18 Coastal, island and wetland systems
- 4 Protected parks and marine areas (e.g., Pahang National Park, Endau-Rompin National Park, Tioman Marine Park, Sultan Iskandar Marine Park)

In addition to the landscape components described above, workshop participants validated the presence of several key species groups within the Pahang & Johor: Highlands–East Coast & Islands landscape. These include a wide range of terrestrial, freshwater and coastal biodiversity reflecting the landscape’s rainforest-to-reef ecological connectivity. Notable wildlife species include *Harimau Malaya*, *Gajah Asia*, *Tapir Malaya*, *Beruang Matahari*, *Rusa Sambar*, *Kijang*, *Kancil*, *Babi Berjanggut*, *Lotong Cengkong*, *Lotong Berbelang*, *Ungka tangan-putih*, *Kongkang*, *Tenggiling*, *Musang*, *Tupai*, *Eggang Tebusu* and *Merbah Karang*. Freshwater ecosystems across the river basins also support important fish species associated with the major river systems.



The landscape further supports diverse plant species including dipterocarp forest trees such as *Meranti* and *Keruing*, *Pelawan* trees, and coastal and wetland species such as *Bakau*, *Bakau Kurap*, *Api-api* and *Nipah*, alongside cultivated crops including *kelapa sawit*, *getah*, *kelapa*, *padi* and *nanas*, which contribute to rural livelihoods within the landscape.

Workshop participants also validated the presence of several environmental hazards affecting the landscape. These include monsoon floods, flash floods, air pollution, land subsidence, drought, storms and landslides, which pose risks to ecosystems, coastal communities and agricultural activities. These hazards reflect the combined pressures of climate variability, coastal exposure and land-use changes across the forest–river–coastal continuum of the landscape.

The total population across the landscape is estimated at 1,543,310 people, with women representing 729,274 individuals (47.3%) and youth accounting for 429,300 individuals (27.8%). The landscape also includes a significant Orang Asli population of 51,922 people, particularly concentrated in forest and riverine areas. Data on persons with disabilities (PWD) is available only at the state level due to limitations in district-level statistics. Overall, the demographic composition reflects strong community presence across both rural and semi-urban districts, with many communities relying on surrounding ecosystems for livelihoods, food security and cultural identity.

Industry data indicates that economic activities within the landscape vary between urban and rural districts. Based on participant feedback:

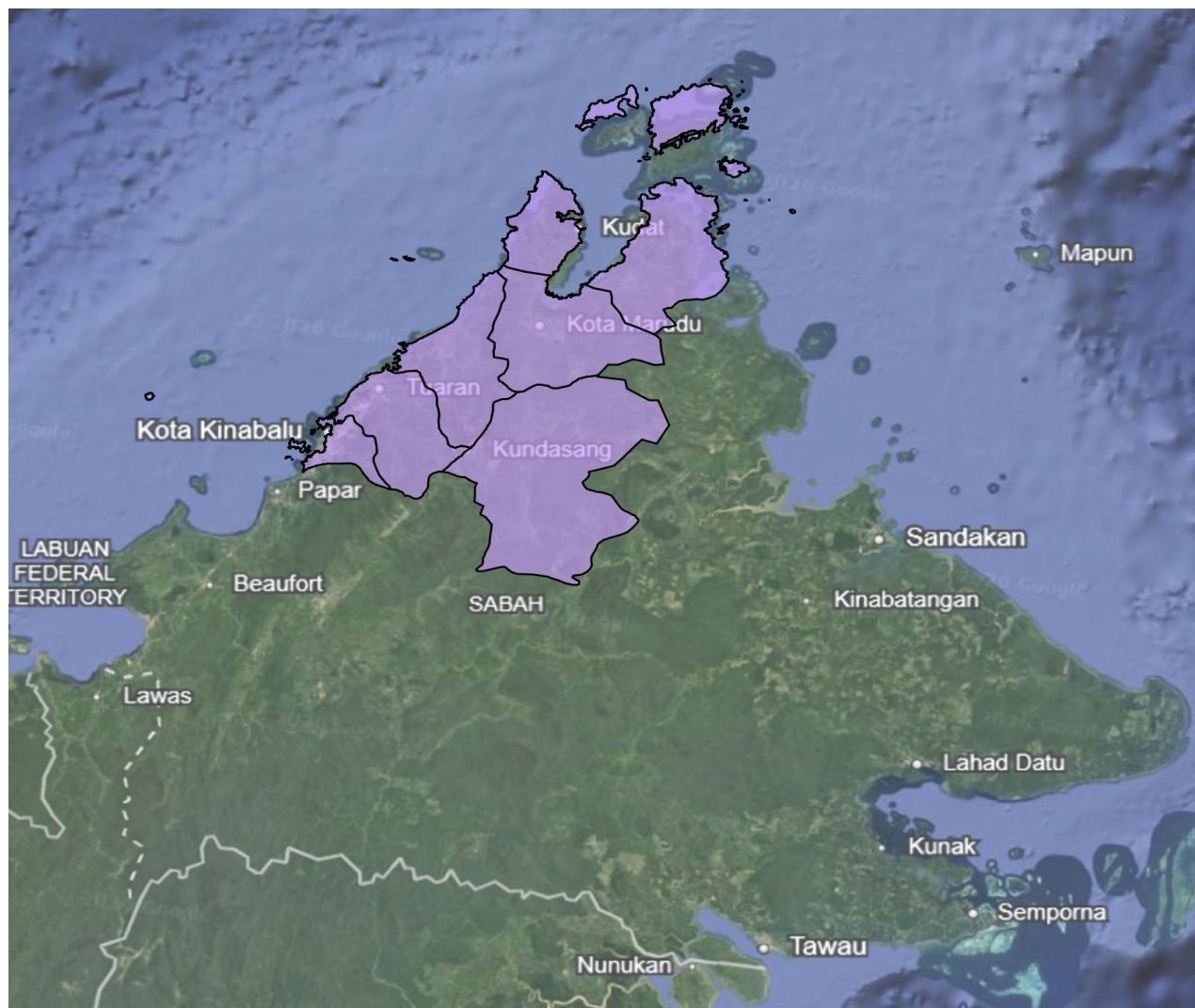
- In urban districts, employment is largely concentrated in accommodation and food services, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, wholesale and retail trade, construction, and transportation and storage.
- In rural districts, economic activities remain anchored in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, followed by accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail trade, household-based economic activities, and arts, entertainment and recreation sectors.

This pattern reflects a mixed economic structure where resource-based livelihoods coexist with expanding service and commercial sectors, underscoring the importance of aligning ecosystem conservation, climate resilience and sustainable livelihood strategies under OP8.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1



2. North Sabah: Highlands – Coast & Islands (Sabah)

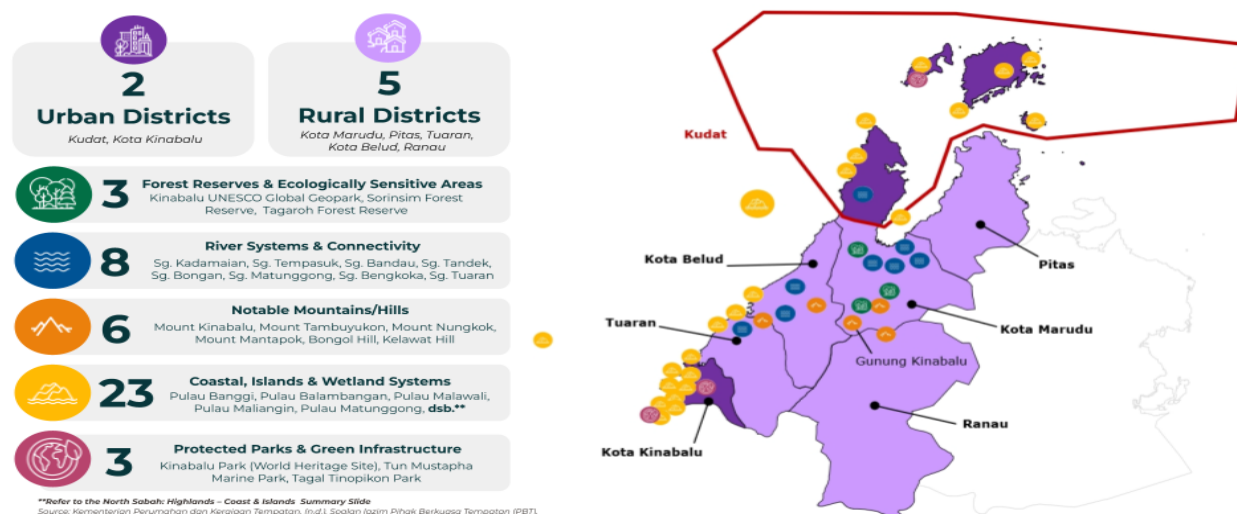


The North Sabah Landscape forms a rainforest-to-reef system linking the Kinabalu highlands and river catchments to coastal waters and offshore islands within the Tun Mustapha Marine Park ecological corridor. Shaped by major river systems flowing from inland forests to the sea, the landscape integrates montane ecosystems, river basins, coastal plains and island clusters into a connected land–sea system.



Deep dive

The Mosaic map and Districts Jurisdiction for North Sabah



The landscape covers 7 districts in Sabah comprising urban districts (Kudat, Kota Kinabalu) and predominantly rural districts (Kota Marudu, Pitas, Tuaran, Kota Belud, and Ranau). Total area: 1,112,900 hectares included:

- 3 Forest Reserves & Ecologically Sensitive Areas (including Kinabalu UNESCO Global Geopark)
- 8 Major river systems
- 6 Notable mountains/hills (including Mount Kinabalu and Mount Tambuyukon)
- 23 Coastal, island & wetland systems
- 3 Protected parks & green infrastructure sites (Kinabalu Park, Tun Mustapha Marine Park, Tagal Tinopikon Park)

In addition to the landscape components described above, workshop participants validated the presence of several key species groups within the North Sabah: Highlands–Coast & Islands landscape. These include diverse terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity reflecting strong rainforest-to-reef ecological connectivity linking the Kinabalu highlands, river systems, coastal ecosystems and island networks across northern Sabah. Notable wildlife species include *Monyet Belanda*, *Kera*, *Beruk*, *Burung Enggang*, *Babi Berjanggut* and *Borneo Buaya Katak*, alongside important marine species such as *Penyu Hijau*, *Penyu Karah*, *Penyu Lipas*, *Dugong*, *Lumba-lumba*, *Ikan Paus*, *Yu, Yu Paus*, *Ikan Pari* and *Ikan Napoleon*. Coastal and marine habitats also support species such as *Belangkas*, *Tapak Sulaiman Berduri*, *Drupella* and *Kelip-kelip*, while freshwater fisheries include *Ikan Pelian Sabah*, *Ikan Bilis Mata Biru* and *Ikan Liking*, which are important for local food systems and fisheries-based livelihoods.

The landscape further supports diverse plant and agricultural species including forest trees such as *Meranti*, *Kapur* and *Tualang*, as well as extensive mangrove species such as *Bakau Perepat*, *Bakau Kurap*, *Bakau*



Minyak, Bakau Berus, Bakau Api-api and Bakau Seraya, which contribute to coastal protection and marine habitat conservation. Agricultural crops identified across the landscape include *kelapa, padi, jagung manis, jagung pulut, getah* and *kelapa sawit*, alongside locally important food resources such as *rumpai laut, tuhau, durian merah, tarap, buah bambangan* and *buah belunu*, which support traditional food systems and community livelihoods.

Workshop participants also validated several environmental hazards affecting the landscape. These include flooding, landslides, large-scale wildfires, earthquakes, storms or typhoons and air pollution, which mainly affect upland and inland areas. Coastal and marine ecosystems are also exposed to coastal erosion, coral bleaching, coral disease outbreaks, crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks and sedimentation, which may threaten reef ecosystems and fisheries productivity. Additional hazards such as sinkholes and drought further reflect the range of environmental pressures across the mountain-to-coast continuum of the North Sabah landscape.

The total population across the North Sabah landscape is estimated at 1,021,004 people, with women representing 498,842 individuals (48.9%) and youth accounting for 323,200 individuals (31.7%). Indigenous communities recognised as Anak Negeri, including the Kadazan-Dusun, Bajau, Murut and Rungus, form a significant portion of the population across the selected districts. Data on persons with disabilities (PWD) is available only at the state level due to limitations in district-level statistics. Overall, the demographic composition reflects strong Indigenous community presence and continued reliance on surrounding ecosystems for livelihoods, cultural identity and food security.

Industry data indicates that economic activities across the North Sabah landscape vary between urban and rural districts. Based on participant feedback:

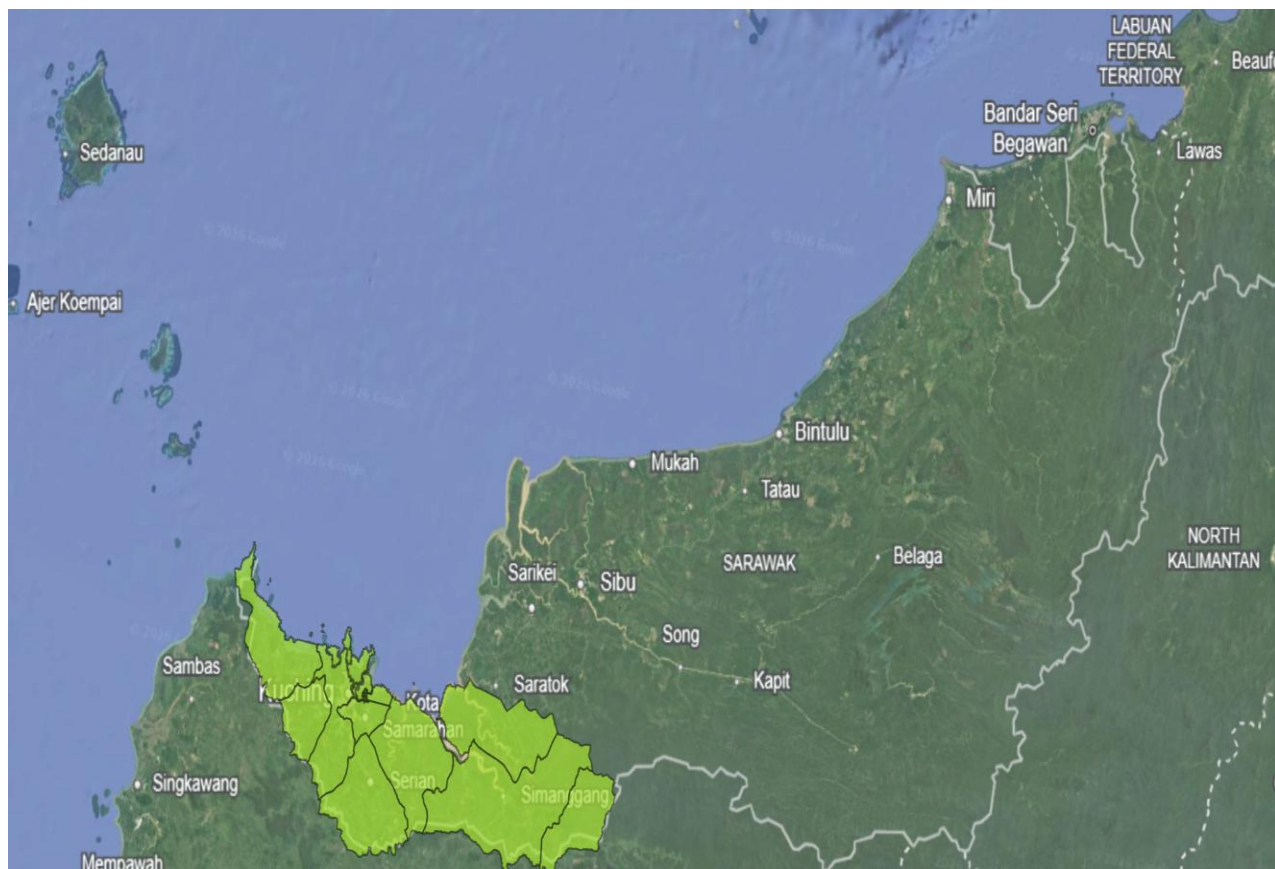
- In urban districts such as Kota Kinabalu and Kudat, key sectors include accommodation and food services, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, wholesale and retail trade, construction, and transportation and storage.
- In rural districts including Kota Marudu, Pitas, Tuaran, Kota Belud and Ranau, economic activities remain centred on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, followed by accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail trade, household-based economic activities and arts, entertainment and recreation sectors.

This economic structure highlights the continued dependence of communities on ecosystem-based resources, reinforcing the importance of aligning biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable livelihood strategies under OP8.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1



3. Southwest Sarawak: Highlands – Coast & Islands (Sarawak)



The Southwest Sarawak Landscape represents an integrated highland-to-coastal socio-ecological system shaped by major river basins flowing from interior forested uplands through lowland floodplains and wetlands before reaching coastal zones and nearshore marine ecosystems along the South China Sea. The landscape connects inland forest reserves, peatlands, river systems, mangroves, coastal habitats and small offshore islands into a continuous ecological mosaic, reflecting strong land–sea connectivity.

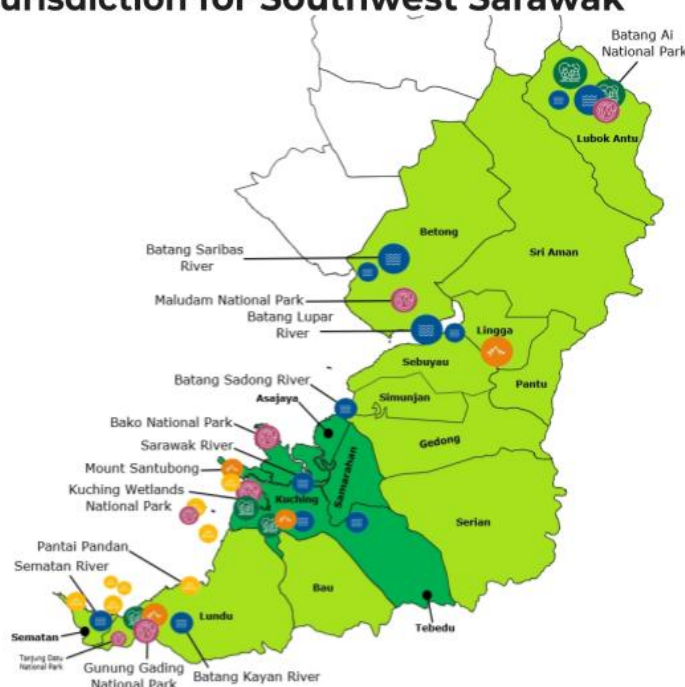


Deep dive

The Mosaic Map and Districts Jurisdiction for Southwest Sarawak



**Refer to the Southwest Sarawak: Highlands - Coast & Islands Summary Slide
Source: Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (KJP), Sajian Ismail Pihok Berkuasa Tempatan (PBT).



The landscape covers 11 districts in Sarawak, comprising both urban (Asajaya, Kuching, Samarahan) and predominantly rural districts (Lubok Antu, Betong, Pusa, Sri Aman, Simunjan, Lundu, Bau, Serian). Total area: 1,493,300 hectares which included:

- 5 Forest Reserves & Ecologically Sensitive Areas (including Batang Ai National Park, Kubah National Park and Talang-Satang National Park)
- 14 River systems and ecological connectivity corridors (Batang Lupar, Batang Saribas, Batang Kayan, Sungai Sarawak and major tributaries)
- 4 Notable mountain/hill ranges (Bukit Lesong, Gunung Gading, Gunung Santubong, Bukit Peninjau/Gunung Serapi)
- 9 Coastal, island and wetland systems (Pantai Damai, Pulau Satang Besar & Kecil, Pantai Pandan, Pantai Sematan and surrounding coastal habitats)
- 8 Protected parks and green infrastructure areas (including Batang Ai National Park, Maludam National Park, Kubah National Park and Talang-Satang Marine areas)

In addition to the landscape components described above, workshop participants validated the presence of several key species groups within the Southwest Sarawak: Highlands–Coast & Islands landscape. These include diverse terrestrial, freshwater and coastal biodiversity reflecting strong rainforest-to-reef ecological connectivity linking inland forests, river basins, wetlands, coastal ecosystems and offshore islands across southwestern Sarawak.



Notable wildlife species include *Monyet Belanda*, *Babi Berjanggut Borneo*, *Kera Ekor Panjang*, *Lotong Kelabu*, *Kelawar Buah*, *Beruang Matahari*, *Orang Utan*, *Harimau Dahan*, *Kancil* and *Landak*, alongside bird species such as *Burung Enggang Badak*, *Burung Kenyalang*, *Burung Rangkong*, *Burung Merak Borneo*, *Burung Layang-Layang Gua* and *Burung Air*. Freshwater ecosystems also support species such as *Ikan Belacak*, *Ikan Bulu* and *Ikan Semah*, as well as amphibians including *Katak Pelangi Borneo*.

The landscape further supports diverse plant and agricultural species including forest trees such as *Meranti*, *Kapur*, *Keruing*, *Selangan Batu*, *Tualang* and *Tapang*, alongside native species such as *Belian* (Ironwood), *Engkabang* and *Ensurai*. Coastal ecosystems support *Bakau Minyak*, *Nipah* and *Bakau Perepat*, while forest ecosystems host flora such as *Rafflesia* (including *Rafflesia tuan-mudae*), *Begonia*, wild orchids and figs. Agricultural crops across the landscape include *lada hitam*, *kelapa sawit*, *padi*, *getah*, *koko* and *sagu*, as well as locally important fruits such as *durian*, *rambutan*, *dabai*, *duku/langsat*, *manggis*, *cempedak*, *tarap* and *buah asam bang/bambangan*, which support traditional food systems and local livelihoods.

Workshop participants also validated several environmental hazards affecting the landscape. These include monsoon and flash floods, tidal flooding, landslides, large-scale fires, air pollution, sinkholes, drought and strong storm events, reflecting the combined pressures of climatic variability, riverine flood dynamics and land-use changes across the highland-to-coastal continuum of the Southwest Sarawak landscape.

The total population across the Southwest Sarawak landscape is estimated at 1,096,526 people, with women representing 528,189 individuals (48.2%) and youth accounting for 298,800 individuals (27.2%). Indigenous communities recognised as Anak Negeri, including the Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau and Orang Ulu (such as Kenyah, Kayan and Kelabit), form a significant portion of the population across the selected districts. Data on persons with disabilities (PWD) is available only at the state level due to limitations in district-level statistics. Overall, the demographic composition reflects strong Indigenous community presence and continued reliance on surrounding ecosystems for livelihoods, food security and cultural heritage.

Industry data indicates that economic activities across the Southwest Sarawak landscape vary between urban and rural districts. Based on participant feedback:

- In urban districts such as Kuching, Samarahan and Asajaya, key sectors include agriculture, forestry and fisheries, construction, water supply services, wholesale and retail trade, and education services.
- In rural districts including Lubok Antu, Betong, Pusa, Sri Aman, Simunjan, Lundu, Bau and Serian, economic activities remain centred on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, followed by water supply services, other service activities, wholesale and retail trade, and household-based economic activities.



This economic structure highlights the continued dependence of communities on ecosystem-based resources and rural production systems, reinforcing the importance of integrating biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable livelihood strategies under OP8 implementation.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1

Conclusion

Across all three selected landscapes: Pahang & Johor, North Sabah, and Southwest Sarawak showed a strong rainforest-to-reef connectivity, biodiversity significance, resource-dependent livelihoods and exposure to climate-related hazards converge. The SEPLS-based baseline assessments confirm that ecosystem pressures, socio-economic vulnerabilities and governance complexities intersect within these areas, justifying coordinated, landscape-scale interventions under OP8.

c) OP8 Strategic Initiatives in the landscapes/seascapes

Based on the engagements conducted throughout the landscape/seascape selection process, including consultations, focus group discussions and Validation workshop with multi-stakeholders collectively agreed to prioritise two core strategic initiatives under OP8:

1. **Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species**
2. **Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security**

These strategic priorities reflect recurring themes identified across the three selected landscapes/seascapes, where ecosystem degradation, biodiversity pressures, and livelihood vulnerabilities intersect. Across the selected areas, communities highlighted increasing pressures on forests, river systems, coastal ecosystems and marine resources, alongside growing concerns related to climate variability, natural hazards and the sustainability of traditional livelihoods.

Focusing on these two strategic priorities enables the programme to address these interconnected challenges through a focused yet integrated landscape approach, linking biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable production systems. The prioritisation also allows the programme to concentrate its limited financial and technical resources on interventions where community-led actions can deliver the greatest impact.

At the same time, the selected strategic priorities align closely with Malaysia's national policy frameworks on biodiversity conservation, sustainable agrofood systems and ecosystem protection, ensuring that OP8 interventions complement ongoing national initiatives and contribute to broader development and environmental objectives.



The strategic initiatives outlined below are informed directly by the findings of the Baseline Assessment Workshops (BAWs) conducted in each selected landscape/seascape using the SEPLS framework. The workshops captured community perceptions and evidence related to ecosystem pressures, livelihood dependencies, environmental hazards and governance gaps across the landscapes. The results provide an important baseline for identifying priority intervention areas and guiding the design of SGP OP8 Malaysia activities within each landscape/seascape.

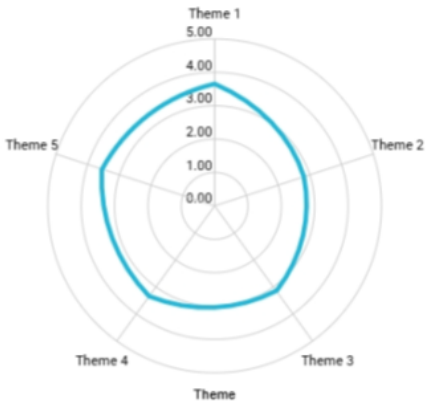
1. Pahang & Johor: Highlands – East Coast & Islands (Peninsular Malaysia)

Pahang & Johor

Outcome of workshop: Pahang & Johor Landscape/Seascape’s Resilience Profile

No.	Theme	Sub-Theme	Overall Theme Value
1	Landscape/Seascape Diversity and Ecosystem Integrity	1. Landscape/seascape diversity	3.64
		2. Ecological connectivity	
		3. Ecological vulnerability and resilience	
2	Biodiversity and Sustainable Management	4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact	2.82
3	Knowledge Integration and Transfer	5. Traditional knowledge promotion and integration	3.15
4	Livelihood and Well-Being	6. Human health and environmental conditions	3.34
		7. Income diversity and the sustainability of biodiversity-based livelihoods	
5	Governance and Social Equity	8. Rights to resources and social equity	3.56
		9. Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape	

SGP OP8 Landscape/Seascape Resilience Profile



The results show moderate resilience across all themes, indicating both a solid foundation and clear gaps for improvement. This presents strong opportunities for NGOs, CSOs, and government agencies to collaborate on targeted interventions that can significantly strengthen the landscape/seascape's overall resilience.



The assessment indicates overall moderate resilience, supported by relatively strong ecosystem integrity and governance structures. Forest connectivity, river systems and existing co-management practices provide a solid ecological and institutional foundation. Livelihood systems remain moderately stable, with biodiversity-based activities and traditional knowledge still present.

However, biodiversity management emerges as a key gap, particularly in species conservation, ecosystem monitoring and sustainable resource practices. Strengthening community-led conservation and improving sustainable production systems will be critical to enhance long-term resilience.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1



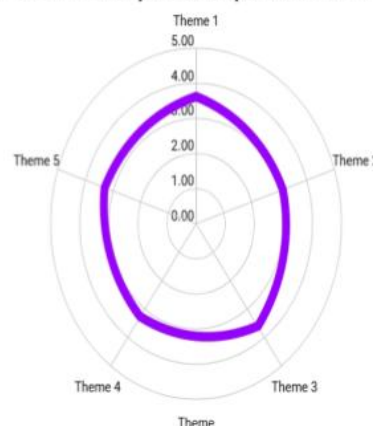
2. North Sabah: Highlands – Coast & Islands (Sabah)

North Sabah

Outcome of workshop: North Sabah Landscape/Seascape's Resilience Profile

No.	Theme	Sub-Theme	Overall Theme Value
1	Landscape/Seascape Diversity and Ecosystem Integrity	1. Landscape/seascape diversity	3.62
		2. Ecological connectivity	
		3. Ecological vulnerability and resilience	
2	Biodiversity and Sustainable Management	4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact	3.14
3	Knowledge Integration and Transfer	5. Traditional knowledge promotion and integration	3.60
4	Livelihood and Well-Being	6. Human health and environmental conditions	3.26
		7. Income diversity and the sustainability of biodiversity-based livelihoods	
5	Governance and Social Equity	8. Rights to resources and social equity	3.33
		9. Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape	

SGP OP8 Landscape/Seascape Resilience Profile



The results show moderate resilience across all themes, indicating both a solid foundation and clear gaps for improvement. This presents strong opportunities for NGOs, CSOs, and government agencies to collaborate on targeted interventions that can significantly strengthen the landscape/seascape's overall resilience.



The assessment indicates overall moderate resilience, supported by relatively strong ecosystem connectivity and the continued presence of traditional ecological knowledge within local communities. Forest landscapes, coastal and marine ecosystems, and existing conservation initiatives provide an important ecological foundation, while community knowledge and traditional practices remain actively integrated in resource management.

Livelihood systems remain moderately stable, with biodiversity-based activities such as fisheries, small-scale agriculture and forest-related livelihoods continuing to support local communities. Governance arrangements and co-management practices are also present, though their effectiveness varies across locations.

However, livelihood sustainability and biodiversity management emerge as key areas requiring further strengthening, particularly in improving income diversification, enhancing biodiversity-based livelihood opportunities and strengthening inclusive resource governance. Targeted efforts to reinforce community-led conservation, strengthen sustainable production systems and enhance institutional collaboration will be important to improve the long-term resilience of the North Sabah landscape and seascape.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1

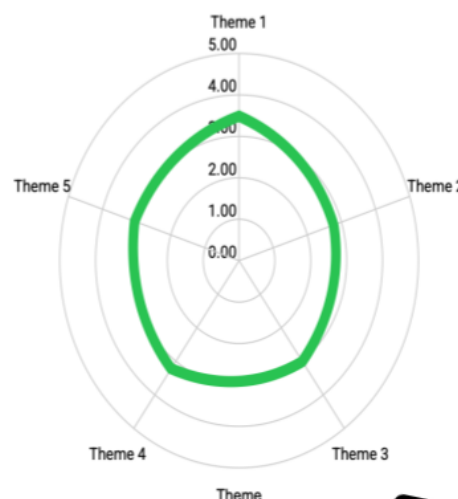


3. Southwest Sarawak: Highlands – Coast & Islands (Sarawak)

Southwest Sarawak

Outcome of workshop: Southwest Sarawak Landscape/Seascape's Resilience Profile

No.	Theme	Sub-Theme	Overall Theme Value
1	Landscape/Seascape Diversity and Ecosystem Integrity	1. Landscape/seascape diversity	3.50
		2. Ecological connectivity	
		3. Ecological vulnerability and resilience	
2	Biodiversity and Sustainable Management	4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact	2.78
3	Knowledge Integration and Transfer	5. Traditional knowledge promotion and integration	3.00
4	Livelihood and Well-Being	6. Human health and environmental conditions	3.22
		7. Income diversity and the sustainability of biodiversity-based livelihoods	
5	Governance and Social Equity	8. Rights to resources and social equity	3.06
		9. Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape	



The results show moderate resilience across all themes, indicating both a solid foundation and clear gaps for improvement. This presents strong opportunities for NGOs, CSOs, and government agencies to collaborate on targeted interventions that can significantly strengthen the landscape/seascape's overall resilience.



The results reflect moderate resilience across ecological, social and governance dimensions. The landscape retains significant ecological assets across forests, peatlands and river basins, forming a strong natural foundation. Livelihood systems and governance arrangements are functional but require strengthening to address increasing environmental pressures.

The most evident gap lies in biodiversity and sustainable management, particularly in ecosystem restoration, species protection and coordinated resource governance. Greater integration of traditional knowledge, institutional support and sustainable land-use practices will be important to reinforce resilience across the landscape.

Note: Further details of the SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape is provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1.



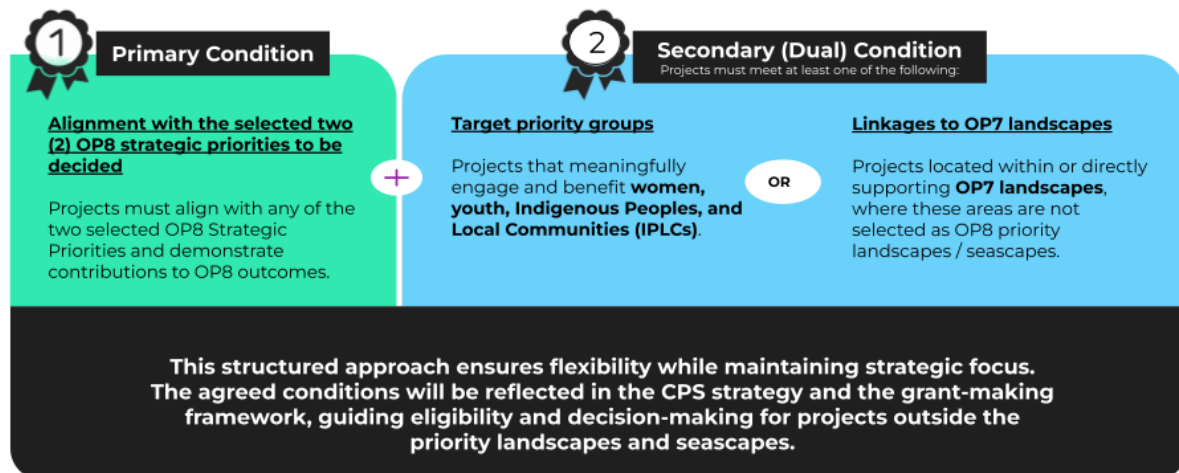
d) Grantmaking outside the priority landscapes/seascapes

While 70% of OP8 resources will be concentrated within the three selected priority landscapes/seascapes, up to 30% of grantmaking will remain available for projects outside these areas. This allocation ensures flexibility to address nationally significant conservation needs and strategic gaps that fall beyond the selected landscapes, while maintaining overall programme coherence.

To ensure focus and consistency, a structured set of conditions was developed through clinic sessions with experts and stakeholders, as well as feedback from the Government Focus Group Discussion with NRES. These conditions guide eligibility and decision-making for grantmaking outside the priority landscapes/seascapes.

Conditions for grantmaking outside the priority landscapes/seascapes

The following conditions were proposed based on inputs from clinic sessions with experts and stakeholders, as well as feedback from the Government Focus Group Discussion with NRES. These conditions provide a focused and practical approach to allowing grantmaking outside the priority landscapes and seascapes, while still supporting OP8 objectives.



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Projects proposed outside the priority landscapes/seascapes must satisfy the following structure:

1. Primary Condition (Mandatory)

All projects must demonstrate clear alignment with at least one of the two selected OP8 Strategic Priorities:

- Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species; and
- Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security.

Projects must show how their interventions directly contribute to OP8 outcomes under these priorities.



2. Secondary (Dual) Condition (At Least One Required)

In addition to the primary condition, projects must meet at least one of the following:

- **Target Priority Groups:** Projects meaningfully engage and benefit women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

OR

- **Linkages to OP7 Landscapes:** Projects are located within, or directly support, former OP7 landscapes that were not selected as OP8 priority landscapes/seascapes.

This dual-condition approach ensures that projects outside priority areas remain socially inclusive and/or strategically connected to previous landscape investments.

Conclusion

The 30% flexible allocation and its structured conditions were agreed upon through multi-stakeholder consultations during the selection and validation process. Stakeholders recognised that while landscape concentration strengthens impact, important conservation and community priorities exist beyond the three selected areas.

This approach ensures that ecosystems and communities outside the designated landscapes are not excluded, provided proposals meet the agreed strategic conditions. In doing so, OP8 maintains focus while remaining inclusive, responsive and nationally relevant.

Note: Further details of the grantmaking outside the priority landscapes/seascapes can be found in the Validation Workshop Report in Annex 2

4.2 CSO-government-private sector dialogue platforms

Under OP8, CSO–Government–Private Sector Dialogue Platforms will serve as coordination mechanisms to strengthen collaboration among civil society organisations, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders within the selected landscapes. These engagements will be facilitated by the SGP Secretariat, in coordination with the National Steering Committee (NSC) and relevant partners, to ensure that community-led initiatives are aligned with state development priorities and national environmental frameworks.



At the landscape level, the SGP Secretariat will convene multi-stakeholder engagements across the selected landscapes. These platforms will bring together civil society organisations, community representatives, government agencies, and private sector actors to strengthen coordination and address implementation challenges related to landscape interventions.

These dialogue platforms will:

- Facilitate coordination among CSOs, local communities, government agencies, and private sector actors operating within the landscape
- Provide a structured space to identify implementation challenges and strengthen collaboration across sectors
- Support alignment of community-led initiatives with state development priorities and national environmental frameworks
- Mobilise partnerships and identify opportunities to scale sustainable practices within the landscape

Participants may include but not limited to:

- Civil society organisations, community groups, and local NGOs
- Community-based institutions such as Rukun Tetangga (Neighbourhood Watch Committees) and Persatuan Ibu Bapa dan Guru (PIBG – Parent–Teacher Associations)
- Relevant government agencies and local authorities
- State planning bodies such as *Unit/Bahagian Perancang Ekonomi Negeri* (UPEN/BPEN – State Economic Planning Units)
- Sectoral agencies related to forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and environmental management, including relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability

Engagements will be organised on an as-needed basis, with at least one engagement conducted within each selected landscape. Where possible, existing meetings and coordination platforms will be leveraged to strengthen alignment and avoid duplication.

In addition to landscape-level engagement, the National Steering Committee will serve as a strategic platform to strengthen coordination between landscape initiatives and national policy processes. Routine engagement with state governments across the selected landscapes will also be maintained to ensure alignment with state planning processes and environmental initiatives.

Private sector engagement will be pursued where relevant to support sustainable production practices and collaboration with community-led initiatives. This may include engagement with sectoral stakeholders such as agriculture/plantation initiatives (e.g., MySOIL, SPOC) and fisheries-related actors operating within the selected landscapes.



Beyond immediate coordination outcomes, these dialogue platforms will contribute to broader programme impacts by strengthening partnerships, sharing lessons from community-led initiatives, and promoting replication of successful approaches across landscapes. Over time, this process is expected to support wider adoption of sustainable practices and strengthen the overall impact of SGP-supported interventions.

Last but not least, grant-supported initiatives may facilitate the formation or strengthening of community-grounded governance structures, such as watershed committees, landscape coordination groups, or other locally anchored management bodies. These platforms can help coordinate actions across sectors, reinforce accountability in natural resource management, and ensure that planning and implementation processes remain responsive to both ecological priorities and community needs.

4.3 Promoting social Inclusion, including gender equality and women's empowerment

SGP OP8 Malaysia will ensure that Women, Indigenous People and Local Communities, Youth, and Persons With Disabilities are meaningfully engaged in project design, implementation, and benefit-sharing across the selected landscapes. Social inclusion will be strengthened through clearer programme requirements, targeted capacity support, and mechanisms that enable equitable participation and decision-making.

Across the selected landscapes, women play key roles in agriculture, natural resource management, and household livelihoods but often face constraints in land ownership, access to finance, and participation in formal decision-making. Indigenous communities experience different governance contexts across regions. In Peninsular Malaysia, particularly within the Pahang–Johor landscape, Indigenous People and Local Communities continue to face challenges related to the recognition of customary land rights and participation in formal land-use planning. In Sabah and Sarawak, although Native Customary Rights (NCR) enactments exist, implementation gaps and competing land-use pressures remain. Youth participation also varies across rural areas, while persons with disabilities are frequently underrepresented in environmental programmes. The Country Programme will therefore adopt a practical approach to mainstream social inclusion while providing targeted support to priority groups.

Gender equality and social inclusion will be integrated throughout the grant cycle through clear operational requirements. Specifically:

- All projects will demonstrate inclusive participation in project design and implementation.
- Projects will report sex- and age-disaggregated beneficiary data.
- Calls for proposals and grant agreements will clearly state expectations on gender equality and social inclusion.



- Orientation sessions and capacity-building workshops will strengthen gender-responsive design, inclusive monitoring, and engagement of marginalised groups.

To strengthen implementation, the National Steering Committee (NSC) will designate focal points for gender equality and social inclusion. These focal points will support proposal review, provide technical guidance, and monitor inclusion commitments across the country portfolio.

In addition to mainstreaming measures, the Country Programme will introduce positive incentives within the project selection process to encourage stronger engagement of priority groups. Rather than imposing rigid quotas, proposals that demonstrate leadership roles, decision-making participation, and equitable benefit-sharing for women, youth, Indigenous People and Local Communities, and persons with disabilities will receive scoring advantages.

Targeted support mechanisms will include:

- Strategic and planning grants to strengthen community governance systems and recognition of customary land use, including Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs).
- Engagement with women-led organisations and networks, including *Biro Wanita* and other local platforms, to improve outreach and contextual relevance.
- Targeted mentoring and proposal development support for youth-led, Indigenous-led, and disability-inclusive initiatives.

SGP OP8 Malaysia will aim for at least 10% of regular grants projects to be women-led or explicitly focused on women's empowerment outcomes. Youth-led and Indigenous-led initiatives will also be encouraged through targeted outreach and mentoring. Combined SGP OP8 Malaysia will aim for at least 20 projects with at least 30% of grant funding allocated to these groups.

Through these measures, social inclusion will be embedded as a core programming principle that strengthens community ownership, improves environmental outcomes, and enhances the long-term sustainability of landscape interventions.



4.4 Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management (KM) is a mandatory and critical component of the SGP OP8 strategy in Malaysia. Effective KM ensures that the localised, community-driven successes achieved within the priority landscapes and seascapes do not remain isolated incidents. Instead, by systematically capturing, sharing, and utilising evidence-based lessons and good practices, the Country Programme can foster the replication and scaling up of innovations, build long-term community resilience, and generate data that actively influences sustainable development policies at the state and national levels.

Across the selected landscapes, grantees have demonstrated capacity to generate locally relevant knowledge, but documentation and dissemination beyond individual projects remains inconsistent. Knowledge products are produced without standardised processes, and identification of these products within the project lifecycle is not routinely embedded in grant requirements. Institutional knowledge retention at the community level is also limited, creating continuity risks when project cycles end. The Country Programme will address these gaps by embedding KM requirements across all grants and creating structured pathways for wider dissemination and policy influence.

Knowledge management will be integrated throughout the grant cycle through clear operational requirements. Specifically:

- All projects will demonstrate how lessons learned and good practices will be captured and shared.
- Projects will follow a defined process for generating knowledge, including identifying the types of knowledge products to be produced. Expected knowledge products include case studies, lessons learned reports, toolkits, policy briefs, and site demonstration materials.
- Knowledge management product identification and documentation will be required within the project lifecycle, supported through the planning grant phase.
- A knowledge management product guideline document will be developed and refined for grantees via the planning grant.
- The annual CSO–Government–Private Sector dialogue platform in each landscape will include a knowledge management and dissemination component, such as site demonstrations and knowledge fairs.

To strengthen implementation, the National Steering Committee (NSC) will serve as a policy bridge, channelling knowledge products and evidence generated from SGP OP8 Malaysia projects into national-level policy recommendations and strategic direction.

The Country Programme will also expand the visibility of community knowledge products beyond the SGP ecosystem. National platforms, including the NRES Climate Change Forum and national biodiversity conferences, will be used to showcase SGP-supported case studies and lessons learned. Proposals with concrete knowledge dissemination and replication plans will be prioritised during project selection.



Targeted support mechanisms will include:

- Knowledge product identification and development through strategic grantee, and documentation requirements embedded in the grant process and project lifecycle.
- A knowledge management product guideline document for grantees including guidelines on mainstreaming the KM products in community, developed through the planning grant.
- The CSO–Government–Private Sector dialogue platform, held annually in each landscape, will include a dedicated knowledge management and dissemination strategy incorporating activities such as site demonstrations, knowledge fairs, and lessons learned sharing from SGP-supported projects.
- NSC engagement to translate community-generated evidence into national policy processes.

SGP OP8 Malaysia will aim for all supported projects to produce at least one documented knowledge product/event per grant cycle, with a targeted proportion contributing to national or regional knowledge platforms and policy dialogues.

Through these measures, knowledge management will be embedded as a core programming principle that converts community-level results into scalable models and positions SGP OP8 Malaysia as a contributor to evidence-based policy at the national level.

5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication will be implemented as a structured programme function to strengthen stakeholder engagement, improve visibility of landscape results, and support partnerships and resource mobilisation. The SGP Secretariat will coordinate programme-level communication to ensure consistent messaging, regular dissemination of results, and alignment with national environmental priorities, GEF programming, and UNDP country strategies.

Communication efforts will position SGP-supported landscape initiatives within Malaysia's biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development agenda. Messaging will highlight how community-led actions contribute to ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods, and social inclusion, while demonstrating relevance to national environmental targets and global commitments.

Priority audiences will include national and state government agencies, civil society organisations, community networks, private sector partners, development partners, and the broader public.



To operationalise this approach, the SGP Secretariat will:

- Develop a Communication Plan with branding guidelines, to be updated annually to guide key messages, communication priorities, and dissemination channels.
- Maintain regular updates on the SGP Malaysia website and social media platforms to share programme milestones, funding opportunities, and landscape-level results.
- Produce communication collaterals to improve programme visibility, including infographics, brochures, short videos, photo stories, blog features, and success stories.
- Use Strategic Grants to support documentation and dissemination of project results, including media materials, storytelling products, and social media outreach, while strengthening communication skills among grantees through practical training and guidance.
- Develop policy briefs, technical notes, and knowledge summaries to communicate lessons and recommendations to government agencies and partners.
- Organise knowledge-sharing events, landscape showcases, and stakeholder forums to promote cross-learning, partnerships, and visibility of community-led solutions.

Communication outputs will be aligned with monitoring and knowledge management processes to ensure that dissemination reflects verified results and contributes to advocacy, partnership-building, and resource mobilisation for scaling successful initiatives.

6. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Resource mobilisation will be implemented as a structured programme function to strengthen the sustainability and scaling potential of SGP-supported initiatives. The Country Programme will pursue complementary financing that aligns with landscape objectives and supports community-led protection of ecosystems and species, as well as sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and food security.

a) Secured and planned cash and in-kind co-financing

SGP OP8 Malaysia will be financed primarily through the GEF Small Grants Programme allocation by GEF administered by UNDP Country Office, which forms the core grantmaking resource for the selected landscapes. Additional complementary funding streams, including ICCA-related support and other aligned programme resources, will be integrated into programme implementation and reporting.



At the project level, co-financing will include cash and in-kind contributions from communities, civil society organisations, and government partners. These contributions may include voluntary labour, local materials, technical expertise, training support, and extension services. The SGP Secretariat will strengthen documentation and reporting systems to ensure that these contributions are systematically recorded and aligned with programme priorities.

At the landscape level, co-financing will be pursued through alignment with state-level conservation, resilience, and development initiatives. Complementary national financing mechanisms (including ecological fiscal transfer-related funding) will be explored where relevant to landscape and resilience priorities. Research and innovation funding windows may also be considered for initiatives with strong learning or demonstration value.

At the country level, the programme will explore targeted government funding windows, collaboration with national research institutions, and partnerships with relevant public agencies to support small-scale initiatives with high environmental and community impact.

b) Co-financing opportunities

To diversify funding sources beyond core GEF allocations, the Country Programme will adopt a proactive approach to identifying and mobilising complementary financing opportunities. Resource mobilisation efforts will prioritise alignment with programme priorities and landscape objectives while ensuring that additional funding strengthens community-level outcomes.

To operationalise this approach, the Country Programme will:

- Engage with UNDP Malaysia's programme portfolio to identify synergies and co-financing opportunities with ongoing initiatives operating in overlapping landscapes.
- Explore collaboration with multilateral and bilateral donors, development partners, and international funding mechanisms aligned with biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable production systems.
- Engage embassies, philanthropic organisations, and local foundations that support environmental protection, sustainable livelihoods, and community development.
- Strengthen engagement with state governments, including State Economic Planning Units (BPEN/UPEN), to identify opportunities for co-financing and alignment with state development priorities.



- Identify complementary financing opportunities through government funding windows, research grants, and innovation programmes that support pilot and demonstration initiatives.

These efforts will strengthen collaboration across government agencies, development partners, and civil society organisations while increasing the availability of resources for community-led environmental initiatives.

7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Partnership development will be used to expand access to complementary funding, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and support the long-term sustainability of community-led initiatives. The SGP Secretariat, together with the National Steering Committee (NSC) and Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs), will facilitate partnerships that connect civil society organisations and communities with external funding opportunities and technical partners.

While resources mobilised through these partnerships may not flow directly through SGP grants, they will increase overall resource flows to SGP stakeholders and strengthen the sustainability and scaling potential of community-based initiatives.

To operationalise this approach:

- The SGP Secretariat will provide overall coordination and guidance for partnership development, including identifying priority partnership opportunities and aligning them with programme objectives.
- The Strategic Grantee will support partnership development at the landscape level by:
 - Conducting donor mapping at national and landscape levels, identifying potential funding sources such as foundations, development partners, government programmes, and private sector initiatives.
 - Supporting proposal preparation and concept development for communities and CSOs seeking external funding opportunities.
 - Providing mentoring and technical guidance to improve proposal quality and competitiveness.
 - Facilitating the development of joint proposals and collaborative initiatives involving communities, NGOs, research institutions, and government agencies.
 - Organising knowledge exchanges, innovation showcases, or marketplace-style platforms to highlight community solutions and connect projects with potential partners.



Partnership development will prioritise initiatives that originate from community-defined priorities, demonstrate strong engagement with local leaders and villages, and integrate livelihood improvement with environmental outcomes. Partnerships will therefore be pursued not only as funding opportunities but also as mechanisms to strengthen local capacity, legitimacy, and long-term collaboration.

Where appropriate, partnerships may include collaboration with public agencies, research institutions, civil society networks, and socially responsible private sector actors. Locally appropriate financing and collaboration models (including public–community partnerships, social enterprise pathways, and alignment with relevant national financing mechanisms) will be explored to support sustainable community-led initiatives.



8. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

As shown in Table 3, several risks were identified in the target landscapes/seascapes. These risks will be tracked throughout the implementation of the CPS and assessed during annual reviews and in the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The likelihood or severity of each risk may change over time, requiring adjustments to both the risk assessments and the corresponding mitigation measures during each review period.

Table 4. Description of risks identified in OP8

Risk Areas	Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
Operational Risk	The number of grants taken up by applicants has remained limited	Medium	High	● Utilise strategic grants on getting the expertise to support and increase the number of grantees ● Expand outreach through universities, civil society networks, youth registries, Registrar of Societies (JPPN) / <i>Kawasan Rukun Tetangga</i> (KRT) platforms, and past strategic grantee networks. ● Explore flexibility in grant allocation ratios (e.g. 70:30), subject to consultation with the SGP global team.
	Based on past operational periods, NSC faced capacity constraints in administering the programme in its entirety	Medium	Medium	● Technical Advisory Group (TAG) may be established to provide specialised technical review and strengthen the quality of project appraisal and National Steering Committee decision-making.
	Unclear grantees status criteria for grant eligibility present risks in	Medium	Medium	● Clarify and communicate eligibility criteria, including whether larger NGOs may apply and under what conditions. ● Introduce Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) and a two-stage application review process:



Risk Areas	Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
	programme implementation			○ First-level screening by NSC ○ Technical filtering by experts ● Status of grantee must be organisations and further restricted by the requirements of UNDP Low-Value Grant (LVG) modality ● Use planning grants to engage experts for proposal screening.
	Certain government actors did not consistently act in accordance with decisions made by the NSC.	Medium	Medium	● Strengthen the role of the NSC by ensuring participation from senior government leadership ● Create a feedback loop mechanisms among the stakeholders.
	Limited community and grantee capacity to participate effectively in the full grant cycle	High	Medium	● Provide targeted training and capacity-building programmes for grantees, including project management, reporting, and financial compliance. Consider utilising strategic grants to assist in this matter. ● Utilise planning grants and strategic grants to support proposal development and early-stage implementation readiness. ● Identify and engage strategic grantees (e.g. experienced NGOs, universities, KRT, youth or community federations) to partner with and monitor smaller community projects.
	Delays caused by the NSC availability constraints and	Low	Low	● Publish and socialise a clear grant cycle calendar, outlining timelines for application, review, approval, and disbursement.



Risk Areas	Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
	unclear approval timelines.			Strengthen NSC engagement and scheduling to reduce approval delays.
	Use of third-party or proxy bank accounts by grantees results in slower fund disbursement and reduced transparency.	Medium	High	Encourage the use of formal and transparent banking arrangements, supported by guidance to grantees during onboarding.
	Geographical & distance constraints between projects affecting monitoring and implementation	Medium	High	Allow flexible monitoring approaches, including adjusted reporting timelines and hybrid monitoring methods.
	Low internet connectivity hampers communication, reporting, and coordination.	Medium	High	Explore alternative communication mechanisms suitable for low-connectivity areas.
Climate Risk	Climate variability affecting project activities and outcomes	High	High	- Require grantees to consider climate risks at the proposal stage, including seasonal timing and site suitability. - Provide advisory guidance on high-risk areas, timing of seasonal climate changes, and climate-resilient practices.



Risk Areas	Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
	False or incomplete reporting of climate-related disasters. E.g. misreporting damage or losses caused by climate events.	Low	Low	- Require supporting documentation (e.g. police or authority reports) where applicable. - Strengthen verification through monitoring visits and partner validation.
Natural Disaster Risk	Exposure to large-scale natural disasters. E.g. Risks such as earthquakes, typhoons, sinkholes, and extreme weather events	High	Low	- Track disaster risks through regular CPS and portfolio reviews. - Allow flexibility in project adjustments and contingency planning where disaster risks materialise. - Integrate disaster risk considerations into landscape-level planning.
Political Risk	Shifts in development priorities or ministry restructuring (e.g. changes affecting NRES leadership).	High	Medium	- Maintain continuous engagement with state governments and federal agencies at the civil service working level. - Strengthen institutional memory through documentation and formal coordination mechanisms. - Use NSC and multi-stakeholder platforms to sustain alignment and programme ownership.
Social and Environmental Risk	Internal community divisions may affect project acceptance and sustainability.	Medium	Medium	- Invest in community engagement, alignment with local needs, and capacity-building activities. - Ensure projects reflect shared community priorities and inclusive participation.



Risk Areas	Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
	Third parties might prepare proposals or documentation without proper community consent.	Medium	Medium	• Enforce social safeguard requirements, including consent and community endorsement. • Require documentation of consent where external parties support proposal development.



9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) PLAN

9.1 Monitoring approaches at project and country levels

For Operational Phase 8 (OP8), the Malaysia SGP Country Programme will implement a Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL) approach. This shift reflects lessons from OP7, where community-based organizations (CBOs), Indigenous groups, and elderly-led initiatives struggled with heavy administrative and reporting requirements. In response, the OP8 M&E framework places clear emphasis on simplification, targeted capacity building, and collaborative monitoring processes that are practical for community partners to manage.

The core objective of M&E in OP8 extends beyond audit and compliance. It is designed to support continuous learning, evidence-based decision-making, and adaptive management throughout project implementation. All monitoring activities will strictly uphold the “do no harm” principle and require Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), particularly when working with the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia and Indigenous communities within the Sabah and Sarawak priority landscapes.

9.1.1 Monitoring approaches at project level

SGP OP8 M&E is implemented across three levels: project, country, and global. The CPS focuses on project- and country-level M&E, while global-level reporting follows established GEF SGP requirements. At the project level, M&E activities are designed to accurately track global environmental benefits without placing excessive reporting burdens on local grantees. Monitoring covers the full grant lifecycle from commitment stage through to completion, with responsibilities shared between the Grantee and the National Coordinator. Under the project level, grantees are required to allocate a dedicated M&E budget (4-6%) from the grant amount to help them in implementing the M&E activities.

To ensure that global environmental benefits are accurately tracked while remaining accessible to local grantees, project-level M&E will involve the following activities:

Table 5. M&E Plan at the Project level

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
Project M&E plan	Ensure compliance with minimum project design standards and norms	Grantee and NC	NC staff time	At project commitment stage
Participatory Project Monitoring	Monitoring, learning & adaptive management	Grantee	Covered under project grant amount (per SGP operational guidelines)	Ongoing throughout project implementation



M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
Project Evaluation (as necessary / cost effective)	Assess project effectiveness	Grantee, NC, NSC, third party	Covered under project grant amount (per SGP operational guidelines)	Upon completion of project activities, as appropriate
Project Progress Reports (Midterm progress report, final progress report)	Reporting of results; adaptive management	Grantee	Covered under project grant amount (per SGP operational guidelines)	At mid-term and final tranche
Financial Reports (usually 2, per agreed disbursement schedule)	Financial accountability and assessment of cost-effectiveness	Grantee	Covered under project grant amount (per SGP operational guidelines)	At each disbursement request
Project monitoring (as necessary / cost effective)	Monitoring, adaptive management	NC, NSC	Country Operating Budget	At least once per project cycle
Maintain project description / results in global project database	Enable efficient reporting to CPMT, GEF, donors, others	PA and NC	Staff time	At start of project, on ongoing basis, and at project completion

9.1.2 Monitoring approaches at country level

Country-level M&E shifts the focus from individual project performance to the overall effectiveness of the Malaysia Country Programme. Rather than assessing each grant in isolation, monitoring at this level evaluates whether the collective portfolio is achieving meaningful impact against the national strategy and GEF-8 core indicators. The following activities are mandatory as outlined by the global SGP team, and are not subject to country discretion. This requires a more structured and coordinated approach, involving the NC, NSC, UNDP Country Office, and global CPMT. Given the scale and diversity of SGP-supported interventions across the selected landscapes, country-level M&E also serves as the primary mechanism for adaptive management. This will enable the programme to identify gaps, respond to emerging challenges, and make evidence-based adjustments to the CPS over time.



Table 6. M&E Plan at the Country Programme level

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
Country Programme Strategy elaboration	Framework for action including identification of community projects	NC, NSC, country stakeholders, grantees	A SGP planning grant to engage consultants may be used to update OP8 CPS	At start of OP8
As part of NSC meetings, ongoing review of project results and analysis. This includes an Annual CPS Review	Assess effectiveness of projects, country portfolio; learning; adaptive management	NC, NSC, UNDP Country Office. Final deliberations shared/ analyzed with CPMT colleagues	Staff time, Country Operating Budget	At least one annual CPS review to ensure OP8 CPS is on track to achieve its results and make timely and evidence-based modifications to CPS as may be needed ²
Annual Monitoring Report Survey ³	Enable efficient reporting to CPMT and GEF. It serves as the primary tools to record and analytically present results to donors	NC/PA in close collaboration with NSC. CPMT provides technical guidance support and receives final country submission for further action	Staff time	Once per year in June- July
Country Portfolio Review	Methodological results capture the portfolio at a given point to note impact level change as well as	NC, NSC	SGP planning grant to engage consultants may be used to undertake previous operational cycles impact review and utilize lessons for	Once per operational phase

² It is recommended that the Annual CPS review is done close to AMR submissions for both processes to benefit from each other (suggested timeframe is May- July). Note that OP8 CPS will be regarded as a dynamic document and can be updated by the SGP country team and NSC on a periodic basis to reflect any necessary adjustments to ensure maximum impact.

³ Timely and quality country level submissions to Annual Monitoring Process are mandatory. As a Global Programme, it enables aggregated reporting by CPMT to GEF, UNDP and other stakeholders.



M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
	broader adoption. The goal is to support reporting to stakeholders, learning, and support to strategic development/ implementation of CPS		both OP8 CPS development and its implementation Global technical M&E support can be expected	
SGP Database	Ensure recording of all Project and Country Programme inputs in SGP database	NCs, PAs,	Staff time	Throughout the operational phase. Ensure quality assurance and completion of data prior to annual monitoring cycle (May- June of every year)
Audit	Ensure compliance with project implementation/management standards and norms	External/independent auditors. NC/ PA to provide requisite support.	Global Operating Budget	Annually for selected countries on risk-assessment basis



9.1.3 Recommendation of Additional Activities to Support M&E

The mandatory M&E activities in 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 establish the baseline requirements at project and country levels. However, additional support mechanisms are needed to ensure these requirements are met, given the geographical spread of the three selected landscapes and the capacity constraints observed during OP7, where several grantees struggled with reporting requirements. The following activities are recommended to strengthen M&E implementation:

- **M&E**

Inception

Workshops

Prior to project implementation, the NC should conduct mandatory M&E Inception Workshops for all grantees. As SGP Malaysia's grantees largely consist of rural and community-based organisations, these workshops will align grantee tracking and reporting with GEF-8 core indicators and build basic M&E capacity before project activities begin.
- **Cluster**

Monitoring

Monitoring

As the three selected landscapes are geographically dispersed, the NC and PA should adopt a Cluster Monitoring approach by grouping site visits geographically and coordinating joint monitoring missions with state agencies or UNDP Country Office representatives. This reduces travel burden on the NC while maintaining oversight across all landscapes.
- **Simplified**

Reporting

Mechanisms

To address reporting challenges identified during OP7, the NC and PA should develop simplified M&E tracking sheets in Bahasa Malaysia, using tick-box formats and numerical inputs in place of written narratives. Grantees in remote areas should also be permitted to submit alternative progress updates such as geolocated video logs, audio recordings, or WhatsApp photo updates. However, this will be subject to ongoing global discussions on reporting flexibility.
- **Strategic**

Grants for Landscape

Coordination

Strategic grants will be allocated to capable NGOs to train regular grantees on M&E practices and coordinate grantee activities within each landscape. This reduces the administrative burden on the NC while building local M&E capacity.
- **Academic and Consultant Partnerships for Country Portfolio Review**

Review

Review

For the end-of-phase Country Portfolio Review, SGP OP8 Malaysia will establish a pool of academics and partner consultants to conduct independent assessments. Local academic institutions such as Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, or universities in the Klang Valley will be prioritised to ensure independent and scientifically sound verification of impact-level results.



9.2 CPS Results Framework

The CPS Results Framework translates the strategic priorities of SGP OP8 Malaysia into measurable indicators and targets. Several guiding principles were established to ensure the indicators are practical, contextually relevant in Malaysia landscapes, and aligned with GEF reporting requirements. All selected indicators directly support CPS reporting requirements, with the overall programme budget remaining broadly consistent with OP7 at approximately USD 2.3 million. Indicator selection prioritises underserved areas and communities, taking into account OP7 achievements for continuity and realistic target-setting.

Targets will be defined as percentage-based measures tailored to each selected landscape and seascape. GEF core indicators will be assessed carefully to ensure compliance while avoiding duplication with local indicators. Terminology will be refined where ambiguity exists, with each indicator clearly linked to specific project-level activities. State-level consultations will account for local land tenure and jurisdictional variations. As not all indicators apply uniformly across all projects, project-level demographic and contextual data will be collected to support accurate aggregation at the CPS level.

Table 7: Results Framework of SGP OP8 Country Programme Strategy

Alignment with SDGs

The OP8 CPS goals are well aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals directly addressed by this programme include:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks, disasters.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality.



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

12.2 By 2030, achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.

13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

14.2 By 2025, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.

15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.



Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Synergy with UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD):

The GEF SGP OP8 is aligned with the UNDP CPD below::

Output 1.2: Green and blue economy frameworks developed and mechanisms for resilient and sustainable growth of local economies enabled.

Output 2.1: National and sub-national policies and instruments enhanced to improve capabilities in addressing biodiversity challenges, weather-related risks, and other environment-related actions.

Output 2.2: Innovative financing solutions strengthened to position Malaysia as a regional leader for nature-positive financing and addressing risks from changing weather patterns.

Output 2.3: Innovative solutions to reduce pollution delivered, promoting circular economy and sustainable consumption and production practices.

Output 3.1: Good governance, peace-building and human rights frameworks and institutions strengthened through the promotion of transparency, accountability, enforcement and anti-corruption best practices.

OP8 SGP Programme Goal: Engage local CSOs/CBOs in landscape-seascape approaches across the world, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance wellbeing and socioeconomic conditions and generate global environmental benefits.



1 OP8 SGP CPS Strategic Initiatives	2 CPS Indicators and Targets	3 Means of Verification
<u>Strategic Initiative 1:</u> Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4: 14,000 hectares of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (GEF core indicator 4.1 and 4.3) Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 5: 6,000 hectares of marine habitat under improved practices (GEF core indicator 5)	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports) Baseline assessment comparison variables (use of conceptual models and partner data as appropriate) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Review
<u>Strategic Initiative 2:</u> Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 3: 4,200 hectares of land and ecosystems under restoration (GEF core indicator 3.1) Indicator 11: 20 partnerships to advance sustainable agriculture and fisheries and/or food security (such as diversification, sustainable intensification, sustainable fisheries management, agroecological farming practices, climate-smart agriculture, certification programmes, local sourcing initiatives, waste reduction and circular economy, etc.)	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Review Socio-ecological resilience indicators for production landscapes (SEPLs)



<u>Strategic Initiative 6:</u> CSO-Government-Private Sector Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms	Indicator 8: 300 representatives from social inclusion group (Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, persons with disability, farmers, other marginalized groups) meaningfully engaged in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms Indicator 10: 1 CSO-government-private sector dialogue formed or strengthened (this include meeting with the state's agencies)	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), global database Country Programme Review
<u>Strategic Initiative 7:</u> Enhancing social inclusion	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 1: 9,400 people (of whom 4,700 are female) benefit from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (GEF core indicator 11) Indicator 16: 5 projects with focused interventions promoting gender equality and women's empowerment Indicator 17: 5 projects that demonstrate models of engaging (a) Indigenous Peoples, (b) youth, and (c) persons with disabilities. Indicator 18: 30% of the total grant portfolio accessed by 1) women or women groups; 2) youth or youth-led groups; 3) indigenous peoples' groups	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Review



	Indicator 19: 20 grants with targeted support for 1) women or women groups; 2) youth or youth-led groups; 3) Indigenous Peoples' groups	
Strategic Initiative 8: Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge Management	Indicator 21: 47 knowledge exchange/sharing events with participation of local communities Indicator 25: 10 projects with meetings involving local CSOs/CBOs or communities to monitor project results, assess impacts, and identify lessons learned	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Review

Note: Further details of the indicator selection and target development can be found in the CPS Result Framework Finalisation Document listed in Annex 2.



10. NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

NSC members involved in OP8 CPS development, review and endorsement	Signatures
Datuk Nor Yahati Binti Awang/Deputy Secretary General (Environment Sustainability), NRES	Signed by: <i>Datuk Nor Yahati Binti Awang</i> 1067F8475F5141A...
Mr. Edward Vrkić / Resident Representative / UNDP	Signed by: <i>E. Vrkić</i> D2AA1A67F948445...
Dr. Noranida Binti Zainal /Director/ME /GEF Political FC	Signed by: <i>Dr. Noranida Binti Zainal</i> 836109CAB8F34D1...
En. Ahmad Farid Bin Mohammed / Undersecretary / Climate Change Division, NRES /UNFCCC FC	Signed by: <i>En. Ahmad Farid Bin Mohammed</i> 18F77DFFB1E74D0...
Ts. Dr. Khairul Naim Adham / Deputy Undersecretary / Biodiversity and Forestry Management Division, NRES / UNCBD FC	Signed by: <i>Ts Dr Khairul Naim Adham</i> FD7B5E53EDE5483...
Mrs. Lee Sheu Jeen / WWF Malaysia	Signed by: <i>Mrs. Lee Sheu Jeen</i> 9BA2300B56EA4AD...
Ms. Ginny Ng Siew Ling /Independent	Signed by: <i>Ginny Ng</i> 9F6AB76AD77C460...
Dr. Colin G. Nicholas / Centre for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC)	Signed by: <i>Colin G. Nicholas</i> 32E1EC434ED5401...
Pn. Azrina Binti Abdullah / Independent	Signed by: <i>Pn. Azrina Binti Abdullah</i> 5671DED87C07489...
Pn. Suraya Binti Bujang / Purplelily Social Association	Signed by: <i>Pn. Suraya Binti Bujang</i> 6FA24822C7784DB...
Mr. Kon Onn Sein / Foundation for Community Studies and Development	Signed by: <i>Kon Onn Sein</i> 59E4368052D1474...
Prof. Dr. Justin Sentian / Faculty of Science and Natural Resources, Universiti Malaysia Sabah	Signed by: <i>Prof. Dr. Justin Sentian</i> 1B1145B115EE467...



11. ANNEXES

Annex 1: [Baseline Assessment Workshops Report \(SEPLS-Based Ground Validation\)](#)

Annex 2: Supporting Documents in relation of developing the CPS Document:

No.	Supporting Document
1	UNDP/UNOPS SGP OP8 - Clinic Sessions Notes
2	UNDP/UNOPS SGP OP8 - FGD Notes
3	GEF SGP OP8 CPS Malaysia; Validation Workshop Report (19 & 20 January 2026)
4	CPS Result Framework Finalisation Document
5	Boundaries Exercise LS/SC Documentation

Annex 3: Country strategy description for participation in the global co-financing partnership with the Global ICCA Support Initiative (GSI) Phase 2 funded by the German BMUV IKI in line with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Targets 3, 21, 22 and 23 (2023-2028).

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SGP OP8 COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY FOR GLOBAL ICCA SUPPORT INITIATIVE PHASE 2 (2023-2028)

MALAYSIA

1. BACKGROUND

The Global Support to territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCA-GSI) is a multi-partnership initiative that is delivered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP), which is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). ICCA-GSI is funded by the Government of Germany, through its Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection ([BMUV](#)). Key partners include the Convention of Biological Diversity ([CBD](#)), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Global Programme on Protected Areas ([IUCN GPAP](#)), the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre ([UNEP WCMC](#)), and the [ICCA Consortium](#).

Phase 1 of the ICCA-GSI was formed in 2014 to broaden the range and quality of diverse governance types in recognizing ICCAs and achieve the Aichi 2020 targets. ICCA-GSI's objective is to improve the recognition and overall effectiveness for biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and resilience to climate change effects of territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs). Additionally, [studies](#) developed with partners during the ICCA-GSI Phase 1 show that ICCAs cover somewhere between 21 and 32 percent of global land, with 91 percent of them in "good and fair ecological condition," and contain at least 36 percent of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

With the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ([GBF](#)) at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in November 2022, biodiversity management strategies are increasingly recognizing and building upon the vital role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPs and LCs) in voluntarily conserving biodiversity outside of the framework of formal government-recognized protected areas (which account for 17 percent of global land).

As such, Phase 2 of the ICCA-GSI was launched to continue improving the recognition and overall effectiveness for biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and resilience to climate change effects of ICCAs. ICCA-GSI Phase 2 will focus on biodiversity conservation in relation to the role of ICCAs as part of GBF 2030 Targets, specifically on:

- [Target 2](#): ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration.

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- [Target 3](#): conservation and protection of ecosystems and ensure that 30 percent of global land and sea areas are conserved/maintained by 2030.
- [Target 21](#): guide biodiversity action through knowledge-sharing of biodiversity information including the traditional knowledge, innovations, practices of IPs and LCs based on their free, prior and informed consent.
- [Target 22](#): participation of IPs and LCs in decision-making related to biodiversity.
- [Target 23](#): gender equality.

Additionally, it will focus on the role of IPs and LCs and nature-based solutions towards Nationally Determined Contributions ([NDCs](#)) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement and formulating the proposal for a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to achieve KM-GBF goals.

Participating countries

Phase 2 of the ICCA-GSI is implemented in 50 countries including Argentina, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, DR Congo, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Senegal, South Africa, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, and Vietnam.

Work at local, national and global levels

Building on the Phase 1 of the ICCA-GSI, three distinct components, referred to as “Work Packages” continues in the Phase 2 to create a framework for systemic change at the local, national, and global levels. These are:

Work Package 1 (Local level): Direct financial support to community-based action and demonstration on sound ICCA stewardship for the purposes of ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction.

Work Package 2 (National level): Legal, Policy and other forms of support for ICCA recognition and conservation (including governance assessments of protected areas and landscapes).

Work Package 3 (Global level): Networking, knowledge production and exchange between national CSO initiatives at regional and global levels.

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2. SUMMARY: Key Results/Accomplishments

The Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas – Global Support Initiative (ICCA-GSI) Phase 1 was implemented in Malaysia under the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) to strengthen the recognition, governance, and sustainability of territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Since its introduction in 2016, the programme has supported **23 community-led initiatives** that promote participatory conservation, traditional knowledge, and sustainable natural resource management. These initiatives contribute to biodiversity conservation while strengthening community governance and socio-economic resilience.

Table 1. ICCA-GSI Malaysia portfolio (2016-2024)

Country programme	Malaysia
Year started	2016
Portfolio profile	ICCA-GSI
Number of projects	23
Grant amount committed	700,000
Project level co-financing in cash	196,125.45
Project level co-financing in kind	83,521.45
Total co-financing*	279,646.90
Key Thematic Focus	ICCA, Legal Analysis, Livelihoods, watershed management, agroecology, traditional knowledge Education, biodiversity
Total beneficiaries	2,496
Indigenous Communities Supported	communities
Women involved in project activities	969
Youth engaged	303

Projects supported under ICCA GSI Phase 1 delivered strong outcomes across Sabah, Sarawak, and Peninsular Malaysia, particularly in community governance, conservation, knowledge systems, and livelihoods. Supported projects have generated the following key results:

a) Strengthened Community Governance and Resource Management

Communities have enhanced their ability to manage customary territories through locally developed governance systems, including land use planning, community protocols, and conservation practices. Efforts demonstrate the effectiveness of community-led governance in sustaining ecosystems and regulating resource use. Examples include:

- Establishment of Land Use Protocols and river protection systems (Tagal) in Kampung Rumantai, Ranau
- Conservation of water catchment areas and community forest reserves in Kampung Alab and Kampung Simbuan
- Development of customary-based mangrove protection protocols by the Tombonuo community in Kg. Sungai Elo

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b) Documentation and Revitalisation of Traditional Knowledge

Projects have supported the documentation and transmission of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), including:

- Publications on medicinal plant knowledge by the Penan community
- Intergenerational learning initiatives to sustain cultural practices and ecological knowledge systems

c) Livelihoods and Community-Based Enterprises

Community-led initiatives have promoted sustainable livelihood models aligned with conservation objectives, including:

- Eco-tourism and community-based tourism initiatives
- Sustainable agriculture and agroecological practices
- Small-scale enterprises based on local resources

d) Partnerships and Capacity Strengthening

Projects have facilitated collaboration between communities, civil society organisations (CSOs), and technical partners, strengthening:

- Community organisational capacity
- Access to technical knowledge and training
- Engagement with local and national stakeholders

The implementation of ICCA-related initiatives in Malaysia has generated several important lessons that inform Phase 2:

- External disruptions, such as COVID-19, affected implementation timelines.
- Capacity and documentation gaps highlight the need for stronger in-community reporting systems.
- Global frameworks require localisation, particularly for OECMs in Malaysia's context.
- Ongoing pressures on customary territories reinforce the need for stronger recognition and protection of ICCAs.

3. COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Building on the gaps and opportunities identified through various engagements with multi-stakeholders, it has been agreed that Malaysia's OP8 Country Programme will focus on two strategic priorities under the SGP OP8 Malaysia framework. These priorities were determined through multi-stakeholder consultations and reflect the most pressing socio-ecological needs identified across the selected landscapes and beyond.

The selected strategic priorities provide a focused yet integrated direction for OP8 implementation, ensuring that interventions address ecosystem degradation while strengthening sustainable livelihoods and food security. Together, they form the core programming framework for grantmaking, governance arrangements and monitoring under this Country Programme Strategy.

The two selected OP8 Strategic Priorities are:

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1. **Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species**
2. **Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security**

To ensure a focused and manageable implementation under OP8, Malaysia has prioritised these two strategic priorities to avoid overstressing resources and to maintain effective programme delivery. Experiences from previous operational phases indicated that the breadth of proposals received through open calls often exceeded the programme's capacity to support them effectively. By concentrating on these two strategic priorities, the programme can provide more targeted technical and financial support while ensuring that available resources are utilised efficiently. At the same time, the selected priorities align closely with Malaysia's national biodiversity conservation efforts, as well as its food security ambitions, enabling the programme to balance its limited budget with interventions that contribute meaningfully to ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods in agriculture & fisheries, and food security. Refer to **Table 3. SGP Country Programme's alignment with SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives and country priorities/projects/programme in the OP8 CPS document.**

Table 1. Alignment of ICCA-GSI Malaysia with SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives and country priorities/projects/programme

SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives - Global	SGP Country Programme's OP8 Priorities (choose priorities among the SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives on the left column. Some are mandatory and already included.)	SGP Country Programme's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programmes (identify related projects/ programmes for cooperation)
Global ICCA Support Initiative (ICCA GSI Phase 2) (only applicable to ICCA GSI Phase 2 participating countries) (with BMUV IKI funding) 1. Work Package 1: Provide national level ICCA small grants. 2. Work Package 2: Provide legal and governance assistance to ICCAs. 3. Work Package 3: Network exchange and	Global ICCA Support Initiative (ICCA GSI Phase 2) (only applicable to ICCA GSI Phase 2 participating countries) (with BMUV IKI funding) Work Package 1: Provide National-Level ICCA Small Grants Support community-led conservation initiatives through small grants that strengthen stewardship of ICCA territories and ecosystems. Key activities include: • Supporting participatory community mapping and biodiversity baseline	Supports CPD Output 2.1 on biodiversity conservation and implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Through ICCA small grants and governance support, SGP strengthens recognition, documentation and protection of Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved territories within OP8 landscapes. These initiatives contribute to Malaysia's commitments to expand Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and enhance community-based governance

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knowledge management for ICCAs.	assessments to identify and document ICCA territories. - Establishing ICCA demonstration sites through community-led land-use planning and ecosystem restoration activities such as reforestation and rehabilitation. - Promoting sustainable livelihood models linked to biodiversity conservation, including eco-tourism, agroforestry, and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) development. - Documenting traditional ecological knowledge and community governance practices to strengthen local conservation systems. Work Package 2: Provide Legal and Governance Assistance to ICCAs Strengthen the enabling policy and institutional environment for the recognition and governance of ICCAs in Malaysia. Key activities include: - Supporting the expansion and operationalisation of the ICCA Malaysian Consortium and thematic working groups. - Developing policy recommendations and frameworks for	of conservation areas. The initiative also strengthens knowledge exchange and networking among ICCA actors at national and global levels.
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	Indigenous Peoples' biodiversity governance. • Promoting the integration of ICCA principles into national biodiversity strategies and development planning processes. • Facilitating mechanisms for conflict mediation and equitable benefit-sharing related to community conserved areas. Work Package 3: Network Exchange and Knowledge Management for ICCAs Strengthen regional and global collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange among ICCA stakeholders. Key activities include: • Facilitating intergenerational learning platforms for Indigenous leaders, youth, and women. • Conducting capacity building and technical training on governance, biodiversity monitoring, and ICCA management. • Supporting regional and global knowledge exchanges and networking platforms among ICCA communities, organisations, and technical partners. • Promoting women and youth-led initiatives to strengthen inclusive participation in ICCA	
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	governance and conservation activities.	
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3.1. Alignment with National Priorities

Malaysia's National Policy on Biological Diversity (NPBD) 2022–2030 recognises the important role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in the conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity. The ICCA-GSI Phase 2 initiative supports these national priorities by strengthening community-led stewardship, integrating Indigenous knowledge into conservation practices, restoring degraded ecosystems, and promoting nature-based livelihoods such as non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and community ecotourism.

NPBD Target	SGP/ICCA GSI Phase 2 Contribution
Target 2: Strengthen the role of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and stakeholders in biodiversity conservation by 2030.	Supports recognition of community conserved territories, strengthens community governance, and builds capacity for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management.
Target 8: By 2030, at least 20% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of coastal and marine areas are conserved through an effectively managed and ecologically representative system of protected areas and OECMs.	Support identification, mapping, and governance strengthening of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) in pilot landscapes, demonstrating community-led conservation and informing recognition of ICCAs as potential OECMs within Malaysia's national biodiversity framework.
Target 14: Enhance Malaysia's capacity to implement the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework.	Supports documentation of traditional knowledge and promotes fair and equitable benefit-sharing through biodiversity-based livelihoods.

3.2. Alignment with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)

The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) emphasises a gender-responsive, human rights-based, and socially inclusive approach that acknowledges the vital roles of Indigenous Peoples, women, and local communities as custodians of biodiversity. The ICCA-GSI Phase 2 integrates gender perspectives, traditional knowledge systems, and participatory governance to ensure biodiversity conservation efforts also promote empowerment, equity, and resilient livelihoods.

GBF Target	National Relevance	SGP/ICCA GSI Phase 2 Contribution
Target 1: Spatial planning	States developing area-based management plans	Community mapping, community protocols, ICCA documentation, movement patterns, and baseline studies

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Target 2: Restoration	Restoration of degraded forests, wetlands and seascape	Community rehabilitation, reforestation, and ecosystem regeneration initiatives
Target 3: 30x30 conservation	Need for inclusive OECM pathways	ICCA demonstration sites aligned with OECM criteria
Target 9: Use of wild biodiversity	Dependence on forest resources in Indigenous areas	Sustainable livelihood models (agroforestry, NTFPs, eco-tourism)
Target 21: IPLC rights	Recognition of customary land tenure and <i>adat</i>	Strengthened governance, policy frameworks, and ICCA Consortium
Target 23: Gender equality	Increasing women's role in conservation	Women-led ICCA initiatives and intergenerational learning platforms

3.3. Gaps and Opportunities

3.3.1 Legal and Policy Recognition of ICCAs and Customary Territories

Across Malaysia, Indigenous Peoples have their own terms and concepts to describe customary territories such as *Sogian* (Dusun), *Iningeladan* (Sungai), *Iningaan Mai* (Murut Tahol), *Tingoligan* (Dusun Tindal), *Pemakai Menua* (Iban), *Tana Pengurip* and *Tana Nodo* (Penan), and various concepts among Temuan, Jahut, Jakun, Semai, and Temiar communities. These terms reflect the rich diversity of socio-ecological relationships between communities and their ancestral lands. They also form the cultural foundation of ICCA governance, emphasising identity, stewardship, and customary authority.

In these territories, communities continue to safeguard forests, rivers, wildlife, and sacred sites through customary practices and local governance systems. Further strengthening recognition and collaboration with these community stewardship systems presents an important opportunity to enhance Malaysia's contributions toward the Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3 (30x30) and to deepen community participation in land-use planning and conservation decision-making. Continued dialogue, policy alignment, and supportive mechanisms can further strengthen this enabling environment.

Malaysia's governance landscape also reflects the country's federal structure, where land, forests, and customary rights fall under state jurisdiction. As a result, approaches to recognising customary tenure and community stewardship vary across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. In Peninsular Malaysia, the primary legislation is the Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954, which governs *Orang Asli* affairs and includes provisions related to the declaration of *Orang Asli* reserves; the Act is currently under review. In Sabah, Native Customary Rights are recognised under the Sabah Land Ordinance (Section 68), which provides mechanisms for recognition and administration of native

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titles. In Sarawak, Native Customary Rights are recognised within the Sarawak Land Code (Section 81), including provisions for customary land claims, communal reserves, and related dispute resolution processes. States also maintain their own practices relating to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), adat governance, conflict mediation, and benefit-sharing arrangements, reflecting Malaysia's diverse cultural and legal contexts.

At the national level, ongoing policy initiatives such as the Indigenous Development Policy by UNDP Malaysia for the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKDW) prioritise socioeconomic development and community wellbeing. There are opportunities to further strengthen linkages between these initiatives with biodiversity conservation, customary stewardship systems, and community-led conservation approaches such as ICCAs.

ICCA GSI Phase 2 shall be tailored to work with each region's legal and cultural context, supporting customary governance structures, state-specific approaches, and pathways for long-term recognition.

3.3.2 Participatory Community-Mapping, Documentation, and Biodiversity Baselines

Malaysia has made progress under ICCA Phase 1 in participatory mapping and ICCA documentation, yet efforts remain fragmented and uneven across states. Many Indigenous territories do not have standardised maps, baseline biodiversity inventories, or documentation of traditional ecological knowledge. There is no unified national platform for identifying, verifying, or monitoring ICCA sites. This gap limits national recognition efforts and constrains Malaysia from fully capturing the contribution of Indigenous stewardship to GBF Targets 1 (land-use planning), 2 (restoration), 3 (30x30), and 9 (sustainable use of biodiversity). Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability of Malaysia (NRES)-led national work on potential OECMs, provides an important foundation. UNDP's existing portfolio which includes Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) Sustainable Food Systems in Sabah, through the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Programme; the Global Wildlife Programme; the Youth Environment Living Labs (YELL) Programme; Climate-Resilient Hill Paddy Agriculture in Sabah; and the Global Biodiversity Framework Early Action Support Programme, creates strong opportunities for synergy, technical collaboration, and scaling of ICCA approaches.

Malaysia's diverse cultural identities, state systems, and environmental priorities require a decentralised, tailored, and community-driven ICCA strategy. ICCA GSI Phase 2 can strengthen customary stewardship across Malaysia's varied landscape; support the country's GBF & NBSAP targets; leverage synergies with major UNDP/GEF programmes for scaling; build state-specific tools for governance, mediation, and recognition; and empower communities with technology and knowledge partnerships.

3.3.3. Potential Partnerships & Synergies

ICCA GSI Phase 2 will leverage a wide spectrum of partnerships across government, development agencies, civil society, Indigenous networks, academia, and landscape-level initiatives to strengthen

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community-led conservation and secure long-term sustainability. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) will remain the primary national counterpart, especially with the ongoing development of Malaysia's National OECM Framework, the preparation of the 7th National Report to the CBD, and continued work on NDC 3.0. Collaborations with the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKDW), the Department of Orang Asli Development (JKOA), and PlanMalaysia will ensure alignment with rural development strategies, land-use planning, customary tenure issues, and the integration of ICCAs and OECMs into state and district spatial plans. State Governments across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak are essential partners for securing recognition of ICCAs and OECMs, supporting community governance, and embedding these areas into landscape-level conservation strategies.

UNDP and development partners through initiatives and programmes including BIOFIN, the Global Wildlife Programme, the Global Green Commodities Programme, Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program, and the Climate Promise shall offer strong opportunities for synergy. These programmes provide complementary technical expertise on wildlife conservation, integrated landscape management, sustainable commodities, climate finance, and biodiversity expenditure tracking. Their involvement enables ICCA communities to plug into national and state-level policy processes, strengthening policy coherence and unlocking financing opportunities such as Ecological Fiscal Transfers (EFT), restoration funds, and nature-based solutions financing.

ICCA-GSI Phase 2 is proposed to be implemented through two complementary categories of partners:

- a) **Technical Grantee Partners** - universities, research institutes, conservation NGOs, rights-based organizations, and technology providers will support participatory mapping, biodiversity assessments, documentation of Indigenous and community governance systems, conflict mediation, and the development of benefit-sharing and land-use planning frameworks. Their role is to provide technical backbone, methodological guidance, and knowledge products needed to strengthen evidence-based decision making.
- b) **Community Grantee Partners** - Indigenous Peoples communities, women's groups, youth associations, and local conservation collectives will lead territorial stewardship, strengthen customary governance systems, document traditional knowledge, and implement restoration and sustainable livelihood activities. Their ownership and experience are key, ensuring that ICCA recognition and scaling remain grounded in rights-based approaches, local priorities, and place-based realities.

These partnerships create a strong ecosystem of support that connects communities to national policy processes, global environmental goals, and diversified financing streams, ensuring that ICCA GSI Phase 2 is technically robust, socially legitimate, and sustainably embedded within Malaysia's conservation landscape.

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3.4. Opportunities

Growing national interest in OECM pathways aligns closely with UNDP programmes on integrated landscape management, climate adaptation, and nature-positive development. Malaysia's increasing commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), 30x30 Conservation targets, and state-level forest and marine conservation strategies provides strong policy momentum for ICCA recognition and scaling. Strong Indigenous networks are driving regional and global ICCA collaborations, while demand rises for locally led ecosystem restoration and green livelihood models, highlights the potential of community-driven conservation and sustainable development.

3.5. ICCA-GSI Phase 2 Strategy and Work Packages

Work Package 1 – Local Level: ICCA Strengthen community stewardship and sustainable livelihoods through mapped and restored ICCA demonstration sites. Year 1 - 2		
Objective: To support community-led ICCA identification, mapping, restoration, and management as demonstration sites aligned with Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure (OECM) framework, integrating traditional knowledge and biodiversity conservation practices.		
Key Activities	Expected Outputs	Potential Partners
I. Conduct participatory community mapping, movement patterns and baseline studies; II. Facilitate community-led land-use planning and biodiversity inventories; III. Implement reforestation and rehabilitation projects; IV. Develop livelihood-based conservation models (e.g., eco-tourism, NTFPs, agroforestry); V. Document traditional ecological knowledge and governance systems.	I. ICCA maps and baseline studies completed II. Demonstration sites established III. Traditional knowledge documented IV. Restoration and livelihood activities implemented V. Policy recommendations produced based on lessons learned.	Technical Grantee Partners & Community Grantee Partners
Work Package 2 – National Level: Policy & Governance Strengthen legal, institutional, and policy recognition of ICCAs in Malaysia. Year 2 - 3		
Objectives: 1. To develop a Policy Framework and Recommendations for Malaysia's Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Strategy - a reference to future national action planning and policy integration.		

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2. To expand and strengthen the ICCA Malaysian Consortium for improved policy alignment, recognition, and resource mobilization across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak		
Key Activities	Expected Outputs	Potential Partners
I. ICCA Malaysian Consortium widened. Establish thematic working groups (governance, capacity building, mapping, youth). II. Develop a communication and outreach plan to promote ICCA values and visibility. III. Integrate ICCA principles into national biodiversity and development plans; IV. Define conflict mediation and benefit-sharing mechanisms	I. ICCA Malaysian Consortium operational with regional working groups. II. Policy Framework and Recommendations on Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity developed III. Mechanisms for conflict mediation and equitable benefit-sharing identified IV. ICCA principles integrated into national biodiversity and development planning processes.	Engagement with state governments, regional and national ICCA-related networks will be explored to support knowledge exchange, advocacy, and collaboration.
Work Package 3: Global Level <i>Increased Malaysia's engagement in regional and global ICCA networks</i> Year 1 - 3		
Objective: To strengthen the capacity of Indigenous Peoples and local communities through intergenerational learning, leadership development, and technical partnerships to sustain ICCA management and governance.		
I. Engage youth organizations and universities; II. Provide governance and biodiversity monitoring training; III. Establish intergenerational learning platforms; IV. Support women and youth-led ICCA initiatives	I. Community leaders and youth trained; II. Strengthened ICCA governance capacity; III. Sustainable livelihoods enhanced; IV. Intergenerational transfer of knowledge institutionalized; V. Increased participation of women and youth in ICCA decision-making and management.	Youth organizations, universities, technical partners, community-based organizations, and women's networks, YELL

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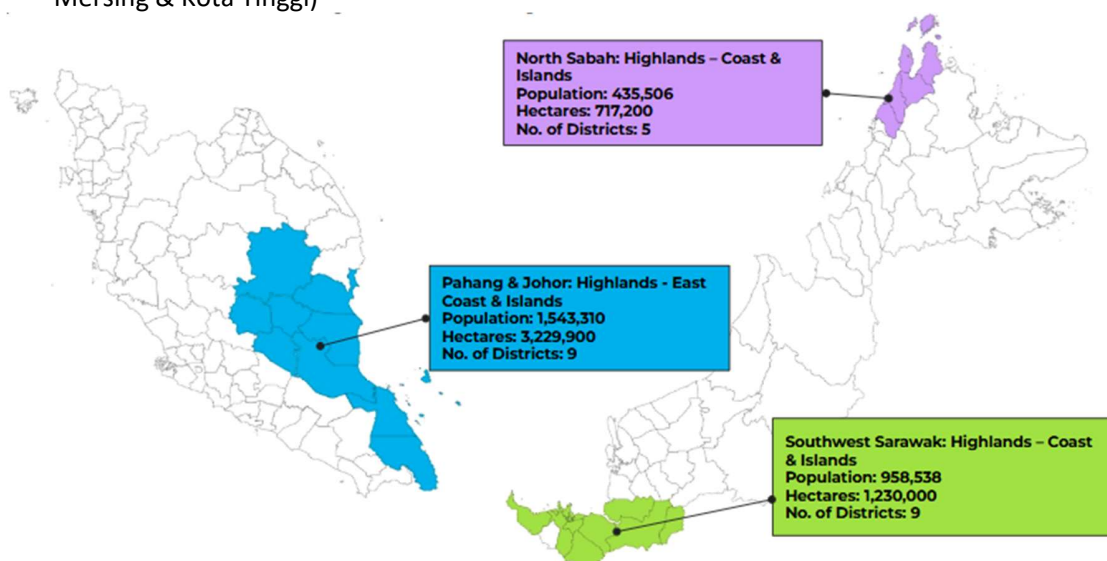
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4. ICCA GSI PHASE 2 PRIORITY GEOGRAPHIES

The selection of priority landscapes and seascapes for ICCA GSI Phase 2 grant-making in Malaysia follows the Landscapes and Seascapes outlined in the SGP OP8 Country Programme Strategy (CPS). The CPS established an evidence-based and consultative framework that ensures objectivity, transparency, and participation of relevant stakeholders. **Please refer to Section 4 in the CPS document – OP8 Priority Landscapes/seascapes & Strategic Initiatives.**

Under OP8, three (3) priority landscapes and seascapes have been identified in Malaysia, namely:

- the Southwest Sarawak Landscape (Lubok Antu, Betong, Asajaya, Kuching, Pusa, Sri Aman, Simunjan, Samarahan, Lundu, Bau, Serian)
- the Sabah Landscape (Kota Marudu, Kudat, Pitas, Tuaran, Kota Belud, Kota Kinabalu, Ranau)
- a combined Pahang–Johor Landscape, reflecting ecological connectivity across state boundaries. (Pahang: Rompin, Pekan, Kuantan, Bera, Jerantut, Maran & Temerloh; Johor: Mersing & Kota Tinggi)



Key criteria include biodiversity significance (e.g. Key Biodiversity Areas and ecologically important habitats), areas experiencing ecosystem degradation, socio-economic vulnerability, and the presence of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and community-based organisations capable of leading conservation and stewardship initiatives. The identification of these landscapes was informed through participatory baseline workshops, consultations with Indigenous Peoples and civil society organisations, and technical inputs from the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC) and other partners. A summary of workshops carried out are as below:

- Clinic Session – Interview with representatives from ICCA Consortium Malaysia (14 October 2025)
- Multi-stakeholders Validation Workshop (19-20 December 2025)
- Knowledge Sharing & Validation Workshop for ICCA-GSI Phase 2 (3 February 2026)

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- Baseline Assessment Workshops (SEPLS-Based Ground Validation) with States Multi-stakeholders Engagement for three (3) landscapes:
 1. Kuching, Sarawak – Southwest Sarawak: Highlands–Coast & Islands (11 February 2026)
 2. Kuantan, Pahang – Pahang & Johor: Highlands–East Coast & Islands (25 February 2026)
 3. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah – North Sabah: Highlands–Coast & Islands (5 March 2026)

Baseline assessments conducted during the OP8 preparation process provided initial insights into the socio-ecological conditions, governance systems, and conservation priorities within each landscape, including engagement with stakeholders operating within and influencing the landscapes:

1. Pahang & Johor Highlands – East Coast & Islands is a continuous rainforest-to-reef corridor where river basins flow from inland forest landscapes through Indigenous People territories and floodplains before reaching coastal zones and nearshore islands. The area is anchored by the Pahang River system, linking key conservation landscapes such as National Park and Som Forest Park to downstream coastal and island environments, supporting ecological connectivity across land and sea. With a strong Indigenous (Orang Asli) presence and multiple internationally recognised protected areas, the corridor connects forests, rivers, coasts and islands as a single integrated system.
2. North Sabah Highlands – Coast & Islands is a rainforest-to-reef landscape linking the Kinabalu Geopark highlands to coastal waters and offshore islands. Shaped by major river systems flowing from inland forests to the sea, the area integrates upland catchments, coasts and island ecosystems within the Tun Mustapha Park Marine Ecological Corridor, reflecting strong land–sea connectivity across northern Sabah.
3. Southwest Sarawak Highlands–Coast & Islands spans an integrated land–sea system shaped by the Batang Lupar, Batang Saribas and Sarawak River basins, flowing from inland highlands and forested catchments through riverine plains to coastal waters and offshore islands along the South China Sea. The area connects upland conservation landscapes, wetlands and estuaries with nearshore islands that support fisheries, biodiversity and coastal livelihoods. With multiple protected areas, Ramsar-designated wetlands and strong river–coast connectivity, the corridor represents a continuous rainforest-to-reef system linking interior landscapes to island and marine environments.

Further details of the selection methodology and SEPLS baseline findings for each selected landscape/seascape are provided in the Baseline Assessment Workshop Report in Annex 1. These findings informed the development of the OP8 landscape strategy and guided the focus of ICCA GSI Phase 2 interventions.

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5. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

5.1 Capturing Lessons Learned

Knowledge management (KM) under ICCA-GSI Phase 2 will support the systematic documentation, learning, and dissemination of community-led conservation practices, with a focus on strengthening both local and national-level impact. Key approaches include:

- Documentation of ICCA practices and lessons from demonstration sites, including governance models, conservation outcomes, and livelihood approaches.
- Promotion of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) through culturally appropriate documentation and intergenerational learning.
- Development of knowledge products such as case studies, policy briefs, and visual storytelling materials.
- Facilitation of cross-site learning exchanges among communities and CSOs across Sabah, Sarawak, and Peninsular Malaysia.
- Contribution to SGP and ICCA global knowledge platforms, ensuring Malaysia's experiences inform regional and global learning.

KM efforts will prioritise accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and practical application, ensuring that knowledge generated supports both community empowerment and policy influence.

5.2 Sharing and Disseminating Good Practices

5.2.1 National Level

Key Areas	Description
Community Knowledge Capture & Exchanges	Documentation of customary governance, TEK, ecological practices, land-use history. Cross-regional exchanges (Sabah-Sarawak-Peninsula). Linking community grantees with technical partners.
Knowledge Materials (Local Languages)	Production of fact sheets, mapping briefs, storyboards, and visual materials in relevant local languages (Dusun, Iban, Semai, Temiar, etc.) for accessibility.
National Knowledge Fairs & Workshops	Annual ICCA/OP8 events bringing together Indigenous communities, government agencies, universities, NGOs, ICCA Consortium, private sector, and development partners. Platforms for replication, upscaling, policy dialogue, and technical support.

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Strengthening CSO & Indigenous Networks	Support to ICCA Malaysian Consortium and Indigenous networks to lead peer exchanges; creation of thematic/regional working groups; strengthening state-level platforms aligned with local land governance systems.
Demonstration Sites / Centres of Excellence	Selected landscapes serve as national demonstration sites for participatory mapping, OECM, forest restoration, TEK–science biodiversity monitoring, governance strengthening, and conflict/benefit-sharing mechanisms.
Capacity Building for Leaders & Partners	Trainings on ICCA governance/legal context, FPIC, mapping & GIS, biodiversity monitoring, restoration, climate adaptation, project & financial management, community storytelling, livelihood skills.

5.2.1 Project Level

Key Areas	Description
KM Plans & Budgeting	Each project must include a KM Plan with dedicated resources for documentation, mapping outputs, governance practices, restoration results, translations, and production of materials.
Peer-to-Peer Learning	Community-to-community exchanges across landscapes to replicate governance strengthening, participatory mapping, forest restoration, and livelihood innovations.
Knowledge Exchange Visits & Dialogues	Landscape-based exchanges with communities, technical grantees, state agencies, universities, and CSOs focusing on GIS, OECM, TEK–science monitoring, conflict mediation, and NTFP/ecotourism/agroforestry livelihoods.
Capacity Building for Community & Technical Partners	Training in climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem restoration, governance/FPIC, project & financial management, reporting, enterprise development.
Resources for Knowledge Sharing	Required budget allocations to support documentation, training, community workshops, peer learning, exchanges, and material development to ensure effective KM across all projects.

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6. COMMUNICATION PLAN

The communication and engagement strategy will support visibility, participation, and partnership-building, while ensuring that messaging is inclusive, culturally appropriate, and aligned with national and global priorities. Communication efforts will position ICCAs as credible, locally grounded solutions that contribute to Malaysia's biodiversity and climate goals. Key approaches include:

- Promoting visibility of ICCA initiatives through storytelling, media engagement, and digital platforms
- Highlighting community voices and leadership, particularly those of Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth
- Supporting national-level platforms, including the SGP Malaysia National Conference and related dialogues, to showcase lessons and strengthen partnerships
- Engaging government agencies, academia, and development partners through targeted communication and knowledge-sharing events
- Aligning messaging with national frameworks such as NPBD and global commitments under the GBF

7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SGP Malaysia will collaborate with ongoing UNDP project on policy development for enhancing Orang Asli development for Inclusive and Sustainable Development, by integrating awareness sessions on SGP grant opportunities and ICCA approaches into planned workshops and consultations.

This coordinated approach will promote more efficient and strategic engagement with Indigenous Peoples, help reduce stakeholder fatigue, and strengthen coherence across UNDP-supported interventions. It will also provide a more unified platform for advancing community-led conservation, strengthened governance, and sustainable livelihoods, while contributing to national priorities and global biodiversity targets.

The National Steering Committee (NSC) members, Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Technical Grantee Partners play an important role in strengthening the ability of communities and CSOs to mobilize complementary resources. While such funding may not flow directly through SGP, these efforts help increase financial and technical support for community conservation initiatives and contribute to the longer-term sustainability of project outcomes.

A. Proposal Development & Technical Support

- Conduct proposal-writing workshops, clinics, and mentoring sessions, including guidance on logframes, budgeting, safeguards, gender inclusion, and MEL.
- NSC and TAG members provide thematic expertise on biodiversity conservation, agroecology, renewable energy, community forestry, OECMs, and cultural heritage.
- Review draft proposals and help refine concept notes prior to submission to donors.

B. Information Sharing & Funding Pipeline Mapping

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- Regular dissemination of donor calls (GEF, UNDP vertical funds, philanthropy, bilateral partners, state funds).
- Pre-call briefing sessions to explain eligibility, documentation, and compliance requirements.
- Maintain a funding implementation chart/calendar for communities and CSOs.

C. Strengthening Community Readiness

- Train ICCA custodians and CSOs on governance structures, financial management, procurement, and reporting to meet donor standards.
- Support community mapping, biodiversity baselines, resource-use studies, and management plans to generate evidence that strengthens applications.
- Facilitate legal registration or formation of cooperatives if needed for grant eligibility.

D. Matchmaking & Networking for Partnerships

- Organise stakeholder dialogues, donor roundtables, landscape forums, and national SGP Conference sessions to link communities with agencies, NGOs, private sector, donors, and researchers.
- Promote cross-learning, exchange visits, and field days to highlight successful pilot models.

E. Increasing Visibility to Attract Funding

- Produce high-quality stories, videos, publications, and infographics on ICCA achievements, Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity outcomes, and sustainable livelihoods.
- Use SGP communication channels such as website, social media to showcase grantees.
- Highlight ICCA/OECM contributions to national priorities (EFT, NDCs, CBD reporting) to position communities as credible partners.

F. Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Proposals

- Convene coalitions of CSOs, universities, private sector actors, and government agencies.
- Provide SGP's data, monitoring frameworks, and mapping outputs as inputs to larger programmes.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

ICCA-GSI projects will be monitored using two tools that are **mandatory** for all projects.

- 1. Project Management Tool** - incorporates indicators for the targeted goals stated in the ICCA-GSI Project Document that were agreed upon by the donor and UNDP. These indicators are aligned to GBF Targets 3, 21, 22 and 23.
- 2. Resilience and Security Index** - tool to assess the socio-ecological health of ICCAs.

While M&E is the responsibility of the National Coordinator (NC), a grant (up to USD 50k) for a national catalytic organization (NCO) can be provided to support the NC using the two aforementioned tools. Following training from ICCA-GSI Project Management Unit (PMU) in

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headquarters, National Coordinators and Programme Associates/Assistants will train national catalytic organizations (NCOs) in their respective countries on the Project Management Tool and Resilience and Security Index.

Note: As supervisor of the NCO, the NC is responsible for validating the data on these tools before sending to PMU/CPMT in the headquarter office.

A. Self-Strengthening Process Guide

The Self-Strengthening Process (SSP) is a cornerstone for Indigenous Peoples and local communities living in ICCAs or Territories of Life. The SSP involves a self-strengthening journey, a process of reflection, discussions, and actions that enable communities to define and shape plans according to their needs and aspirations.

The SSP consists of seven main actions:

1. [Reflect](#) - The SSP may be prompted by the need to address a pressing concern for the territory or to take up a new opportunity. A useful starting point is to hold a grassroots discussion to explore and confirm: (i) whether the community is a custodian of a Territory of Life or ICCA; (ii) what the status of that Territory of Life or ICCA is; and (iii) whether and how the community wants to embark on an SSP.
2. [Document](#) - Community-defined documentation about the Territory of Life or ICCA can be of use within the community and in support of external connections. Documentation helps to support other self-strengthening elements, including being able to communicate, seeing how the situation changes over time, and defending the territory from harm.
3. [Understand](#) - Once sufficient information about the ICCA or Territory of Life has been gathered and shared within the communities, self-strengthening can focus on their understanding of the overall situation or health of the Territory of Life. The Security Index mentioned above can be used in tandem as a tool to determine communities' reality in relation to inter-related ecological, social, cultural, spiritual, political and economic aspects in the ICCA. Understanding their current situation or reality allows the communities to discuss their future.
4. [Envision & celebrate](#) - A foundational moment of any SSP is the moment when the communities recognize themselves as custodians of their Territory of Life or ICCA, and collectively commit to maintaining that role into the future. While this commitment may look different for diverse peoples and communities, it usually centers on the collective capacities and will to govern and manage the relevant territory.

Self-recognition as a community custodian is stronger when built upon or along with a shared vision of the future for the Territory of Life. The moment of collective self-

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recognition may culminate in an event to celebrate, affirm, and commit to the shared vision of the desired future, role as custodians as well as kindle community enthusiasm and sense of unity.

5. [Act & communicate](#) - For the SSP to produce tangible results, the community will need to act. This typically includes developing and implementing one or more specific initiatives. These initiatives should draw from the previous steps such as understanding communities' own strengths, challenges and the threats and opportunities they face in relationship to their role as custodian, and vision of the desired future. In other words, the community members should together consider and agree on what needs to happen for their shared vision of the Territory of Life to become a reality.
6. [Act with others](#) - Custodian communities confront similar challenges and are likely to benefit from sharing experiences and joining forces. In this sense, self-strengthening ultimately involves mutual strengthening among peers and allies, which generally starts from some form of networking. National networking and organizing for collaborative action can help create a critical mass of support for Territories of Life or ICCAs. These collaborations generate: (i) mutual awareness and solidarity, including to address threats to Territories of Life; (ii) enhanced means to act (pulled together from many sources); (iii) better understanding of shared issues and priorities, including how to address opportunities and use of resources effectively; (iv) enhanced national and international visibility of the broad benefits of Territories of Life; and (v) effective advocacy for improved policies and practices.
7. [Review & renew](#) - Self-strengthening is an ongoing process of both learning and action. Territories of Life or ICCAs, their custodian communities, and the broader contexts in which they exist are dynamic. Changing landscapes and circumstances can bring new opportunities and challenges over time. Rather than being a one-off exercise, the process can be viewed as a set of approaches and commitments that enable ongoing learning and growth.

B. Guide to registering ICCAs in the Global ICCA Registry and Protected Planet databases.

1. The Global [ICCA Registry](#)

The Global ICCA Registry was established in 2008 as an online platform to raise awareness of the significance of Indigenous Peoples' and community-led conservation practices. It is a voluntary database, where ICCA custodians or their supporting organizations can provide data, case studies, maps, photos and stories. Information can be provided by using a questionnaire based on the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the communities concerned.

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The ICCA Registry provides information on learning what ICCAs are, the benefits and considerations of participating, and the registration processes.

ICCA Registry webinars

[ICCA Registry webinar 1: Why participate](#)

As an introduction to the ICCA Registry, this webinar discusses the potential benefits of participating in the ICCA Registry, and things to consider before doing so.

[ICCA Registry webinar 2: How to participate](#)

This webinar discusses how to participate in the ICCA Registry.

ICCA Registry videos

Video 1: [What are ICCAs?](#)

Video 2: [Why submit your ICCA to the ICCA Registry, and how?](#)

Video 3: [What definitions can your ICCA meet?](#)

The ICCA Registry is linked to the Protected Planet Initiative, which is the authoritative platform for global data on protected and conserved areas (PCAs) and which tracks progress towards the implementation of area-based conservation targets.

2. [Protected Planet Initiative](#)

The Protected Planet Initiative is an online platform and stores data on PCAs. The Protected Planet databases have a range of users, including governments, NGOs, non-state actors and communities, who use them to track progress towards policy targets, to inform new conservation strategies, defend and educate.

ICCA custodians can also choose to submit their ICCAs as a protected area or an OECM to the Protected Planet databases, which includes the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and the World Database on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM). Submitting data on ICCAs to the Protected Planet databases will further increase their visibility and will ensure ICCAs are included in tracking progress towards national and international conservation ambitions.

C. [Mapeo for ICCAs](#), a digital mapping tool

To further support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in mapping and documenting their ICCAs, Mapeo for ICCAs was developed by UNEP-WCMC, Digital Democracy and the Forest Peoples Programme.

Mapeo is an existing app developed by Digital Democracy, designed to support Indigenous peoples and communities in documenting, monitoring and mapping many types of information. Mapeo now includes a specific version of the app called 'Mapeo for ICCAs' which is designed to support ICCA custodians to map the boundaries of their ICCAs, but it also provides a mechanism for the ICCA

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custodians to submit their data to the Global ICCA Registry and the Protected Planet Initiative databases via the app, if they choose to do so. The app is designed to work in an entirely offline environment, to be highly customizable, and built on a decentralized peer-to-peer database that allows communities to own their own data.

The overall objective of Mapeo for ICCAs is to make the mapping, advocacy, and information-sharing process for ICCAs as accessible as possible. The application is a free digital tool that allows communities to document, monitor, map and own their data. It is an offline and open-source technology which does not require internet or special hardware to collect, view or share data.

Other networks and groups that may be helpful include:

- A. Support to national ICCA Peer Review networks
- B. Collaboration with the ICCA Consortium members in the participating countries. Option to create a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with the Consortium to support the NSC.

8.1. Monitoring Approaches at Project and Country Levels

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for ICCA GSI Phase 2 will follow the SGP OP8 framework (as outlined in the CPS), with participatory and community-led approaches adapted to the ICCA context.

At the project level, progress will be tracked through baseline assessments at each selected pilot site, simplified results frameworks, and periodic reporting using participatory tools such as community mapping and community-based monitoring.

Data will be systematically recorded in the SGP database and aggregated at the country programme level by the National Coordinator (NC), with support from the NSC and technical partners. Data quality will be ensured through standardised indicators, field verification, and triangulation of sources. Monitoring will include 1–2 site visits per project per year, where feasible conducted through cluster-based and joint missions with partners. Capacity strengthening of grantees will support credible and inclusive data collection. Consistent with SGP principles, community members including women, youth, and vulnerable groups, will participate in defining indicators, tracking progress, and validating results through regular reflection processes, in line with FPIC and ethical standards, with findings reported through project reporting and national knowledge-sharing platforms.

All ICCA-GSI projects will align with at least one or more of the below Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) targets and all mandatory indicators from the International Climate initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

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PROJECT LEVEL INDICATORS		
MANDATORY Global Biodiversity Framework Targets and Indicators		Type
GBF Target	Indicator	
GBF Target 3 Conservation and protection of ecosystems and ensure that 30 percent of global land and sea areas are conserved/maintained by 2030	I. Hectares positively influenced by ecosystem type (number)	Mandatory: A given project can be linked to, <u>at a minimum, one GBF Target.</u> Mandatory for Target 3: all indicators listed
GBF Target 21 : Guide biodiversity action through knowledge-sharing of biodiversity information including the traditional knowledge, innovations, practices of IPs and LCs based on their free, prior and informed consent.	II. Projects supporting the protection/enhancement/promotion of Indigenous Peoples' customary sustainable use practices of biodiversity (number) III. Projects supporting linguistic diversity of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (number) IV. Number of projects supporting traditional occupations of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (number) V. Knowledge-sharing workshops (number) VI. Projects supporting the strengthening of inter-generational transfer(number) VII. Legal and recognition agreements to ensure conservation and sustainable use of ICCAs (number)	Mandatory: A given project can be linked to, <u>at a minimum, one GBF Target.</u> Mandatory for Target 21: <u>at least</u> three of these GBF indicators
GBF Target 22 : Ensure Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice and Information Related to Biodiversity for all. Ensure participation of IPs and LCs in decision-making related to biodiversity.	I. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are included in decision-making related to biodiversity conservation at project, local, national, regional and/or global levels. (number) II. National strategic documents incorporating ICCAs and related ecosystems as priorities for biodiversity conservation and adaptation	Mandatory: A given project can be linked to, <u>at a minimum, one GBF Target.</u> Mandatory for Target 22: <u>at least</u> three of these GBF indicators.

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	to climate change (number) III. Territorial planning units that adopt ICCA recognition and governance assessments (number) IV. Management plans and governance assessments updated to include ICCA legal, and others forms of recognition (number)	
GBF Target 23 : Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action	I. Number of women-led projects (number) II. Women representatives receiving support/capacity strengthening (number)	Mandatory: A given project can be linked to, <u>at a minimum, one GBF Target.</u> Mandatory for Target 22: all indicators listed
GBF Targets 3, 21, 22, 23	ICCA Security and Resilience Index assessment score carried out in line with ICCA self-strengthening methodology (number)	Mandatory
Socio- Economic Benefit Indicators		
1	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender	Mandatory
2	Number of Youth as direct beneficiaries of the project, disaggregated by gender	Mandatory; very important for projects with inter-generational transfer outputs
3	Number of indirect beneficiaries disaggregated by gender	Mandatory
4	Number of Youth as indirect beneficiaries of the project, disaggregated by gender	Mandatory; very important for projects with inter-generational transfer outputs
5	Number of direct beneficiaries with improved livelihoods and well-being	Mandatory
6	Number of Increase in livelihoods: a. Amount of increase in incomes (number) b. Amount of increase in food production (food security for subsistence communities) (number)	<i>Mandatory for at least 1 component of increase in livelihoods as relevant to the project</i>
7	Number of sustainably produced biodiversity and agrobiodiversity products	<i>As relevant</i>

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8.2. ICCA GSI Phase 2 Results Framework

The ICCA GSI Phase 2 results framework integrates SGP OP8 / GEF core indicators with ICCA-GSI-specific indicators to capture both environmental and socio-cultural outcomes of community-led conservation. Core indicators track beneficiaries, hectares, biodiversity, livelihoods, and gender, while ICCA-specific indicators focus on customary governance, sustainable use, knowledge transfer, and recognition processes. A limited set of country-specific indicators reflects Malaysia's landscape context. Baselines and targets will be refined through participatory site-level assessments, ensuring alignment with global reporting requirements while remaining relevant to local conditions.

Outcome	Key Indicator	Type	Target (Phase 2)
1. Community-led conservation and restoration strengthened	Number of people benefiting (sex-disaggregated)	SGP OP8 / GEF	1,200 beneficiaries (≥50% women where applicable)
	Hectares under improved conservation/sustainable use	SGP OP8 / GEF	15,000 ha
	Hectares under restoration	SGP OP8 / GEF	1,500 ha
	Number of ICCA sites with strengthened management plans	ICCA-GSI	4 sites
	Number of species with improved/maintained conservation status	SGP OP8 / GEF	6 species/populations
2. Livelihoods and well-being improved	Number of beneficiaries with improved livelihoods	SGP OP8 / GEF	400 individuals/households
	% increase in income from sustainable livelihoods	SGP OP8 / GEF	≥15% increase
	% increase in food production/food security	SGP OP8 / GEF	≥10–15% increase
3. Indigenous governance and knowledge systems strengthened	Projects supporting customary sustainable use	ICCA-GSI	4 projects
	Projects supporting intergenerational knowledge transfer	ICCA-GSI	4 projects
	Number of knowledge-sharing workshops/exchanges	ICCA-GSI	12 events
4. Recognition, participation, and policy uptake enhanced	Number of community representatives in decision-making	ICCA-GSI	200 representatives
	Number of policies/strategies incorporating ICCAs	ICCA-GSI	3 documents

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	ICCA Security & Resilience Index assessments conducted	ICCA-GSI	4 assessments
	Legal/administrative/recognition agreements supporting ICCAs	ICCA-GSI	4 agreements
5. Gender equality and social inclusion mainstreamed	Number of women-led projects	SGP OP8 / GEF	≥2 projects
	Number of women beneficiaries supported	SGP OP8 / GEF	200 women
	% of projects benefiting IPs, women, and youth	SGP OP8 / GEF	≥60% of portfolio
6. Monitoring, learning, and knowledge management strengthened	% of projects with participatory monitoring processes	ICCA-GSI	100% of projects
	Number of knowledge-sharing events	SGP OP8 / ICCA-GSI	12 events
	Baseline and endline/site assessments completed	ICCA-GSI	4 baseline + 4 endline

9. National Steering Committee Endorsement

NSC members involved in ICCA GSI Phase 2 development, review and endorsement	Signatures
Datuk Nor Yahati Binti Awang/Deputy Secretary General (Environment Sustainability), NRES / Chairperson SGP MY	Signed by: <i>Datuk Nor Yahati Binti Awang</i> 1067F8475F5141A...
Mr. Edward Vrkić / Resident Representative / UNDP	Signed by: <i>E. Vrkić</i> D2AA1A67F048445...
Dr. Noranida Binti Zainal /Director/ME /GEF Political FC	Signed by: <i>Dr. Noranida Binti Zainal</i> 835109CAB8F34D1...
En. Ahmad Farid Bin Mohammed / Undersecretary / Climate Change Division, NRES /UNFCCC FC	Signed by: <i>Ahmad Farid Bin Mohammed</i> 18F77DFFB1E74D0...
Ts. Dr. Khairul Naim Adham / Deputy Undersecretary / Biodiversity and Forestry Management Division, NRES / UNCBD FC	Signed by: <i>Ts Dr Khairul Naim Adham</i> FD7B5E53EDE5483...
Mrs. Lee Sheu Jeen / WWF Malaysia	Signed by: <i>Mrs. Lee Sheu Jeen</i> 9BA2390B56FA4AD...

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NSC members involved in ICCA GSI Phase 2 development, review and endorsement	Signatures
Ms. Ginny Ng Siew Ling /Independent	Signed by: 9F6AB76AD776460...
Dr. Colin G. Nicholas / Centre for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC)	Signed by: 32E1EC434ED5401...
Pn. Azrina Binti Abdullah / Independent	Signed by: 5674DED87C07489...
Pn. Suraya Binti Bujang / Purplelily Social Association	Signed by: 6FA24822C7784DB...
Mr. Kon Onn Sein / Foundation for Community Studies and Development	Signed by: 59E4368052D1474...
Prof. Dr. Justin Sentian / Faculty of Science and Natural Resources, Universiti Malaysia Sabah	Signed by: 1B1145B115EE467...