



# Laporan Pemetaan Isu Kawasan Parlimen 2025

**Wilayah Sarawak**

**P.203 Lubok Antu**

Laporan Disediakan Oleh: Raine Melissa Riman



# Issue Mapping Report for P.203 Lubok Antu

Prepared by:  
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# P.203 LUBOK ANTU

# WELCOMING REMARKS



**YB PUAN RODIYAH SAPIEE**

*Treasurer of APPGM-SDG Committee;*

*Member of Parliament for Batang Sadong (P.200)*

Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim.

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, and greetings,

I am pleased to pen these welcoming remarks for the Parliamentary Constituency Issue Mapping Reports Compilation 2025 for the Sarawak Region. This compilation reflects our collective commitment to Malaysia's sustainable development agenda and to centring the 'lived realities' of communities in national policymaking. It serves as both a living archive of what we have heard on the ground and a roadmap for what we must do next.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a unifying framework for balanced progress - integrating economic vitality, social well-being, environmental stewardship, and good governance. Since 2020, the APPGM-SDG has shown that meaningful community participation strengthens policy coherence and drives actions that are equitable, inclusive, and just.

In Sarawak, where coastal and riverine settlements, rural heartlands, and dynamic urban centres coexist, such an approach is not merely desirable - it is indispensable. The realities of geography, culture, and access demand solutions that are context-sensitive, integrated, and place-based.

This compilation consolidates the findings of the 2025 issue-mapping exercise conducted across Sarawak's parliamentary constituencies. The work is grounded in rigorous field engagements and sincere dialogues among Members of Parliament, community representatives, government agencies and departments, the private sector, and civil society organisations.

Several cross-cutting themes and issues emerge throughout the report. Equally important, the report highlights promising practices and local innovations in livelihoods,

community-driven environmental restoration, social enterprise, and partnerships that bridge government programs with grassroots capabilities. These examples demonstrate that Sarawak's diversity is a strength - when harnessed through collaborative planning and sustained action. Policy is most effective when it incorporates local knowledge and is reinforced by strong institutional coordination across federal, state, and district levels.

Beyond diagnosing issues, this volume advances practical recommendations aligned with the SDGs. Each recommendation is crafted to facilitate inter-agency collaborations, realistic resource distributions, effective implementation and measurable outcomes.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the APPGM-SDG Secretariat for driving this initiative, to my parliamentary colleagues for their steadfast support, and to our partners in government, particularly the Division, District and Land Offices - for their professionalism and cooperation. I also wish to acknowledge our community leaders, facilitators and resource persons whose dedication in the field ensured that the data gathered is both rigorous and meaningful.

To every organisation and individual, often working quietly behind the scenes, who contributed time, expertise, and resources: thank you. Your efforts have made this publication both possible and purposeful.

It is my hope that this volume will guide collective action, deepen inter-agency coordination, and inspire locally led solutions. May it contribute to Sarawak's continued advancement and to the long-term resilience of our nation, today and for generations to come.

Thank you.

# FOREWORD

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**JAMES RYAN RAJ**

*Deputy Executive Director of APPGM-SDG*



Since 2020, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) has been actively advancing the localisation agenda of the SDGs across parliamentary constituencies nationwide. Grounded in a systematic issue-mapping approach, APPGM-SDG conducts Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with targeted local groups to identify urgent community challenges and propose solutions through SDG-based community projects and relevant policy interventions. From 2020 to 2024, APPGM-SDG has carried out fieldwork in 115 parliamentary constituencies. In 2025, this initiative has expanded to 28 new constituencies, enabling the team to explore grassroots issues in greater extent and set clearer local priorities. Field visits offer comprehensive insights into on-the-ground realities and assist to identify the most relevant solutions required.

As a result of these efforts, 28 issue-mapping reports have been produced in 2025 and published as the Parliamentary Constituency Issue Mapping Reports Compilation 2025. This compilation is organised according to zones and regions, consisting of Central, North, South, East Coast, Sabah, and Sarawak. They are summarised in Table 1. Photo reports documenting field visits and identified issues are also included. In addition, individual reports for each parliamentary constituency have been prepared to facilitate referencing for Members of Parliament and other stakeholders.

Table 1: Breakdown of Parliamentary Constituencies by Volume

VOLUME	ZONE / REGION	NUMBER OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES	RESEARCHERS
Vol 1	North Zone	9	5
Vol 2	East Coast Zone	4	2
Vol 3	Central Zone	3	3
Vol 4	South Zone	6	4
Vol 5	Sabah Region	4	2
Vol 6	Sarawak Region	2	2
TOTAL		28	

These reports adopt a qualitative approach that captures grassroots voices, including the emotions, needs, and priorities of local communities. Although the full FGD transcripts are not included, the social analysis presented here is sufficient to illustrate the realities of community life on the ground. The complete reports, with full audio transcripts, will be published for source reference to Members of Parliament and made available to the public upon request for further research purposes.

These reports will serve as the foundation for future discussions in Parliament as well as with relevant agencies and ministries. The ultimate goal is to develop more comprehensive solutions and drive meaningful policy improvements to address the identified issues.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the APPGM-SDG Committee Members, the Head of Secretariat, and the APPGM-SDG Directors and Secretariat, as well as to all Members of Parliament, government agencies, including district offices, and all stakeholders and communities who facilitated dialogues and participation in the APPGM-SDG initiative in 2025.

A special note of congratulations goes to Nurul Syaza Mazelan and Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir, main editors of this six-volume series, for their dedication in editing the reports prepared by the APPGM-SDG research team. My gratitude also goes to the lead researchers: Dr Teo Lee Ken, Nurul Syaza Mazelan, Dr Wan Suzita Wan Ibrahim, Dr Siti Nur Ain Zakinuddin, Dr Thanaraj Murudi, Siti Noraiysah Rohim, Raine Melissa Riman, Dr. Eva Kristin Larry Sait, Nur Syadhira Mohd Razali, Nuha Mysara Mohd Hisam, Lydia Ann Anak Bill, Fatimah binti Mohd Yasin, Tariq Ziad bin Abdul Razak, and McJeanet Lempisik@Marx as well as the APPGM-SDG Corporate Communications team led by Zoel Ng, with special thanks to Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir, Kezia Sim Kui Ting and Arif Azhad

Abdul Ghaffar together with Afiqah Abdul Malik, Head of Secretariat Department for their creative efforts in ensuring the success of this publication.

May this collective endeavour continue to strengthen our pursuit of sustainable development for all Malaysia.

# INTRODUCTION



**RAINE MELISSA RIMAN**

*Head of Sarawak Region, APPGM-SDG*

In 2025, APPGM-SDG strengthened its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) issue mapping initiatives, making it more effective, inclusive, and standardized in approach across all locations. This year, we placed key emphasis on refining the issue-mapping process as it constitutes the foundation for SDG localisation, through the standardising of research documentation and reporting methods. The issue mapping fieldwork research remains a critical initial phase in APPGM-SDG's SDG localisation efforts. As the starting point of the intervention cycle, issue mapping research functions as a robust analytical tool supported by efficient, transparent, and inclusive stakeholder engagements. Therefore, APPGM-SDG prioritises comprehensive participation, mainstreaming the perspectives of communities, agencies, and local leaders to ensure that diverse viewpoints are seriously considered. Fieldwork research for the issue-mapping reports serves as a key instrument to present analytical findings, priorities for action priorities, and the level of stakeholder participation at various locations and levels.

For 2025, APPGM-SDG has conducted issue-mapping work encompassing 28 parliamentary constituencies (Figure 1), representing diverse localities across different zones and regions, including Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. In each location, collaborations with local government offices, state agencies and local authorities or their equivalent entities are also strengthened. These entities play crucial roles as field coordinators, facilitators for community mobilisation, and references for local data (Table 1).

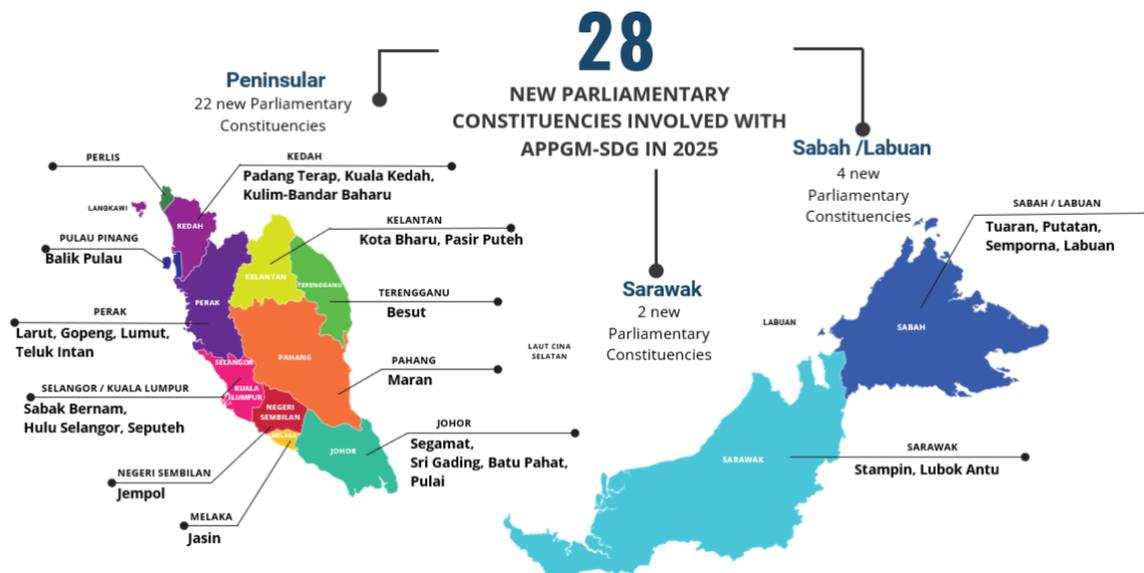


Figure 1: The 28 Parliamentary Constituencies for 2025

During fieldwork excursions, the research teams uphold strict ethical protocols, including obtaining consent for recordings and maintaining confidentiality. However, several challenges accompanied the 2025 operations. These included difficulties in achieving balanced participation across target groups, inconsistent audio quality that required analytical and cross referencing with field notes, overlapping conversations during FGDs that require careful filtering, as well as logistical constraints such as scheduling, venues, and facilities that affected the overall quantity of sessions and the depth of evidence collected. Nevertheless, these challenges were mitigated through rescheduling, support from village heads and district offices for mobilisation, prior mapping of existing stakeholders, and the adoption of multiple documentation methods to maintain the integrity of data.

In terms of content, this report is structured to assist readers to understand each zone and region gradually in phases and in depth. **Section 1** presents the background of each area, highlighting geography, topography, population composition, economic activities, and the relevance of local contexts to SDG targets. **Section 2** explains the methodology, ethical considerations, fieldwork challenges, and study limitations. **Section 3** summarises cross-cutting SDG issues based on thematic areas such as education, skills, employment, culture/heritage, road safety, agriculture, irrigation, human-wildlife conflict, access to social assistance, and basic infrastructure. **Section 4** provides the overall mapping summary by major issues, with detailed explanations, interventions, and responses from relevant agencies. **Section 5** lists the preliminary identification of short-term solution projects as community interventions that are high-impact, immediate and direct, along with recommended implementing partners and the alignment of SDGs.

By utilising such a structure and layout, the parliamentary constituency issue mapping reports of 2025 function as an action-based reference document for the transition from the amplifying of grassroots voices to the formulation of action plans, and thereafter to the implementation of programs that are realistic and measurable.

### **ISSUE MAPPING IN THE SARAWAK REGION**

The 2025 issue mapping exercises in P203 Lubok Antu and P196 Stampin sought to situate community perspectives within the broader landscape of Sarawak's development trajectories. Conducted through ten focus group discussions (FGDs) and ethnographic field observations in each site, the study highlights how geography, demography, and governance shape everyday experiences. By focusing on lived realities rather than solely technical indicators, the mapping illustrates how development challenges are interlinked across both rural and urban settings.

In P203 Lubok Antu, the study examined rural and interior Iban longhouses along the Batang Lupar basin, particularly the Ulu Ai and Ulu Engkari riverine regions, alongside a Malay-Iban hybrid village in Engkelili and long-established Hakka Chinese settlements. Across these diverse communities, key issues identified include land use and ownership, citizenship documentation, digital readiness, and limited access to information and public services. These challenges extend beyond gaps in infrastructure and service provision; they are also shaped by governance arrangements and the ways in which customary practices intersect with state-led development planning. While local identities and traditions remain important sources of continuity, many communities struggle to navigate bureaucratic systems that determine access to resources and influence decision-making processes. In contrast, P196 Stampin represents Sarawak's most densely populated parliamentary constituency, characterised by a majority Chinese population and a mix of urban and peri-urban neighbourhoods. Here, the pressures of urbanisation are more pronounced: rising housing costs, complex strata and property management regimes, and the daily negotiations required to live within diverse, mixed-population environments. For many residents, development challenges are shaped not only by policy frameworks but also by the practical, adaptive strategies households adopt to manage the demands of urban life.

Despite these differences, common threads cut across both constituencies. Agriculture remains significant, yet farmers in Lubok Antu and Stampin alike face rising input costs, labour shortages, and reduced interest among younger generations. Whether among interior Iban cultivators or Chinese Hakka smallholders, these pressures affect both livelihoods and cultural continuity. Housing insecurity also emerges as a shared concern. In Lubok Antu's smaller towns, low-income (B40) households rely on the *Program Perumahan Rakyat Sejahtera* (PPRS), while in Stampin, issues of affordability are expressed

in the persistence of squatter settlements such as those in Batu Kawa. Importantly, urban squatting cannot be understood in isolation, as it is partly driven by rural-to-urban migration. Many younger residents from Lubok Antu, often with limited educational qualifications, move to towns seeking opportunities but encounter precarious employment and high living costs, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability. Each constituency also presents distinctive livelihood pathways. In Lubok Antu, riverine communities are involved in tourism, yet many lack access to the training, institutional support, and resources required to develop sustainable, community-led ecotourism. In Stampin, everyday life is shaped by navigating housing regulations, strata rules, and property management policies. Across both areas, communities consistently noted a lack of accessible information on policies and rights. This gap in awareness reduces their ability to engage fully in decision-making processes and reinforces a sense of dependency on external actors.

Leadership was another recurring theme. In Lidah Tanah (P196), the absence of a recognised community leader leaves residents without a clear channel for representation. In RPR Engkelili (P203), the complexity of formal leadership appointments has slowed progress. Agencies themselves acknowledge that administrative processes can be lengthy, which may limit responsiveness to local concerns. Overall, the findings suggest that rural transformations and urban challenges are deeply connected. What may appear as localised issues, whether in a longhouse along the Batang Ai basin or a gated residence in Kuching city, are part of wider structural dynamics that shape both opportunity and inequality. Addressing these challenges requires development approaches that are responsive to local contexts, while also recognising the interdependence of rural and urban futures in Sarawak.

<b>NO.</b>	<b>ZONE / REGION</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY</b>	<b>CODE</b>	<b>LEAD RESEARCHER APPGM-SDG</b>
1	Sarawak	Stampin	P196	Dr. Eva Kristin Larry Sait
2	Sarawak	Lubok Antu	P203	Raine Melissa Riman

Table 1: List of 28 Parliamentary Constituencies Involved in APPGM-SDG Fieldwork for 2025

NO.	ZONE/ REGION	PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	CODE	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	PARTY	COORDINATING PARTNERS	LEAD RESEARCHER APPGM-SDG
1	Central	Sabak Bernam	P092	YB Tuan Kalam bin Salan	PN-BERSATU	Pejabat Daerah & Tanah (PDT) Sabak Bernam	Nur Syadhira Mohd Razali
2	Central	Hulu Selangor	P094	YB Tuan Haji Mohd Hasnizan bin Harun	PN-PAS	PDT Hulu Selangor	Nuha Mysara Mohd Hisam
3	Central	Seputeh	P121	YB Puan Teresa Kok Suh Sim	PH-DAP	Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL)	Nurul Syaza Mazelan
4	North	Padang Terap	P007	YB Tuan Nurul Amin bin Hamid	PN-PAS	PDT Padang Terap	Nurul Syaza Mazelan
5	North	Kuala Kedah	P010	YB Dr. Ahmad Fakhruddin	PN-PAS	PDT Kota Setar	Dr. Thanaraj Murudi
6	North	Balik Pulau	P053	YB Dato' Muhammad Bakhtiar bin Wan Chik	PH-PKR	PDT Barat Daya	Siti Noraiysah Rohim
7	North	Larut	P059	YB Dato' Seri Hamzah bin Zainudin	PN-BERSATU	PDT Selama	Dr. Thanaraj Murudi
8	North	Kulim-Bandar Baharu	P018	YB Tuan Roslan bin Hashim	PN-BERSATU	PDT Kulim & PDT Bandar Baharu	Dr. Thanaraj Murudi
9	North	Padang Rengas	P060	YB Kapten Azahari bin Hasan	PN-BERSATU	PDT Kuala Kangsar	Dr. Teo Lee Ken
10	North	Gopeng	P064	YB Tuan Tan Kar Hing	PH-PKR	PDT Kampar	Lydia Ann Anak Bill

NO.	ZONE/ REGION	PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	CODE	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	PARTY	COORDINATING PARTNERS	LEAD RESEARCHER APPGM-SDG
11	North	Lumut	P073	YB Komander (B) Nordin Bin Ahmad Ismail	PN-BERSATU	PDT Manjung	Dr. Thanaraj Murudi
12	North	Teluk Intan	P076	YB Tuan Nga Kor Ming	PH-DAP	PDT Hilir Perak	Nurul Syaza Mazelan
13	South	Jempol	P126	Dato' Haji Shamsulkahar Bin Haji Mohd Deli	BN-UMNO	PDT Jempol	Tariq Ziad bin Abdul Razak
14	South	Jasin	P139	YB Tuan Zulkifli bin Ismail	PN-PAS	PDT Jasin	Dr. Wan Suzita Wan Ibrahim
15	South	Segamat	P140	YB Tuan Yuneswaran a/l Ramaraj	PH-PKR	PDT Segamat	Dr. Wan Suzita Wan Ibrahim
16	South	Sri Gading	P149	YB Tuan Haji Aminolhuda bin Hassan	PH-AMANAHAH	PDT Batu Pahat	Dr. Teo Lee Ken
17	South	Batu Pahat	P150	YB Tuan Haji Onn bin Abu Bakar	PH-PKR	PDT Batu Pahat	Dr. Wan Suzita Wan Ibrahim
18	South	Pulai	P161	YB Tuan Suhaizan bin Kaiat	PH-AMANAHAH	Pejabat Daerah Johor Bahru	Siti Noraiysah Rohim
19	East	Maran	P089	YB Dato' Sri Dr. Haji Ismail bin Abd. Muttalib	PN-PAS	PDT Maran	Siti Noraiysah Rohim
20	East	Kota Bharu	P020	YB Datuk Seri Takiyuddin bin Hassan	PN-PAS	Pejabat Tanah & Jajahan (PTJ) Kota Bharu	Dr. Siti Nur Ain Zakinuddin
21	East	Pasir Puteh	P023	YB Datuk Dr. Nik Muhammad Zawawi bin Salleh	PN-PAS	PTJ Pasir Puteh	Dr. Siti Nur Ain Zakinuddin

NO.	ZONE/ REGION	PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	CODE	MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	PARTY	COORDINATING PARTNERS	LEAD RESEARCHER APPGM-SDG
22	East	Besut	P033	YB Datuk Che Mohamad Zulkifly bin Jusoh	PN-PAS	PDT Besut	Siti Noraiysah Rohim
23	Sabah	Tuaran	P170	YB Datuk Seri Panglima Madius bin Tangau	PH-UPKO	Pejabat Daerah Tuaran	Mc Jeanet Lempisik @ Marx
24	Sabah	Putatan	P173	YB Datuk Ir. Shahelmey bin Yahya	BN-UMNO	Pejabat Daerah Putatan	Mc Jeanet Lempisik @ Marx
25	Sabah	Semporna	P189	YB Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Mohd Shafie bin Apdal	WARISAN	Pejabat Daerah Semporna	Fatimah Binti Mohd Yasin
26	Sabah	Labuan	P166	Dato' Indera Dr. Suhaili Abdul Rahman	BEBAS	Perbadanan Labuan (Labuan Corporation)	Fatimah Binti Mohd Yasin
27	Sarawak	Stampin	P196	YB Tuan Chong Chieng Jen	PH-DAP	Majlis Perbandaran Padawan (MPP) & Majlis Perbandaran Kuching Selatan (MBKS)	Dr. Eva Kristin Larry Sait
28	Sarawak	Lubok Antu	P203	YB Tuan Roy Angau anak Gingkoi	GPS-PRS	Pejabat Daerah Lubok Antu	Raine Melissa Riman

## **A NOTE OF APPRECIATION**

We would like to extend our greatest appreciation to everyone who participated in the process of producing the Compilation of Parliamentary Constituency Issue Mapping Reports of 2025. Thank you to the lead researcher of each Parliamentary constituency, the editorial team and the researchers of the Constituency Coordination Department who have worked tirelessly to ensure the successful publication of these reports. We would also like to convey our special appreciation to the Committee Members of the APPGM-SDG, the Head of Secretariat, the directors of the APPGM-SDG, our network of resource persons, as well as all Members of Parliament and government agencies who have provided the utmost support and inputs throughout the issue mapping fieldwork working process.

Building on these collective efforts, the APPGM-SDG is committed to continuing the process of localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through strategic initiatives. Among the continuous efforts further taken is the capacity building workshop with government agencies and related stakeholders that are held to develop the latest knowledge and skills linked to the implementation of the SDGs at the grassroots level. The findings and outcomes of these workshops are also disseminated through the publication of the book, *Bengkel Pembangunan Kapasiti: Merangkah Langkah ke Arah Masa Depan Mampan 2025* (Capacity Building Workshop: Outlining Steps towards a Sustainable Future 2025). In addition, a total of 3 or 4 SDG micro projects will be implemented in every Parliamentary constituency with a total allocation of RM120,000 based on the local needs identified through the issue mapping fieldwork research.

The APPGM-SDG will also strengthen collaborations with the federal, regional and state governments to formulate policies and program that are inclusive through the approach of multi-stakeholder partnerships. The formation of the SDG Policy Intervention Committees with selected district offices will also spur long term solutions that will provide transformational and sustainable impacts. We would like to appeal for the continuous cooperation of all stakeholders to ensure effective, efficient and measurable implementation.

With an approach that is systematic and evidence-based, these reports serve not only as archival references, but also as practical guides for community-based development that are sustainable and forward looking. Together, let us ensure that no one is left behind in our efforts to build a future that is inclusive, prosperous and sustainable for all Malaysians.

# **PART A**

## **Issue Mapping Visit Report**

**P.203 Lubok Antu**

# WITH THE SUPPORT FROM

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF LUBOK ANTU, YB TUAN ROY ANGAU ANAK GINGKOI



## TARGETED GROUPS/COMMUNITIES

11- 17 March | 04 April 2025  
Tuesday - Monday | Friday

### DAY 1

FGD 1 : Community of Kg. Melayu Engkilili  
FGD 2 : Chinese Community, Engkilili  
Site Visit 1 : One Fifteenth Fraction Company (十五分公司)  
Temple | 15 Branch Temple, Engkilili

### DAY 2

Site Visit 2 : Aquaculture Industrial Zone (AIZ), Batang Ai  
FGD 3: Rumah Ruekeith Anak Jampong, Langkang III,  
Engkilili

### DAY 3

FGD 4 : Persatuan Penternak Ikan Batang Ai, Lubok Antu

### DAY 4

FGD 5 : Rumah Bada Anak Chendai, Nanga Talong, Ulu  
Engkari

FGD 6: Rumah Guyu Anak Jarau, Nanga Ukom, Ulu  
Engkari

### DAY 5

FGD 7 : Rumah Ninting Anak Jantan, Nanga Jambu,  
Sungai Delok, Ulu Ai  
FGD 8 : Rumah Andah Anak Lembang, Nanga  
Sumpa , Sungai Delok, Ulu Ai

### DAY 6

FGD 9 : Rumah Baying Anak Kadam, Kumpang  
Langgir & Rumah Kelly Anak Jangan, Kumpang  
Langgir Sungai Kum, Engkilili

### DAY 7

FGD 10 : Rumah Manggat Anak Meringai, Menyang  
Taih, Ulu Ai Kanan

## RESEARCHER TEAM



**RAINE MELISSA RIMAN**  
*(Lead Researcher)*



**DR TEO SUE ANN**



**DR EVA KRISTIN LARRY SAIT**



**CORRIN ALICIA NERO**



**PANIIRSELVAM JAYARAMAN**



**FAHMI FAZRIN ABDUL KARIM**

# ISSUE MAPPING VISIT WAS CONDUCTED FROM 11 - 17 MARCH 2025 & 4 APRIL 2025





### 15 JANUARY 2025 | PRELIMINARY MEETING & PROFILING

Melissa, Eva, and Corrin conducted the Inception and Profiling session for Parlimen Lubok Antu at the Lubok Antu District Office, which also served as a pre-site visit and courtesy call. The session was chaired by YB Tuan Roy Angau and attended by District Officer Akoi anak Ejau, along with key representatives from various departments and agencies. Seven communities have been identified for the upcoming issue mapping visit, six of which are riverine settlements situated along the tributaries of the Batang Ai hydroelectric dam. Some of these settlements are located within or adjacent to the Orangutan sanctuary. These communities rely primarily on motorised longboats as their main mode of transportation, with the journey to the furthest village taking up to six hours. The tentative dates for the site visits, including travel days, are scheduled for 10–17 February 2025.



### 21 FEBRUARY 2025 | PRE-VISIT MEETING

A coordination meeting was held in Kuching between APPGM-SDG Sarawak representatives Mel and Eva, YB Roy Angau Anak Gingkoi (Member of Parliament for Lubok Antu), and his Special Officer, Zainie Aji. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the planning, logistics, and strategic focus of the upcoming issue mapping visit to Parlimen Lubok Antu, which is tentatively scheduled for 12–18 March 2025. During the discussion, YB Roy emphasised the importance of prioritising riverine communities as key focus areas for the issue mapping exercise. These settlements hold particular geographic and socio-economic significance within the constituency, especially in the context of development planning and service delivery. YB Roy also highlighted the considerable logistical challenges involved in accessing these areas. Reaching the identified communities will require multiple modes of transportation and the navigation of difficult terrain, including unpaved logging roads and river routes. These factors will need to be carefully accounted for in the operational planning of the site visit.



### FGD 1 COMMUNITY OF KG. MELAYU ENKILILI COMMUNITY LEADER : TUAN HARMAN DOLLAH ABDULLAH

Kampung Melayu Engkilili was established over 70 years ago when two Iban headmen gifted the land to a Malay pioneer settler. The village was officially gazetted as a Malay settlement 40 years ago and has since evolved into a hybrid community of Malay and Iban heritage. Today, the kampung is divided into *tanah bergeran* (titled land) and tanah TOL (Temporary Occupation License land), which is allocated under the *Skim Pembesaran Kampung* (SPK). Key Challenges that were raised include: **(1) Land and infrastructure:** The TOL land is swampy and requires extensive drainage systems to prevent flooding, making it difficult to develop or occupy. Land reclamation efforts are needed, involving the addition of materials such as rocks, soil, and cement to stabilise the wetland areas. Since 2016, there have been no recipients of the *Program Perumahan Rakyat Termiskin* (PPRT), despite the presence of individuals in urgent need of housing assistance; **(2) Ageing population and youth migration:** The community is ageing, with many elderly individuals living alone. This poses challenges for those with mobility and vision impairments, who require regular support from caregivers. Youth migration to urban areas is high due to the lack of job opportunities, leaving elderly residents without younger family members to care for them. There is an urgent need for economic initiatives and sustainable development programs to encourage younger generations to remain in the village; **(3) Water supply issues :** The clean water supply is unstable, mainly due to low water pressure. An upgrade to the water reservoir capacity is necessary to ensure consistent and sufficient water access for the community; and **(4) Perception of neglect :** The village is often referred to as “Kampung Bunian” (Fairy Village) due to the community’s sense of being overlooked in development plans and welfare assistance. This perception is particularly strong among the ageing population, who feel left behind in terms of social services and support systems.



### FGD 2 HAKKA & TEOCHEW CHINESE COMMUNITY, ENKILILI COMMUNITY LEADER : KAPITAN MARY SIM

The Chinese community in Engkilili has maintained a continuous presence for over 150 years, with origins tracing back to Hakka gold miners who migrated from Sambas, in present-day Kalimantan, Indonesia. This community's historical significance is reflected in the gazetted "One Fifteenth Fraction Company" (十五分公司) temple, a heritage site that symbolises their early involvement as part of the 15 factions of the Hakka Kongsi. Today, the Chinese population in Engkilili primarily comprises smallholders engaged in oil palm cultivation, alongside local business owners contributing to the town's commercial landscape.

Despite their long-standing contributions to the local economy, they face several critical challenges including : **(1) Limited land for agricultural expansion & lack of subsidies** : Chinese oil palm operators struggle with land scarcity, which limits their ability to expand plantation operations. Unlike other groups, they rarely receive subsidies or financial aid from government agencies for their oil palm ventures; **(2) Water supply issues** : Inconsistent clean water supply, primarily due to low water pressure, affects both households and agricultural operations. Upgrading the water reservoir capacity is crucial to ensure stable and sufficient water access; **(3) Marginalisation in development & infrastructure** : The community feels Engkilili town has been overlooked in terms of development. Lack of proper signage (at the time of the FGD) marking the entrance to Engkilili town reinforces the perception of neglect. The design of the Pan Borneo Highway claimed to have diverted traffic away from Engkilili, leading to a decline in visitors, negatively impacting local businesses and tourism; **(4) Insufficient emergency services** : No dedicated Fire and Rescue Department in Engkilili, posing risks during emergencies. Police presence is insufficient, with a lack of manpower to ensure proper security and law enforcement; **(5) Lack of a Gazetted Community Leader (Kapitan)** : The Engkilili Chinese community in RPR Engkilili lacks a Kapitan, a formally recognised leader similar to a Ketua Kaum. This absence hinders applications for housing assistance, particularly for repairing dilapidated homes, as there is no official representative to verify applications and ; **(6) Bureaucratic Hurdles in Education Development** : The Chinese community crowdfunds the development of SJKC Chung Hua and its additional facilities. However, school infrastructure projects face long bureaucratic delays at the Ministry of Education, slowing down necessary improvements and expansions.



### **SITE VISIT 1: ONE FIFTEENTH FRACTION COMPANY (十五分公司) TEMPLE | 15 BRANCH TEMPLE, SUNGAI MARUP, ENKILILI**

One Fifteenth Fraction Company (十五分公司) Temple, a historical landmark that once served as the headquarters of the Fifteen Kongs—believed to represent the fifteen shareholders of an early mining company. Established as early as 1856, the temple stands as a testament to the migration and settlement of Hakka miners in South-Western Sarawak.

In recent years, the temple has faced increasing security concerns. It has been repeatedly targeted by burglars, with some incidents reportedly linked to drug-related activity in the surrounding area.



### **SITE VISIT 2: AQUACULTURE INDUSTRIAL ZONE (AIZ), BATANG AI**

The research team conducted a site visit to a privately operated fish cage located within the Aquaculture Industrial Zone (AIZ) on the Batang Ai reservoir. Among the key challenges raised was the high cost of fish feed, which significantly impacts the viability of aquaculture activities in the area.

At the time of the visit, it was noted that a single 20kg bag of fish feed costs approximately RM82.00. Fish farmers typically require between 3 to 4 bags per day, resulting in a daily operational cost ranging from RM246 to RM328. These high input costs were identified as a major constraint to the profitability and long-term sustainability of fish farming for local communities.



### FGD 3 RUMAH RUEKEITH ANAK JAMPONG, LANGKANG ILI, ENKILILI

The Iban community of Langkang Ili has maintained a presence in the area since the 1920s. The current longhouse—the third constructed following the destruction of two earlier structures by fire—now stands within the perimeter of a privately owned oil palm plantation, which is gated and monitored by security personnel. While the plantation represents broader trends in rural economic development, its enclosure of the longhouse has contributed to the community's sense of spatial and socio-economic isolation. The community's marginal position reflects broader structural dynamics associated with market-oriented land use, but it is also compounded by limited access to rights-based mechanisms, participatory decision-making, and institutional support.

The key challenges the community had raised includes: **(1) Lack of basic utilities.** The community does not have access to treated clean water, as the road leading to their longhouse is a privately owned, non-gazetted plantation road, making public water supply connections unfeasible. However, they do have access to the electric grid; **(2) Limited land for agriculture & livelihoods.** The community faces challenges in growing food or rearing livestock due to limited land. Frequent flooding, as the longhouse is near a river, further complicates agriculture. The river is infested with crocodiles, making it unsafe for animal rearing; **(3) Ageing population & migration.** Many young people have migrated to cities in search of better job opportunities, leaving behind an ageing population with limited support; **(4) High cost & limited access to healthcare.** Due to the longhouse's location within private property, public transportation is inaccessible. To reach the nearest town, residents must either charter private transport or rely on an informal ride-sharing system, significantly increasing the cost and difficulty of accessing healthcare services.



#### FGD 4 PERSATUAN PENTERNAK IKAN BATANG AI, LUBOK ANTU CHAIRMAN: TUAN TOM ANAK SUMOK

The Persatuan Penternak Ikan Batang Ai was established in 1993 to support resettled communities affected by the construction of the Batang Ai Hydro Dam, as part of Sarawak Energy Berhad's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The association expanded to include a broader network of fish farmers, consisting of both individual license holders and private companies. Currently, excluding this year's registrations, the association has approximately 136 registered members, the majority of whom are beneficiaries of the cage culture scheme under the Department of Agriculture, Malaysia, which forms part of the Industrial Aquaculture Zone (IAZ) initiative.

The key challenges identified include: **(1) One-time government support.** Fish farmers only receive a one-time subsidy, which covers just one fish cycle. New farmers especially struggle, as they lack experience and only receive basic training; **(2) High fish mortality during droughts.** Dry seasons reduce water levels, causing low oxygen and higher temperatures. This stresses fish, causes disease outbreaks, and increases death rates; **(3) Boat traffic affecting fish health.** Heavy boat activity mixes deep and surface water, lowering oxygen levels and killing fish. Small-scale farmers are unable afford technology to reduce this impact; **(4) Expensive fish feed in Sarawak.** Fish feed costs much more in Sarawak than in West Malaysia due to transport costs. Farmers want to produce their own feed but cannot afford the machinery; **(5) Drop in aquatourism income before COVID-19:** fish farmers benefited from tourists visiting their farms via a nearby resort. Since the resort closed, this income has disappeared. Farmers want to restart agrotourism but do not know how to get licensed. **(6) Poor water quality :** Pollution and algae growth lower oxygen in the water, harming fish. Farmers suggest using technology to monitor water conditions, but they cannot afford it. **(7) Inability to compete with big players.** Small-scale farmers struggle to sell their fish at good prices due to unfair market competition with big companies; **(8) Brand misuse .** Other farmers (e.g., pond operators) are using the "Tilapia Batang Ai" name, making it hard for cage farmers to stand out and protect their brand; **(9) Theft and vandalism.** Fish, engines, and equipment are often stolen. Farmers do not have security systems to protect their property; **(10) Lack of basic facilities.** There are no collection centers for harvested fish, no clean water supply, no proper disposal for diseased dead fish, and no proper toilets for workers staying at the cages. **(11) Slow recovery from COVID-19 :** Many farmers are still financially struggling after the pandemic. High operating costs make it hard to bounce back. **(12) License renewal problems.** Some farmers lose their licenses because they are unable to meet strict government requirements—mainly due to financial struggles. Regularisation policies have made it harder for smallholders to stay in the business.



### FGD 5 RUMAH BADA ANAK CHENDAI, NANGA TALONG, ULU ENKARI

Nanga Talong is a remote Iban longhouse settlement located approximately 40 km upriver from the Batang Ai Hydroelectric Dam jetty. Established in 1988, the concrete longhouse comprises 28 bilek (households) and is home to an estimated 150 residents, including members who have migrated but maintain strong ties to the community. Situated near the Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary, Nanga Talong is recognised as the most remote settlement in the Engkari region and is notable for being the only community in Ulu Engkari that has formally rejected timber extraction activities—demonstrating a clear and enduring commitment to environmental stewardship. As expressed by the Tuai Rumah: "*Kami sayau ka rapak menoa, sayau ka jelu, sayau ka ai*" ("We appreciate our land, wildlife, and rivers"). The community actively collaborates with the Sarawak Forestry Corporation and the Smithsonian Institution's Working Land and Seascapes Programme. Both men and women have been trained as community park rangers, carrying out enforcement activities and ecological monitoring tasks such as setting up camera traps. In addition, Nanga Talong maintains a traditional tagang (river conservation) system, officially gazetted in 2010. Selective harvests of semah (*Labeobarbus douronensis*) provide a sustainable source of income to support communal funds. Subsistence hill paddy farming remains a key livelihood activity. However, the community continues to face several infrastructural challenges. Nanga Talong is not connected to the state electricity grid and instead relies on renewable energy sources. A solar power system installed by Sarawak Energy Berhad in 2019 and a micro-hydro system installed by Barefoot Mercy in 2013 are currently non-functional. Healthcare is limited to monthly visits from flying doctor teams, while the community accesses clean water through a gravity-fed system with a filtration tank provided by the Ministry of Health, reportedly requiring minimal maintenance.

Key issues identified include: **(1) Costly digital access.** Internet access is no longer provided for free. The current Jendela WiFi hotspot requires users to pay between RM40–80 monthly, which is a significant cost burden for most residents; **(2) Need for agricultural support.** The physical delivery of subsidised paddy fertiliser has been replaced by a one-off cash subsidy of RM600. However, due to Nanga Talong's remote location, transportation alone accounts for nearly RM300 of this amount. Households typically pool resources to share logistics costs; **(3) Administrative barriers.** Accessing social welfare assistance requires travel to town centres, incurring high transportation costs. Often, these journeys result in unsuccessful applications, further discouraging community members from pursuing government support schemes; and **(4) Limited eco-tourism development.** Poor road conditions leading to the longhouse have hindered the development of eco-tourism, despite the community's proximity to a biodiversity-rich conservation zone.



### FGD 6 RUMAH GUYU ANAK JARAU, NANGA UKOM, ULU ENKARI

Nanga Ukom is an Iban longhouse community located in the remote interior of Ulu Engkari. Established in 1985 and rebuilt following a fire in 2015, the settlement currently consists of 35 bilek (households) and 161 registered residents, including individuals who reside in towns but retain ties to the community. The present population is predominantly made up of elderly residents, children, and a small number of subsistence farmers and inland fishers. Nanga Ukom is listed as a tourist destination by a private eco-tourism operator. However, during the discussion, community members shared that the benefits from tourism have been limited. There is growing concern that the challenging housing conditions—often framed externally as “authentic”—do not reflect the community’s aspirations for improved living standards. As the Tuai Rumah expressed, “*Nadai urang ka idup baka tu*” (“No one wants to live this way”), highlighting a desire for more dignified and sustainable development support that aligns with the realities and needs of rural communities.

Key issues addressed include: **(1) Post-logging depletion**, Past timber extraction has led to a severe shortage of building materials, impacting infrastructure upkeep; **(2) Educational gaps** where only two individuals have pursued higher education; none serve in the civil service, reflecting systemic barriers; **(3) Unsafe jetty** – The community’s only landing point is structurally unsound, posing serious safety risks; **(4) Welfare access** – RM100 round trips to town for social aid (e.g., RM300 OKU allowance) often outweigh the benefit; **(5) Early education barriers** – Daily preschool access costs RM18 in fuel, making regular attendance unaffordable. **(6) Digital Isolation** – No mobile or internet coverage cuts residents off from key services and opportunities. **(7) Unsustainable energy source** – The community relies solely on costly petrol generators (RM20/night), lacking renewables. **(8) Decline in pepper farming** – Rising costs and disease have driven many to abandon farming, reducing economic resilience; **(9) Disillusionment with aid** – Bureaucratic hurdles and frequent rejections have eroded trust in government programmes; and **(10) Adult illiteracy** – Literacy gaps persist even among younger adults, pointing to long-standing educational access issues.



### FGD 7 RUMAH NINTING ANAK JANTAN, NANGA JAMBU, SG DELOK - ULU AI

Nanga Jambu, a remote Iban longhouse community comprising 10 households and 53 residents. It is the most upriver settlement in Ulu Ai. While little is known about the structure of the original longhouse, the current building is newly constructed and reflects the community's efforts to improve their living conditions despite limited accessibility and infrastructural constraints. Notably, Nanga Jambu has achieved successful rural electrification through a 15kW micro-hydro system installed in 2017 under a project funded by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) in collaboration with Swinburne University of Technology. It is also the only longhouse in Ulu Ai with access to clean water via the Sarawak Alternative Water Supply (SAWAS) initiative. The operation and maintenance of the micro-hydro system are led by local women and youth, reflecting a strong sense of community ownership and gender-inclusive engagement in technical roles. While a previous attempt to establish a *tagang* (community fish conservation) system was unsuccessful, Nanga Jambu and neighbouring longhouses remain actively committed to conservation efforts. Through a partnership with Borneo Adventure, the community supports ecotourism and the protection of orangutan habitats. It is also important to note that none of the longhouses in Ulu Ai, including Nanga Jambu, have participated in commercial logging—opting instead to preserve their natural environment and uphold traditional livelihoods. The community relies primarily on hill paddy and pepper cultivation through shifting agriculture, with each household managing approximately 2 to 3 acres of farmland. These activities remain central to their subsistence and cultural continuity.

Issues that were identified include: **(1) Wildlife conflict** : Animals such as gibbons and deer damage crops, leading to poor harvests; **(2) Decline in pepper farming** : rising fertiliser costs and disease have made pepper farming unsustainable for many; **(3) Boat material supply challenges** : timber for boat-building is hard to obtain, requiring 1.5-day upstream trips; **(4) Low tourism income** : Boatmen earn as little as RM100 after expenses for three days' work, highlighting economic precarity in ecotourism; and **(5) Lack of road access** : while residents want roads for better access to services and mobility, tourism narratives often resist this, promoting remoteness as "authentic." This tension reveals a deeper issue: romanticising hardship often sidelines community needs for equitable development.



### FGD 8 RUMAH ANDAH ANAK LEMBANG, NANGA SUMPA, SG DELOK - ULU AI

Nanga Sumpa is a Iban longhouse settlement which resides 43 households, some with multiple families in a household. The longhouse was rebuilt in 2016 following a fire. Located approximately 2.5 hours upriver from the Batang Ai Hydroelectric Dam jetty, Nanga Sumpa is widely recognised as one of the most prominent indigenous ecotourism destinations in Ulu Ai. Since 1987, the community has partnered with a private tour operator to develop community-based tourism. To manage tourism operations, the community has established three internal committees with distinct, gendered responsibilities: men are primarily involved in guiding and infrastructure maintenance, while women oversee hospitality services and craft production. Despite more than three decades of ecotourism engagement and support from conservation organisations such as WWF, the benefits have not been equitably distributed across households, and tourism alone has not proven to be a fully sustainable income source. Government-initiated agricultural schemes in the past—including cocoa, rubber, and pepper—saw limited long-term success. Today, only pepper cultivation and subsistence rice farming remain, though both face growing threats from rising input costs, labour shortages, and crop-related diseases. While ecotourism continues to contribute to local income, it has not replaced traditional livelihoods. Community members emphasised the importance of improved road access, viewing connectivity as a key factor for long-term socio-economic resilience. However, they also acknowledged a tension between development aspirations and the tourism sector's preference to maintain Nanga Sumpa's image as a remote and untouched destination. Residents advocated for a more balanced approach—one that harmonises conservation goals with the need for basic infrastructure and mobility, ensuring both environmental integrity and inclusive development.

Challenges discussed include: **(1) Human-wildlife conflict** : gibbons, deer, and other wildlife damage paddy and fruit trees, affecting yields; **(2) Decline in pepper farming** : rising costs and disease have led many farmers to abandon cultivation; **(3) Boat logistics** : timber for boats is hard to source and requires 1.5-day trips; boats are vital for transport and tourism; **(4) Low boatman wages** : after expenses, boatmen earn only ~RM100 for three days' labour, or ~RM4/hour—exposing the precarity of ecotourism-dependent jobs; **(5) Logistics in low-tide season** : river navigation becomes harder; crew often must carry boats across rocky beds (*bebatak*) or switch to smaller vessels; **(6) Limited road access** : calls for roads to improve livelihoods often conflict with tourism narratives of “untouched” wilderness, revealing a tension between development rights and preservation aesthetics; **(7) Stagnant women's economy** : craftmaking by women (weaving, basketry, dyeing) is constrained by seasonal tourism demand, high transportation costs, and limited market access, despite some success with social enterprises like Tanoti; **(8) Documentation issues** : Around 20 residents lack documentation, affecting their access to education, healthcare, and employment—entrenching intergenerational marginalisation.



### FGD 9 RUMAH BAYING ANAK KADAM, KUMPANG LANGGIR & RUMAH KELLY ANAK JANGAN, KUMPANG LANGGIR SUNGAI KUM, ENKILILI

Kumpang Langgir is an Iban longhouse located approximately 15 km from the town of Engkilili. The community was originally established in the 1960s during the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation, and its current 26-door longhouse was constructed following the relocation from an earlier highland settlement. In response to population growth and evolving settlement patterns, a newer offshoot known as Kumpang Langgir Sungai Kum has since been established. This satellite settlement comprises six households and is led by Tuai Rumah Kelly anak Jangan.

Issues raised by the community include: **(1) Lack of access to treated water** : though piping infrastructure was completed in 2022, water meters remain uninstalled, leaving residents reliant on a gravity-fed system built in the 1960s. Bureaucratic delays and logistical hurdles have prevented the full activation of treated water supply, exposing residents to health risks and daily hardship; **(2) Hazardous road conditions** : located along a narrow, winding, and landslide-prone route, road access to Kumpang Langgir is precarious. Poor maintenance and erosion control increase accident risks, disrupt transportation, and periodically cut off the community during heavy rainfalls. Finally, **(3) Citizenship documentation issues** : The community struggles with persistent documentation issues. 2 cases were presented - *Case 1: A child born in Malaysia is denied citizenship despite a legally recognised sibling, due to birth registration errors; and Case 2: A woman married through kahwin adat remains undocumented, as the union is unregistered with the National Registration Department (JPN), barring her access to services.* These cases reflect the structural impacts of rigid administrative frameworks, limited legal literacy, and gaps in service delivery for informal or cross-border family arrangements. Statelessness has led to school denial, welfare inaccessibility, and long-term exclusion from public systems—deepening cycles of marginalisation for affected families.



### FGD 10: TUAI RUMAH MANGGAT ANAK MERINGAI, MENYANG TAIH, ULU AI KANAN

Menyang Taih, a longhouse community in the Ulu Ai Kanan riverine area of Batang Ai, Sarawak, is accessible via a 30-minute boat ride from Batang Ai Jetty and a 30-minute uphill forest trek supported by cement walkways and ironwood bridges. Established in 1993, the current longhouse houses 17 bilek and can accommodate up to 150 individuals. However, fewer than 15—mainly elderly residents—live there permanently due to outward migration for work and education. The community is a key partner in conservation efforts, collaborating with the Sarawak Forestry Department, WWF, WCS, and a local tour operator. Their surrounding forest area (~14,000 hectares) hosts an estimated 120 orangutans and has been proposed as the Ulu Sungai Menyang Special Conservation Area. In 2017, WWF and the Forestry Department introduced a gaharu agroforestry initiative aimed at rehabilitating degraded lands, creating a buffer against orangutan habitats, and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Despite these conservation successes, Menyang Taih continues to face structural and service-related limitations including: **(1) Unsafe and deteriorating access pathway** : the forest trek is increasingly hazardous due to slippery surfaces and aging infrastructure. The lack of safe, maintained pathways hampers movement, especially for elderly residents and in transporting supplies. A formal request for repairs has been submitted to the Lubok Antu District Council. **(2) Unreliable electricity supply** : the longhouse depends on a solar home system (SHS) provided by Sarawak Energy Berhad. While sustainable, the system's efficiency drops during prolonged cloud cover, resulting in regular blackouts that disrupt basic activities and limit the use of electrical appliances; and **(3) Poor telecommunications connectivity** : network coverage is weak and unstable. Residents often have to stand on the *tanju* (verandah) or near windows to make calls or access messages. This digital gap isolates the community and hinders effective coordination in conservation, tourism, and emergency response.

# **PART B**

## **Issue Mapping Report**

P.203 Lubok Antu

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AD</b>	Assistant Director
<b>AO</b>	Administrative Officer
<b>AADK</b>	Agensi Anti Dadah Kebangsaan
<b>ADO</b>	Assistant District Officer
<b>ADUN</b>	Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri
<b>API</b>	Aerial Photographs
<b>APPGM-SDG</b>	All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia - Sustainable Development Goals
<b>BN</b>	Barisan Nasional
<b>CCD</b>	Constituency Coordination Department
<b>DO</b>	District Officer
<b>DOA</b>	Department of Agriculture
<b>DOSM</b>	Department of Statistic, Malaysia
<b>DVS</b>	Department of Veterinary Services
<b>DUN</b>	Dewan Undangan Negeri
<b>FAMA</b>	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GPS</b>	Gabungan Parti Sarawak
<b>HOS</b>	Head of Secretariat
<b>ICQS</b>	Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security
<b>IAD</b>	Inter – Agency Dialogue
<b>IPD</b>	Ibu Pejabat Polis Daerah
<b>JPN</b>	Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>MDLA</b>	Majlis Daerah Lubok Antu
<b>MFG</b>	Mini Focus Group
<b>MP</b>	Members of Parliament
<b>Mt</b>	Metric tonne
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>OAPTAR</b>	Organisation for Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery
<b>PRA</b>	Participatory Rural Assessment
<b>SFC</b>	Sarawak Forestry Corporation
<b>SFD</b>	Sarawak Forestry Department
<b>SME</b>	Small Medium Enterprises
<b>SMI</b>	Small Medium Industries
<b>SMK</b>	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan
<b>SRWS</b>	Sarawak Rural Water Supply Department
<b>SSD</b>	Semi Structured Discussion
<b>TFG</b>	Townhall Focus Group
<b>YB</b>	Yang Berhormat

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Lubok Antu parliamentary is represented by YB Tuan Roy Angau anak Gingkoi, a member of *Parti Rakyat Sarawak* (PRS) of the *Gabungan Parti Sarawak* (GPS) coalition. YB Tuan Roy, who first assumed office in 2022. He is also an active member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Integrity, Governance and Anti-Corruption for the current 2024 session (APPGM-SDG 2024).



**YB Tuan Roy Angau anak  
Gingkoi**

## 1.1 Geography/Topography

The Lubok Antu parliamentary constituency (P203), located in the Sri Aman Division of Sarawak, spans a total area of 3,294 square kilometers, consisting of two state constituencies: Engkilili (1,298 km<sup>2</sup>) and Batang Ai (1,996 km<sup>2</sup>), both of which are predominantly rural and sparsely populated (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DOSM], 2022). Geographically, Lubok Antu is defined by a complex topographical structure comprising undulating terrain, riverine valleys, and lowland plains. Major hydrological features include the Batang Lupar, Batang Engkari, and Batang Ai river systems. These watercourses play a central role in shaping local settlement patterns, especially for Iban longhouse communities, and facilitate inland transport and subsistence-based agriculture. A notable geographic landmark is the Batang Ai Hydroelectric Dam, a 108 MW facility that has transformed parts of the region into an artificial reservoir. This hydro-infrastructure has had long-term impacts on resettlement dynamics, local ecosystems, and economic activities (Sarawak Energy Berhad [SEB], 2021). Much of the area falls within the broader Heart of Borneo conservation landscape, which emphasises ecological connectivity and biodiversity protection (World Wildlife Fund [WWF], n.d.; Sarawak Forestry Corporation, 2021).

Engkilili, as one of the two DUN (state constituencies) within P203, lies further inland and is characterised by hilly uplands interspersed with riverine tributaries, notably Batang Skrang and Batang Engkilili. These features have historically anchored the spatial organisation of settlements, particularly among the indigenous Iban population living in traditional longhouses along riverbanks (Cramb, 2007). The topography includes secondary forests, hill paddy terraces, and mixed-crop plots managed by smallholders. Certain areas remain difficult to access, especially during monsoon seasons when roads are frequently affected by flooding or landslides (DOSM, 2022). The region's proximity to the Lubok Antu–Badau border crossing further enhances its potential for cross-border trade and cultural exchange with Indonesian communities in West Kalimantan, although such opportunities remain underutilised due to limitations in infrastructure and service

provision. As such, the integration of traditional ecological knowledge with agroecological practices and eco-based enterprises represents a promising pathway for sustainable, community-led development in both Lubok Antu and Engkilili (Cramb & McCarthy, 2016).

## 1.2 Demographics

The population of the Lubok Antu parliamentary constituency (P203) is predominantly composed of Iban Ulu Ai communities, with smaller populations of Malay, Chinese, and other ethnic groups residing in the area. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022), the total population recorded in the 2020 census was 26,780, with a notably low population density of approximately eight persons per square kilometres. The constituency also exhibited a slightly male-skewed sex ratio, with 104 males for every 100 females (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). Ethnically, Lubok Antu is composed primarily of Bumiputera groups, particularly indigenous Sarawak ethnicities. Based on administrative data from the Lubok Antu District Office (Pentadbiran Bahagian Sri Aman, 2025), Iban communities form the largest ethnic segment, followed by other native groups such as the Bidayuh and Melanau, collectively accounting for approximately 90.5% of the constituency's population. The Chinese population constitutes around 5.6 percent, while the Malay community makes up 3.7 percent. An additional 0.2 percent consists other or unspecified ethnic groups. In terms of nationality, citizens make up 97.8 percent of the population, with non-citizens comprising the remaining 2.2 percent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022).

Table 1. Principal statistics of population, Lubok Antu, Sarawak, 2020-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 <sup>P</sup>
<b>Penduduk/ Population ('000)</b>					
<b>Jumlah</b>	24.6	24.7	24.6	24.6	24.6
<i>Total</i>					
<b>Warganegara</b>	23.9	24.0	23.9	24.0	24.1
<i>Citizens</i>					
<b>Bukan warganegara</b>	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5
<i>Non-citizens</i>					
<b>Lelaki/ Male</b>	12.5	12.5	12.4	12.4	12.4
<b>Perempuan/ Female</b>	12.1	12.2	12.1	12.2	12.2
<b>Kewarganegaraan/ Citizenship (%)</b>					
<b>Warganegara</b>	97.1	96.9	97.3	97.5	97.8
<i>Citizens</i>					
<b>Bukan warganegara</b>	2.9	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.2
<i>Non-citizens</i>					
<b>Kadar pertumbuhan penduduk tahunan (%)</b>					
<i>Annual population growth rate (%)</i>	-	0.6	-0.6	0.2	0.0
<b>Kumpulan etnik warganegara (%)</b>					
<i>Ethnic group of citizens (%)</i>					
<b>Bumiputera</b>	93.9	94.1	94.1	94.1	94.2
<b>Melayu/ Malay</b>	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
<b>Bumiputera Lain/ Other Bumiputera</b>	90.4	90.4	90.4	90.4	90.5
<b>Cina/ Chinese</b>	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.6
<b>India/ Indians</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Lain-lain / Others</b>	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2

Source: Image from the Statistik Subnasional Parlimen dan DUN - Parlimen Lubok Antu, Department of Statistic Malaysia (2022)

### **Ethnohistorical Landscape: Migration, Settlement and Identity in a Multi- ethnic Constituency**

Lubok Antu holds significant anthropological and historical value, particularly in relation to Iban migration trajectories and interethnic settlement dynamics in the western interior of Sarawak. The area is a key site in the historiography of Iban movement from the Kapuas basin in present-day West Kalimantan into the riverine and forested landscapes of what is now Malaysian Borneo. These patterns are well-documented in the academic literature (Padoch, 1982; Sandin, 1967; Langub & Chew, 2014) and are further corroborated by both archival materials and field engagement. Rivers such as Batang Ai, Engkari, and Delok have historically served as primary corridors of Iban mobility, resettlement, and cultural transmission. Oral histories and colonial-era Brooke administrative records similarly highlight an era of intensified Iban migration between the 17th and 19th centuries, shaping the ethnocultural landscape of Lubok Antu (Brooke Archive, 2025). The term "Iban" is not a rigid racial marker but instead refers to "people" in the local vernacular - a reflection of a more fluid understanding of identity. Historically, Iban social and territorial identities have been intimately linked to geographic referents, particularly rivers and tributaries along which settlements were established. Today, Iban longhouses remain concentrated along key waterways such as the Engkari, Ai, and Delok, reflecting a deep continuity between past and present patterns of land use and sociocultural organisation. However, Lubok Antu is not exclusively Iban. The Malay and Chinese communities, particularly in Lubok Antu town and the Engkilili district, have also played a pivotal role in shaping the region's multiethnic landscape. In Engkilili, oral narratives trace the origins of the Malay community to an interethnic land-sharing arrangement around 1950, when two Iban leaders - Tuai Rumah Jenggi and Tuai Rumah Subah Bua - granted land to a pioneering Malay settler. This gesture is remembered by the current village leadership as a moment of historical coexistence and mutual respect. Many early Malay settlers in the area were Iban Undup who later converted to Islam, a process that contributed to identity transformation and cultural assimilation. The phenomenon of religious conversion, particularly to Islam, has been the subject of considerable ethnographic attention (Antaran, 1995; Bala, 2014; Agusti, 2018; Harahap, 2019). As Kumpoh (2020) asserts, "conversion to Islam is always pointed out as an important element that generates a subtle force on the ethnic identity of the converts" (p. 52). Within this socio-cultural context, the concept of *masuk Melayu* (literally "entering Malayness") denotes a broader process wherein religious conversion is accompanied by sociocultural reclassification, often resulting in the assimilation of former Iban individuals into the broader Malay ethnocultural framework.

Meanwhile, the Chinese community in Engkilili also holds a distinct historical presence. Their migration into the region dates back approximately 150 years, primarily centred around Sungai Marup, a tributary of the Batang Lupar. This movement is part of the

broader wave of Hakka migration into Sarawak, associated with gold mining and trade. The establishment of the "One Fifteenth Fraction Company" (十五分公司) temple, believed to date back to around 1856, provides both spiritual and historical anchorage to this community. Oral testimonies suggest that these early settlers were gold miners from Sambas in western Borneo. The economic significance of Marup during this period is further evidenced by the establishment of Fort Leonora under Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke, cementing Engkilili's position in the colonial administrative and commercial system. In contemporary times, the Chinese population in Engkilili plays a central role in the local economy, particularly through smallholder oil palm plantations, retail trade, and related services. Fruit orchards - featuring durian, langsung, and rambutan - serve as an important supplementary livelihood source for both Chinese and Iban smallholders, contributing to food security and seasonal income diversification. Together, the Iban, Malay, and Chinese communities have co-produced a multiethnic landscape shaped by overlapping histories of migration, land-sharing, religious conversion, and adaptive livelihood strategies. This rich social dynamic provides a fertile ground for examining questions of identity, belonging, and rural transformation in Sarawak's interior.

### 1.3 Livelihood Strategies & Economic Activities

- **Traditional Agriculture: Subsistence Farming and Perennial Cash Crops**

Agriculture remains the cornerstone of economic life for most communities across the P203 Lubok Antu constituency, particularly in its two state constituencies of Batang Ai and Engkilili. Despite gradual shifts toward cash-based livelihoods, a significant portion of the population continues to depend on traditional forms of subsistence agriculture, especially within the Iban longhouse communities located along major river systems such as the Batang Engkari, Delok, Ai, and Undup. The subject of the Iban community's livelihood in Sarawak has long attracted anthropological interest, especially in relation to the Iban settlers in Lubok Antu. Freeman (1955) famously described the Iban as '*mangeurs de forêt*' - or 'forest eaters' - in reference to their swidden-based livelihoods deeply rooted in forest ecologies. However, as Mertz et al. (2013) argue, shifting political, economic, and lifestyle dynamics have significantly altered Iban livelihoods, with many communities now engaged in perennial cash cropping such as peppers and other forms of commercial agriculture. Nonetheless, fieldwork conducted in March and April 2025 indicates that upland Iban communities in Lubok Antu continue to cultivate hill paddy as a subsistence activity, albeit in quantities insufficient for full household consumption. Hill paddy cultivation, home gardens, and the maintenance of fruit groves are practiced not only for sustenance but also as part of a long-standing cultural relationship with the landscape. Shifting cultivation (also known as swidden farming), though declining due to state-led restrictions

and land pressures (Mertz et al, 2013), remains present in certain upper riverine areas, particularly along the Engkari and Delok tributaries. Pepper cultivation also features prominently in the rural economy. Typically grown in small-scale garden plots adjacent to longhouses, pepper is an important cash crop with both domestic and export markets. Fruit cultivation - including *durian*, *rambutan*, *langsar*, and *tarap* - is widespread, with excess produce sold in local markets. In recent years, there has been growing interest in reviving traditional fruits and underutilised native crops, aligned with efforts to promote biodiversity and local food security (SDG 2: Zero Hunger).



Image 1. Hill paddy field cultivated by the headman of Nanga Talong<sup>1</sup>  
Source: APPGM-SDG's fieldwork, 16 March 2025

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<sup>1</sup> This paddy fill is situated in the upland area of the Batang Engkari riverine. The photograph shows a typical example of Iban shifting cultivation, where the active plot is surrounded by fallow land undergoing natural regeneration.



Image 2. Traditional craft items made from *bemban* (*Donax grandis*)<sup>2</sup>

Source: APPGM-SDG fieldwork, 18 March 2025

- **Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) & Timber Products**

In tandem with food cultivation, many households supplement their income through the harvesting and sale of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as rattan, bamboo, wild fruits like *buah tampoi* (*Baccaurea macrocarpa*), *engkabang* (*Shorea macrophylla*) seeds used in plant-based butter, and edible ferns such as *midin* (*Stenochlaena palustris*), freshwater fish and prawn. These forest-based economies generate seasonal income and are often stewarded by women, contributing directly to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The trade in NTFPs is deeply rooted in cultural knowledge and practices, forming part of a traditional market economy that is increasingly being formalised. This shift is reflected in the Lubok Antu District Council's (MDLA) "Market Hasil Hutan" (Forest Products Market), which provides a structured venue for the sale and exchange of these locally harvested goods and traditional food produce such as smoked fish and prawn.

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<sup>2</sup> *Donax grandis* (Miq.) Ridl. Maranthaceae. (left image). CN: locally known as *bemban*, harvested along the riverbanks. The plant is traditionally used in local crafts such as basket weaving, as illustrated in the right image. This basket is produced in Nanga Sumpa and sold to tourists visiting the area.



Image 3. Lubok Antu District Council's managed NTFP Market

Source: APPGM-SDG fieldwork, 14 March 2025

Other forest materials such as *bemban* (*Donax grandis*), bamboo, and rattan (*Calamus tetradactylus Hance*) are also used to produce traditional handicrafts such as woven baskets, mats, and decorative items. These are typically sold to tourists visiting longhouse communities, especially in areas like Nanga Sumpa, or supplied to social enterprises such as Tanoti Sdn Bhd, which support indigenous artisans through fair trade and capacity building. Community-made crafts are also featured at regional craft expos and major cultural events - such as the Kuching Regatta Festival and Sarawak Craft Festival - with support from Sarawak Energy Berhad and the Sarawak Forestry Corporation through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. The Batang Ai National Park and its surrounding buffer zones serve as important ecological reserves where sustainable NTFP harvesting, and conservation is operated under co-management agreements (SEB, 2018).



Image 4. A variety of non-timber forest product (NTFP) food sources commonly foraged by local communities<sup>3</sup>

Source: APPGM-SDG fieldwork, 12 March 2025

For the upriver and riverine communities of P203 Lubok Antu - particularly in Batang Ai and Engkilili - the river continues to serve as a lifeline, especially in remote areas where road access is limited or non-existent. Longboats remain the primary mode of transportation, a practice that reflects the Iban's enduring cultural identity as a riverine people whose settlement patterns and mobility have long been tied to waterways. Boatbuilding remains a vital economic activity in these communities. Timber from species such as *Selangan Batu* and *Meraka* is selectively harvested and shaped into essential components like frames, ribs, planks, oars, bows, and transoms. These heavy timber parts are often transported manually through forest trails - sometimes spanning several kilometres - to reach village boatbuilding sheds. Locally made wooden boats are valued at around RM3,000, providing important income for skilled artisans and their families. Beyond timber, the boatmaking process also relies on the collection of natural materials such as *damar* - a type of gum or resin - used to seal joints and waterproof the vessel, reflecting a sustainable use of forest resources embedded in traditional craftsmanship.

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<sup>3</sup> These products include young edible leaves and shoots such as *daun mendai* (*Euphorbiaceae*), *daun sabong* (*Gnetum gnemon*), *kantuk meludang* (*Smilax borneensis*), *tebu telur* (*Saccharum edule*), *tubu manis* (*Bambusa* spp.), and *daun bungkang* (*Eugenia cephalanthum* Ridl.)

- **Oil Palm Cultivation and Land-Based Joint Ventures**



Image 5. A private owned oil palm plantation at Langkang Ili, Engkilili  
*Source: APPGM-SDG fieldwork, 12 March 2025*

Oil palm cultivation has emerged as a dominant economic activity in the parliamentary constituency, particularly through the establishment of joint venture arrangements between native customary rights (NCR) landowners and private companies. The first such joint venture, facilitated by the Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (SALCRA), was initiated in Lubok Antu in 1976 (Ngidang, 2002). Unlike federal resettlement schemes such as FELDA, SALCRA's model emphasises in-situ development, allowing landowners to remain on their ancestral lands while leasing them - typically under 60-year contracts - for plantation use. These joint ventures offer participating Iban landowners' dividends and employment opportunities while enabling large-scale oil palm development in rural Sarawak (Mertz et al, 2013). However, challenges remain, including concerns over land tenure security, profit-sharing transparency, and long-term sustainability. Still, with appropriate governance and participatory mechanisms, such models could contribute to local economic empowerment and rural transformation (SDG 1: No Poverty; SDG 8). Among Chinese smallholders, oil palm cultivation is also widespread especially throughout Engkilili forming part of the local mixed livelihoods economy. Recent infrastructural developments, such as the launch of SALCRA's Kernel Processing Plant (KCP) in Lubok Antu, aim to improve local processing capacities and reduce dependency on imported raw materials. The KCP, with a projected capacity of 30,000 metric tons and estimated revenue of RM58 million per year, as well as the SALCRA Palm Oil Mill Complex, reflect ongoing investments in the sector (Utusan Borneo, 24 May 2025).

- **Tourism and Environmental Conservation**

Tourism has become an increasingly significant economic activity in the Batang Ai and Engkilili areas, particularly through ecotourism and cultural tourism ventures. The presence of the Batang Ai National Park - home to orangutan habitats and biodiverse rainforest ecosystems - has positioned the region as a key destination for nature-based tourism. Notably, tourism activities in Ulu Ai date back to 1987, with the introduction of longhouse-based ecotourism in partnership with pioneering travel operators such as *Borneo Adventure*. These early initiatives laid the foundation for a tourism model that blends environmental conservation with cultural immersion, aligning with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Longhouse stays in communities such as Nanga Sumpa - organised in collaboration with conservation NGOs and local residents - offer visitors an authentic experience of Iban culture while generating income for host households, thus contributing to SDG 1 (No Poverty). Over the years, operators like *Borneo Adventures (BA)* have continued to play a central role in promoting guided tours focused on orangutan habitats, forest ecology, and conservation awareness in the Ulu Ai area - advancing SDG 15 (Life on Land). However, the promotional focus of such tours remains largely targeted at international visitors.

These tourism and conservation efforts are underpinned by a broader framework of partnerships involving state agencies such as the Sarawak Forestry Department and Sarawak Forestry Corporation, alongside NGOs, including the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the Smithsonian Institution's Working Land and Seascapes. Collaborative programs under international platforms like the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) have supported co-management approaches, engaging local communities as stewards of forest resources. This governance model exemplifies SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), while reinforcing biodiversity and climate resilience efforts under SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15.

In addition to raising conservation awareness, tourism has become a supplementary income source for subsistence farming communities - particularly during the peak season from July to September. Residents participate by providing boat transport, guiding services, food preparation, and homestay operations. These activities support SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as they do involve the active participation of women and youth. Furthermore, conservation initiatives have enabled year-round employment through the recruitment of residents as forest rangers and biodiversity monitors. These community rangers patrol protected areas such as Batang Ai National Park

and the perimeters of Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary, assist in installing camera traps, and support ongoing wildlife research - further embedding environmental stewardship within local livelihood strategies and enhancing resilience in line with SDG 13 and SDG 15. Communities such as Nanga Talong and Lubok Pantu also play a vital role in sustaining the traditional Tagang system - an upriver fish conservation practice that restricts fishing to allow fish populations to replenish. This system provides additional income opportunities as community members are able to harvest and sell fish sustainably, contributing to both ecological conservation and local livelihoods.



Image 6. Photo showing the Tagang river network map in Ulu Engkari  
 Source: Rumah Bada, Nanga Talong during APPGM-SDG's fieldwork, 15 March 2025

- **Batang Ai Aquaculture Industrial Zone (AIZ)**

The Aquaculture Industrial Zone (AIZ) of Batang Ai, established by the Ministry of Food Industry, Commodity & Regional Development Sarawak (MFICORD) and gazetted by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) Sarawak, is one of the state's principal hubs for freshwater aquaculture, particularly for the cage culture of red tilapia. The Batang Ai Hydroelectric Dam, which forms the reservoir, has served as an aquaculture site for over three decades. Between 2021 and 2022, the zone recorded a production of 1,081 metric tons of fish, valued at RM14.9 million (DayakDaily, 2022).

Situated within the Batang Ai Reservoir, the AIZ operates on a dual model that supports both commercial-scale enterprises and smallholder operators - the latter

benefiting from DOA Sarawak's one-off Rural Transformation Program (RTP) grants, which enable family-managed aquafarms and leased cage operations. Other key stakeholders involved in the development and financing of aquaculture activities, include the Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (SALCRA) and Agrobank.

The zone contributes substantially to the regional economy through an integrated aquaculture value chain encompassing fish production, hatchery operations, feed supply, processing, and cold storage. These services are largely managed by commercial operators such as Borneo Eco Fish Sdn Bhd, which operates 5,000 cages across approximately 600 acres of the reservoir (Borneo Eco Fish, 2025). Red tilapia farmed in Batang Ai is marketed both domestically and internationally, making the zone a strategic contributor to Sarawak's food security agenda and aquaculture-based economic growth.



Image 7. Smallholder tilapia cage culture

Source: APPGM-SDG fieldwork, 14 March 2025

As of 2023, the Batang Ai AIZ supports 146 smallholder operators alongside a private company managing over 14,000 cage units - highlighting the zone's scale and significance in promoting community livelihoods as well as sustainable investment in aquaculture (MFICORD, 2023).

- **Commerce, local trade and cross-border trade**

Sociocultural and economic ties between communities along the Sarawak-West Kalimantan border have long preceded the imposition of modern state political policies or formal border controls (Majid Cooke, 1999; Eilenberg, 2012). The eventual delineation of national boundaries disrupted these organic connections - restricting mobility and fragmenting kinship networks due to differing citizenship statuses (Aris Munandar, 2011). Nevertheless, borderland communities continue to operate within a shared cultural and behavioural system, shaped by intergenerational social patterns and a deep sense of mutual belonging (Junaenah et al., 2013). Lubok Antu town and Engkilili serve as key commercial hubs for nearby rural settlements. Weekly *tamu* (traditional markets) remain vital spaces for exchange, where small-scale producers - especially women - sell fruits, vegetables, wild meats, and hand-woven crafts, supporting both household incomes and local food economies. Chinese shopkeepers, long established in the region's retail landscape, operate provision stores and hardware shops, often offering goods on informal credit. These enduring interethnic economic networks reflect resilient systems of interdependence, where trade, labour, and social exchange are deeply embedded in shared histories and everyday practice. Of growing cultural and economic significance is the trade in artisanal and heritage-based products such as *pua kumbu*, *ikat* textiles, beaded accessories, and ritual attire. However, this sector faces mounting challenges - not only from cross-border competition where similar items are mass-produced in Indonesia and sold at lower prices, but also due to the gradual erosion of traditional skills and knowledge within Sarawak, particularly in specialised crafts such as indigenous metalwork. This decline reflects a broader disconnection between younger generations and cultural production systems, often exacerbated by limited transmission pathways and lack of institutional support. Such dynamics raise critical concerns about the sustainability of local crafts and the undervaluation of indigenous knowledge systems, illustrating how SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) intersect with the imperative of cultural continuity. While cross-border trade in heritage goods remains embedded in shared histories and cultural affinities, it is simultaneously shaped by the asymmetries of globalised market economies. As such, there is an urgent need for targeted policy interventions that safeguard intangible cultural heritage, revitalise traditional artisanal practices, and ensure equitable access to markets for rural craftspeople. These steps are vital for fostering inclusive, resilient, and culturally grounded models of local development.



Image 8. Ping Hap, a Chinese Malaysian Indonesian-owned establishment<sup>4</sup>

*Source: Vinnie Tay, Google map, 2023*

#### 1.4 Relation between the SDG Conceptual Framework and the Local Contexts

The parliamentary constituency of P203 Lubok Antu is situated within a unique socio-ecological and political landscape that demands careful contextualisation when considering its development trajectory. Home to diverse communities - predominantly Iban, alongside Malay, Chinese, other indigenous Sarawakians, and non-citizen residents - it is also a constituency that straddles the Malaysian-Indonesian border at Badau in West Kalimantan. This borderland geography has historically shaped flows of people, goods, and cultural exchange, while also presenting governance challenges in terms of service delivery, infrastructure development, and community identity. Understanding Lubok Antu's realities requires an approach that links its histories and contemporary challenges to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), interpreted in ways that reflect local needs and aspirations rather than abstract policy frameworks. The constituency is defined by its close relationship with protected areas such as the Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary, Batang Ai National Park, and the Batang Ai hydropower reservoir. These landscapes embody both ecological significance and cultural continuity. For many indigenous Iban communities, customary land management and adat (traditional law) continue to govern subsistence livelihoods. At the same time, these practices intersect with state-led conservation frameworks and international initiatives such as the Heart of Borneo. This speaks directly to **SDG 15 (Life on Land)**, particularly *Target 15.1* (conserve terrestrial

<sup>4</sup> This establishment, located at Lubok Antu Riverine Park, functions as a notable one-stop center for Iban traditional costume sets, antiques, and handcrafted art pieces sourced both locally and from across the border. The store exemplifies the hybrid nature of heritage economies in borderland contexts, where cultural exchange, commerce, and identity intersect. It also reflects how artisanal markets are not only shaped by shared histories but also by transnational supply chains and evolving consumer preferences.

ecosystems) and *Indicator 15.1.2* (proportion of important sites for biodiversity covered by protected areas). Yet, the integration of indigenous governance is also linked to **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)**, *Target 16.7* (inclusive, participatory decision-making), where adat and state law must be reconciled to avoid marginalisation.

Infrastructure development has long been a central concern for Lubok Antu. The construction of the Batang Ai Dam in 1993 fundamentally altered settlement patterns, displaced communities, and created new dependencies on government-led development. For many residents, road access is not simply a matter of convenience but the very foundation of well-being, underpinning access to healthcare, education, markets, and administrative services. Here, **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)** is highly relevant, particularly *Target 9.1* (develop quality, reliable, sustainable infrastructure) with *Indicator 9.1.1* (proportion of the rural population living within 2 km of an all-season road). Yet infrastructure expansion also raises questions about environmental integrity and cultural preservation, tying into **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)** and *Target 11.4* (strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard cultural heritage).

Tourism has emerged as one of the constituency's growing livelihood sectors, driven by eco-tourism, cultural homestays, and heritage-based initiatives. Improved connectivity through new road networks promises to expand these opportunities, yet it also brings risks of cultural erosion and uneven economic benefit. **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)** is central here, particularly *Target 8.9* (promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products) with *Indicator 8.9.1* (tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP). The bypassing of Engkilili town by the Pan Borneo Highway demonstrates how infrastructure can create uneven economic effects, linking to **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**, especially *Target 10.2* (empower and promote social and economic inclusion).

Agribusiness and land use patterns further complicate Lubok Antu's development context. In areas like Engkilili subdistrict, the expansion of oil palm has raised questions of land tenure security, sustainability, and wildlife conflict. This relates to **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)**, specifically *Target 2.4* (ensure sustainable food production systems), as well as **SDG 15 (Life on Land)**, *Target 15.5* (reduce degradation of natural habitats). Crocodile-related safety concerns highlight how environmental management intersects directly with human security, linking to **SDG 16.1** (reduce all forms of violence and related death rates). Meanwhile, access to clean water remains uneven, with inadequacies in treated water infrastructure constraining both household well-being and agricultural productivity. This speaks to **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**, *Target 6.1* (universal

access to safe drinking water), measured by *Indicator 6.1.1* (proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services).

Another pressing issue is access to social protection and citizenship documentation. Many Iban and Malay households struggle to navigate the bureaucratic procedures required to secure housing, welfare support, and legal identity. Limited outreach and information gaps exacerbate these challenges, excluding vulnerable populations from benefits they are entitled to. This connects directly with **SDG 1 (No Poverty)**, *Target 1.3* (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems), measured by *Indicator 1.3.1* (proportion of population covered by social protection systems). At the same time, **SDG 16.9** (provide legal identity for all, including birth registration) is critical, as gaps in documentation perpetuate exclusion.

Riverine communities are also increasingly turning to aquaculture and cage culture as supplementary livelihood strategies. These ventures offer potential for income diversification, but they face significant barriers in technical training, feed affordability, and market connectivity. Misuse of the “Batang Ai” label undermines both market trust and the potential for premium branding. Here, **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)** is relevant, especially *Target 14.7* (increase the economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs from sustainable use of marine resources), while the strengthening of value chains ties into **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)**, *Target 12.b* (develop tools to monitor sustainable tourism and production impacts), and **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**, *Target 17.11* (increase developing countries’ share of global exports).

Taken together, these interconnected realities demonstrate that the SDGs cannot be applied to Lubok Antu in a uniform or generic way. They must instead be interpreted through the constituency’s specific socio-ecological conditions: a history shaped by hydropower-led development, ongoing negotiations between conservation and livelihood rights, evolving cultural economies, agribusiness pressures, and gaps in access to social protection. By explicitly mapping Lubok Antu’s issues to SDG goals, targets, and indicators, it becomes clear that achieving progress requires localised, community-driven strategies that balance ecological sustainability, cultural continuity, and equitable development. This contextual analysis provides the foundation for the grounded findings presented in Part 3, where the voices, experiences, and issue-mapping of local communities are brought to the fore.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODS & METHODOLOGY

This parliamentary report employs a systematic and evidence-based approach to issue mapping, adhering to best practices within the APPGM-SDG framework. A qualitative methodology was adopted to capture the lived experiences of grassroots communities, ensuring the findings are both representative and contextually relevant. The primary data collection methods are rooted in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques (Chambers 1994), incorporating semi-structured inquiries such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and or Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) (Tremblay 1957) to gather in-depth, grounded insights. These ethnographic research tools facilitate active participation and collaboration with community members, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their perspectives. Complementing the fieldwork, desk studies were conducted to provide an overarching understanding of the locations and communities involved, forming a foundational framework to guide the research process. In Sarawak, the research incorporated the use of native and local languages and their properties of everyday conversation (Stubbs 1983) to ensure inclusivity and authenticity, fostering meaningful engagement with community members. To further enhance the analysis, discourse analysis (Coulthard 1977) was employed, structured around three core elements: content, context, and assumption (Rahim 2018). This framework enabled a comprehensive exploration of themes, interactions, and underlying perspectives within the community narratives.

- Content: Analysed the themes and types of interactions or utterances during discussions.
- Context: Explored grammar (language structure and syntax), setting (spatial, temporal, and social backgrounds), and emotion (expressed feelings or instincts) to interpret the broader environment of interactions.
- Assumption: Examined opinions, references, and questions to uncover underlying beliefs and perspectives of participants.

The integration of native languages and discourse analysis allowed for culturally sensitive and authentic interpretations of the data, ensuring that community dynamics were accurately captured. This methodological rigour emphasises participatory, inclusive, and evidence-based research practices, aligning with the principles of sustainable development goals. By combining ethnographic tools, qualitative data, and linguistic analysis, this study provides empirically grounded insights that reflect the lived realities of the communities studied.

## 2.1 Issue Mapping Approach

The data-gathering methods used in P203 Lubok Antu were grounded in community-based mapping approaches. These methods are informed by tools and principles derived from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA),<sup>5</sup> which emphasise local knowledge, collective engagement, and community-led identification of issues. In Lubok Antu, the issue mapping process involved ten (10) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with communities across the two state constituencies within the parliamentary boundary - N33 Engkilili and N34 Batang Ai. These sessions engaged a diverse range of local groups, including fish cage aquaculture communities (both gazetted and non-gazetted), and captured variations in cultural, socio-economic, and ecological conditions. While the majority of participants were Iban, reflective of the broader demographic composition of Sarawak and Lubok Antu, the area is specifically home to the Ulu Ai Iban, an Iban subgroup historically concentrated in the upper reaches of the Batang Ai basin. Anthropologically, Lubok Antu lies within an important migratory and cultural corridor for the Iban people. Drawing on oral histories and ethnographic accounts, including those documented by Benedict Sandin (1967),<sup>6</sup> the region was once a key route for Iban migration from Kalimantan (present-day Indonesian Borneo). Historical figures such as Patih Ambau are remembered for leading Iban movements across this landscape, establishing early settlements in Pangkalan Tabau and later in Engkari, through a complex history of interethnic conflict, negotiation, and agricultural expansion. These historical trajectories remain embedded in longhouse genealogies and generational oral narratives.

Today, P203 Lubok Antu encompasses a dynamic and multi-ethnic constituency shaped by both historical legacies and contemporary demographic change. According to *MyCensus 2020*,<sup>7</sup> 88.6 percent of the population identifies as indigenous - primarily Iban - followed by Chinese (7.8 percent), Malay-Muslim Bumiputera (3 percent), and other groups (0.6 percent). Settlements such as Kampung Melayu Engkilili and long-established Chinese enclaves reflect a history of interethnic cooperation, strategic migration, and shared economic practices. Today, economic interdependence is particularly visible in smallholder oil palm production, often reliant on the leasing of Native Customary Rights (NCR) land, further demonstrating how traditional land tenure and local economies remain deeply intertwined.

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<sup>5</sup> Chambers, Robert. "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Challenges, Potentials and Paradigm." *World Development* 22, no. 10 (1994): 1437–1454. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(94\)90030-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(94)90030-2).

<sup>6</sup> Sandin, Benedict. *The Sea Dayaks of Borneo before White Rajah Rule*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM). *MyCensus 2020: Population and Housing Census of Malaysia - Sarawak*. Putrajaya: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021. <https://www.dosm.gov.my>.

Table 2. Brief Itinerary of the Site Visit to Lubok Antu Parliament

DATE	ACTIVITY/SESSION/VISIT
15 January 2025, Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inception meeting &amp; profiling</b> with YB Roy Angau anak Gingkoi</li> <li>• <b>Pre-site visit and courtesy call</b> to Lubok Antu District Office. Attended by DO Akoi anak Ejau, AO Stanley Nunsang anak Martin Engkujang (Lubok Antu District Office), AO Ambrose Ambir (Lubok Antu District Office), AAO Edwin Mas (Engkelili Sub-district Office), AAO Nur Nabilah Binti Wazir (Engkelili Sub-district Office), AAO Mu'izzudin Mahzuz b Aidil (Engkelili Sub-district Office), DSP Victor anak Ripon (PDRM), CPL Suffian Kassim (PDRM), Juing Ullie (Information Officer, Lubok Antu), Siti Nuraini (Supervisor, KEMAS Lubok Antu), Rose Unggom (Supervisor, KEMAS Lubok Antu), Gilbert Langup (Assistant Officer, JKR Lubok Antu), Edwin Joel (Assistant Supervisor, DUN N34 Batang Ai Service Centre), AAO Nicky anak Robin (Department of Agriculture, Lubok Antu)</li> </ul>
11 March 2025, Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Site visit briefing</b> with Puan Lina Kutak, Puan Rorika Anna anak Naka (Representative from P203 Lubok Antu Service Centre) &amp; Puan Baby Lenjau (Representative from N33 Batang Ai Service Centre)</li> <li>• <b>FGD 1</b> with the Malay Community of Engkilili</li> <li>• <b>FGD 2</b> with the Chinese Community of Engkilili</li> </ul>
12 March 2025, Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FGD 3</b> with Iban Community, Langkang Ili, Engkilili</li> </ul>
14 March 2025, Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FGD 4</b> with Persatuan Penternak Ikan Batang Ai</li> </ul>
15 March 2025, Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FGD 5</b> with Iban Community, Nanga Talong, Ulu Engkari</li> <li>• <b>FGD 6</b> with Iban Community, Nanga Ukom, Ulu Engkari</li> </ul>
16 March 2025, Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FGD 7</b> with Iban Community, Nanga Jambu, Ulu Ai</li> <li>• <b>FGD 8</b> with Iban Community, Nanga Sumpa, Ulu Ai</li> </ul>
17 March 2025, Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FGD 9</b> with Iban Community, Kumpang Langgir, Engkilili</li> </ul>
4 April 2025, Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FGD 10</b> with Iban Community, Menyang Taih, Batang Ai Kanan</li> </ul>

<b>9 May 2025</b> , Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inter-Agency Dialogue (IAD)</b> at Lubok Antu District Office. Attendees, include: Mr Zainie Aji, Special Duties Officer to YB Tuan Roy, Tuan Akoi anak Ejau, District Officer for Lubok Antu District, various representatives from different units from Engkilili Sub-district Office, Sarawak Forestry Corporation, PPD Lubok Antu, PDRM Lubok Antu, and JKR Lubok Antu, and JKM Lubok Antu</li> </ul>
<b>26 May 2025</b> , Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Issue Prioritisation</b> with YB Tuan Roy Angau anak Gingkoi, Research Officer, Awangku Mohd Shaiful Nizam</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Fieldwork Ethical Considerations

The Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research (MCRCR) (National Science Council 2020) governs research involving human participants in Malaysia. In adherence to these guidelines, the APPGM-SDG research ensured the highest ethical standards were maintained throughout the study:

- a. The lead researcher ensured that all ethical protocols were followed by obtaining informed consent from participants for audio recording, as well as for capturing video and photographs and ensuring voluntary participation. In cases where FGD participants declined to have their statements recorded or refused permission for their photographs to be taken, the research would not include or report those details on any platform.
- b. To protect participants' privacy, all personal data and sensitive information were treated confidentially. Identifying information was either anonymised or excluded from the final reports, unless explicit permission was granted by the participants. All data (primary and secondary) should not only be correctly collected and recorded but kept securely yet easily retrievable and in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act 7097 of Malaysia (Malaysia 2010). Data should be archived with strict confidentiality for a duration as required by the specific research.
- c. The research design and data collection methods were structured to avoid causing any psychological, social, or economic harm to participants. Researchers were sensitive to cultural norms, community dynamics, and local issues, ensuring as much as possible that the research process did not exploit or place undue burden on participants. Engaging with communities requires a deep understanding of their cultural, social, and economic contexts. Researchers adopted culturally

appropriate methods of engagement, respecting local customs, languages, and traditions to foster trust and mutual respect between the researchers and the community.

- d. The research aimed to provide benefits to the community by accurately representing their voices, issues, and needs. Findings from the study will be shared with community leaders and relevant stakeholders to ensure the research would contribute to informed decision-making and positive outcomes for the community.

### 2.3 Fieldwork Challenges

The recent fieldwork conducted in the Lubok Antu parliamentary constituency offered valuable insights into the lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations of local communities across diverse geographic and cultural contexts. Despite its overall success, the exercise also surfaced several logistical, linguistic, and institutional challenges that informed the team's adaptive strategies throughout the process.

- **Weather and Mobility:** Field operations proceeded smoothly in terms of transportation and access, a testament to the team's careful planning and familiarity with local terrain. However, seasonal weather patterns - especially heavy rainfall and thunderstorms - necessitated flexibility in scheduling. While such disruptions were anticipated, they underscored the importance of contingency planning when operating in remote or weather-sensitive areas.
- **Linguistic and Cultural Complexity:** The linguistic diversity of Lubok Antu, encompassing Iban, Sarawak Malay, standard Malay, and various Chinese dialects, reflects the region's rich cultural heritage. While this was navigated comfortably by local researchers, non-native team members encountered occasional difficulties interpreting nuanced expressions and conversational subtleties. These challenges were especially apparent during the data analysis phase, highlighting the importance of contextual understanding and collaborative translation to ensure accuracy and cultural integrity.
- **Geographical Scope and Representation:** The vast spatial distribution of settlements - ranging from remote riverine communities to semi-urban centres - presented challenges in ensuring balanced community representation. The team addressed this through meticulous planning and route optimisation. While time and resource constraints limited total outreach, the fieldwork succeeded in engaging a cross-section of voices from multiple subregions.

- **Sensitivity in Community Dialogue:** Certain thematic areas - particularly around tourism development - elicited strong sentiments from community members, reflecting a diversity of experiences and perspectives. These conversations were conducted with care and respect, with the research team adopting a neutral, facilitative approach to maintain trust and ensure all voices were acknowledged in a respectful and constructive manner.
- **Institutional Engagement and Coordination Gaps:** Engagement with local government agencies, while respectful and generally cooperative, remained limited in scope. Opportunities for more structured interagency dialogue were constrained by timing, availability, and administrative procedures. This restricted the team's ability to fully grasp district-level governance perspectives or tap into existing development planning processes. Strengthening inter-agency collaboration will be key for integrating community feedback into institutional responses.
- **Resource and Time Considerations:** While the fieldwork achieved its core objectives, the team acknowledges that broader community engagement would require additional time and financial support. These limitations notwithstanding, the research was carried out with a commitment to inclusion, integrity, and cultural respect, laying the groundwork for future follow-ups.

## 2.4 Research Limitations

The research undertaken in the Lubok Antu parliamentary constituency was designed to capture the rich socio-cultural, economic, environmental, and governance realities of the area. While methodologically rigorous and guided by strong ethical considerations, the study was not without its constraints. These limitations, though managed carefully, shaped the scope, depth, and interpretation of the findings.

- **Linguistic Complexity and Interpretation Challenges**  
The linguistic plurality of Sarawak - ranging from Iban and Sarawakian Malay to Mandarin and local Chinese dialects - offered both richness and complexity. For team members unfamiliar with local dialects or cultural references, accurately interpreting subtle meanings and context during data analysis posed a challenge. This complexity was further compounded when those not involved in fieldwork processed the data, necessitating stringent cross-verification to preserve meaning.

- **Constraints on Time and Depth of Engagement**

Given the qualitative nature of the methodology, particularly the use of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), more time would have allowed deeper, more inclusive engagement. The compressed timeline limited the number of groups consulted and, at times, curtailed discussions that required more reflection or follow-up.
- **Sensitivity of Topics and Participant Reluctance**

Topics such as statelessness, governance gaps, and development inequities are inherently sensitive. While every effort was made to create a safe and respectful environment, some participants remained cautious in sharing openly. This caution, though understandable, may have contributed to partial disclosure or underreporting in certain thematic areas.
- **Resource Limitations**

As with many field-based studies, budgetary and human resource constraints shaped the scale of outreach. This affected the breadth of communities engaged and limited the ability to conduct extensive follow-up visits or triangulate findings through repeated interactions.
- **Ethical Imperatives and Data Privacy**

Ethical safeguards - including informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of identities - were rigorously observed. While these measures were essential to ensure community trust, they inevitably limited the granularity and specificity of case studies that could be presented in the final outputs.
- **Cultural Protocols and Community Dynamics**

Respecting customary norms and cultural protocols was fundamental to the fieldwork. However, navigating these traditions required tact and adaptability. Any perceived oversight could have impacted rapport with communities and influenced the tone or openness of conversations.

Despite these limitations, the research process was marked by careful planning, grounded cultural understanding, and commitment to ethical research practice. While certain constraints influenced the depth or extent of engagement, the findings generated offer critical and credible insights into the lived realities of communities across Lubok Antu. These limitations, rather than diminishing the study, highlight key areas for refinement in future phases of engagement.

### 3.0 KEY ISSUES AND CROSS-CUTTING SDGs

Here are the seven main issues that have been identified as priorities and require immediate attention. These issues were selected due to their significant impact on the well-being of the population and their relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Table 3. Key Issues and Cross-Cutting SDGs

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
1.	Environmental governance and sustainable livelihood	Traditional subsistence ( <i>adat</i> ) overlaps with state/international conservation such as the Heart of Borneo initiatives; coordination needed so biodiversity goals, indigenous rights, and ecotourism stewardship reinforce each other.	Environment, Social, Governance	Encompassing all riverine communities which are living within the conservation zone	Upriver Lubok Antu: Ulu Engkari, Nanga Delok, Jambu - Delok, Batang Ai Kanan	<p><b>SDG 15: Life on Land</b> Target 15.1, Indicator 15.1.2 Target 15.6, Indicator 15.6.1</p> <p><b>SDG 2: Zero Hunger</b> Target 2.3, Indicators 2.3.1, 2.3.2</p> <p><b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b> Target 16.7, Indicator 16.7.1, Target 16.10, Indicator 16.10.2</p>
2.	Infrastructure development & socio-cultural transition	The Batang Ai Dam transformed landscapes and livelihoods, disrupting forest access and traditional farming. While it bolstered Sarawak's energy	Economy, Environment, Social, Governance	Encompassing all riverine communities which are living within the conservation zone	Upriver Lubok Antu: Ulu Engkari, Nanga Delok, Jambu - Delok, Batang Ai Kanan,	<p><b>SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b> Target 9.1, Indicator 9.1.1</p> <p><b>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</b> Target 11.2, Indicator 11.2.1</p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		<p>supply - 30 years later - communities are still facing regulatory and market pressures despite of many economic support initiatives being implemented to upskill or reskill communities affected by the dam development. Many - especially youth and working families - call for improved road infrastructure to boost access to markets, healthcare, and education. Yet, this needs clashes with conservation concerns over environmental degradation and cultural "authenticity." Balancing connectivity</p>				<p><b>SDG 15: Life on Land</b> Target 15.1, Indicator 15.1.2</p> <p><b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b> Target 16.7, Indicator 16.7.1</p> <p><b>SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities</b> Target 10.2, Indicator 10.2.1</p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		and ecological integrity require inclusive, culturally sensitive infrastructure planning that supports resilience, youth participation, and socio-economic rights in rural areas.				
3.	Tourism development & cultural - economy sustainability	Tourism in Lubok Antu is growing through ecotourism homestays and cultural experiences, offering income and youth engagement while promoting Iban heritage. However, long-term sustainability requires community-led governance, benefit-sharing, and stronger access to technical tools like digital marketing and licensing. Road	Economy, Social, Governance	Homestay operators, youth, cultural practitioners and ecotourism beneficiaries within the constituency.	Upriver communities in Lubok Antu and Engkilili,	<p><b>SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth</b> Target 8.9, Indicators 8.9.1, 8.9.2</p> <p><b>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</b> Target 11.4, Indicator 11.4.1 Target 11.a, Indicator 11. a.1</p> <p><b>SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities</b> Target 10.2, Indicator 10.2.1</p> <p><b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b> Target 16.7, Indicator 16.7.2</p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		<p>upgrades create new market opportunities but also raise risks of cultural erosion and external exploitation. Meanwhile, Engkilili - once a key tourism stop - is in decline after being bypassed by the Pan Borneo Highway, underscoring the need for targeted rejuvenation and inclusive regional planning.</p>				
4.	Land use, agribusiness & water infrastructure	<p>Engkilili faces interlinked challenges involving agribusiness expansion, insecure land tenure, and underdeveloped public utilities. While oil palm has benefited some Iban households,</p>	<p>Environment, Economy, Social, Governance</p>	<p>Subsistence farmers and ageing longhouse community in Engkilili</p>	<p>Langkang Ili - Engkilili subdistrict</p>	<p><b>SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation</b>                      Target 6.1, Indicator 6.1.1                      Target 6.4, Indicators 6.4.1, 6.4.2</p> <p><b>SDG 2: Zero Hunger</b>                      Target 2.4, Indicator 2.4.1</p> <p><b>SDG 15: Life on Land</b></p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		<p>concerns over biodiversity loss and rising crocodile encounters threaten safety and livelihoods. At the same time, the treated water system is failing to meet domestic and agricultural needs. These overlapping pressures highlight the urgent need for improved water infrastructure and stronger safeguards to ensure both environmental sustainability and community resilience in the face of ongoing land and resource pressures.</p>				<p>Target 15.5, Indicator 15.5.1                      Target 15.1, Indicator 15.1.2  <b>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</b>                      Target 11.1, Indicator 11.1.1    <b>SDG 13: Climate Action</b>                      Target 13.1, Indicator 13.1.1    <b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b>                      Target 16.1, Indicator 16.1.4</p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
5.	Social protection, housing & citizenship documentation	Many downriver Malay and upriver Iban communities face persistent barriers in accessing welfare and housing support due to unclear eligibility criteria, complex application procedures, and limited outreach. A key challenge is the lack of accessible, multilingual information, especially on citizenship documentation, which delays access to essential services for undocumented individuals and families. These gaps in communication and policy literacy hinder equitable inclusion and	Social, Governance	Malay downriver and Iban upriver communities, undocumented persons	Downriver Malay areas, upriver Iban settlements in Lubok Antu and Engkelili	<p><b>SDG 1: No Poverty</b> Target 1.3, Indicator 1.3.1</p> <p><b>SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities</b> Target 10.2, Indicator 10.2.1</p> <p><b>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</b> Target 11.1, Indicator 11.1.1</p> <p><b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b> Target 16.9, Indicator 16.9.1</p> <p><b>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals</b> Target 17.14, Indicator 17.14.1</p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		contribute to ongoing marginalisation in both rural and peri-urban areas.				
6.	Cage culture & aquaculture development	Cage culture aquaculture in Lubok Antu offers rural households' supplementary income and supports Sarawak's agro-based diversification goals. However, challenges persist, including limited technical training, poor cold-chain infrastructure, weak market access, and high fish feed costs due to dependence on imports. The absence of coordinated marketing leaves producers vulnerable as price-	Economy, Governance, Environment	Cage farmers, small-scale fishers	Lubok Antu communities; Members of Persatuan Penternak Ikan Sangkar Lubok Antu	<p><b>SDG 1: No Poverty</b> Target 1.2, Indicator 1.2.1</p> <p><b>SDG 2: Zero Hunger</b> Target 2.3, Indicator 2.3.1</p> <p><b>SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth</b> Target 8.3, Indicator 8.3.1</p> <p><b>SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b> Target 9.3, Indicator 9.3.2</p> <p><b>SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production</b> Target 12.7, Indicator 12.7.1</p> <p><b>SDG 14: Life Below Water</b></p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		<p>takers. Additionally, misuse of the “Batang Ai” name in fish branding threatens product authenticity. Local feed production, certification systems, and a geographical indication framework are needed to strengthen sustainability, market integrity, and community ownership.</p>				<p>Target 14.4, Indicator 14.4.1</p> <p><b>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals</b></p> <p>Target 17.6, Indicator 17.6.1</p>
7.	<p>Agricultural decline and food insecurity in rural communities</p>	<p>Rural communities in Engkilili and Lubok Antu face growing challenges to food self-sufficiency due to rural-urban migration, which reduces the labour needed for paddy and pepper farming. While some households still</p>	<p>Economy, Environment, Social</p>	<p>Subsistence farmers and their household</p>	<p>Encompassing all areas within the constituency</p>	<p><b>SDG 2 – Zero Hunger</b></p> <p>Target 2.3; Indicator 2.3.1 Indicator 2.3.2 Target 2.4, Indicator 2.4.1</p> <p><b>SDG 13 – Climate Action</b></p> <p>Target 13.1, Indicator 13.1.1</p> <p><b>SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth</b></p>

NO	KEY ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSION	AFFECTED GROUPS	AFFECTED AREAS	RELATED SDGs
		plant paddy, many struggle to produce enough rice, relying instead on purchases. Generational cash crops like pepper are also declining due to rising input costs, pest and disease issues, and climate impacts. Labour shortages and these compounding pressures threaten both household food security and sustainable agricultural livelihoods.				Target 8.6, Indicator 8.6.1  <b>SDG 15 – Life on Land</b> Target 15.2, Indicator 15.2.1

## 4.0 OVERVIEW OF ISSUES

### 4.1 Detailed Findings of Key Issues

Table 4. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 1

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<b>FGD 1:</b> Dialogue with Communities of Kampung Melayu Engkelili <b>Date:</b> 11 March 2025 <b>No. of Participants:</b> 27 participants <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 3 Groups			<b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lubok Antu District Office</li> <li>2. Welfare Department Lubok Antu (JKM)</li> <li>3. Public Works Department, Lubok Antu (JKR)</li> </ol>
1.	Waterlogged land and funding shortfalls	Intermittent flooding remains a recurrent concern in the community, primarily due to the swamp-like soil conditions that lead to prolonged waterlogging during the monsoon season. The issue is compounded by inadequate drainage infrastructure, which is unable to accommodate excess rainfall and effectively prevent water accumulation. During recent consultations with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID), community members were informed that an allocation of RM200,000 had been approved for the construction of new drainage systems. However, residents argued that this sum is insufficient to meet actual needs, particularly in areas located adjacent to swamp terrain where drainage coverage is limited or blocked.	<b>Lubok Antu District Officer (DO)</b> The District Office has not received any reports from the residents of flooding issues in the village, and flooding is not known to occur in the village. There are, however, instances of flooding along roads outside of the village, from Engkilili town to Lubok Antu, but it also depends on if it is low-lying or higher.  Flooding is known to occur at the low-lying junction leading to Kumpang Langgir. There is a district level disaster management committee (DMC) that uses specific terminology to define what classifies as flooding disaster. Occasional flooding during rainfall does not classify as a disaster and will not be included in the DMC report.

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>Although detailed assessments of impacts are limited, residents report that waterlogging significantly restricts access to farmland, disrupting agricultural activities and contributing to livelihood insecurity. Households situated in low-lying areas are especially vulnerable, with recurring drainage problems leaving them more exposed to seasonal flooding.</p> <p>This situation reflects the interaction of environmental vulnerability, infrastructural gaps, and financial constraints. Without adequate planning and investment, drainage challenges will continue to undermine agricultural productivity and daily life, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive and adequately resourced response.</p>	<p>Granted, flooding does affect housing in low-lying areas, however this is caused by heavy rainfall and not river overflow.</p>
2.	Ageing clean water supply system	Residential areas and villages within Engkilili town continue to experience intermittent and unstable access to clean water. The issue is largely attributed to ageing utility systems, inadequate water pressure, and limited maintenance. The existing municipal water tank infrastructure is outdated, although further technical details remain unavailable as relevant agencies were not present during discussions. For households, this	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>Treated pipe water is provided by the Sarawak Rural Water Supply Department or <i>Jabatan Bekalan Air Luar Bandar</i> (JBALB). There are issues with the pump system, causing intermittent low water pressure issues.</p> <p>No agency representative was present at the IAD.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>means that water is often unavailable during the daytime and only accessible in the evenings, forcing residents to store water in containers for daily use. The problem has also disrupted local livelihoods, particularly among food hawker businesses that rely heavily on consistent water supply to maintain hygiene and operational efficiency.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the development of the Sarawak Water Grid system is expected to provide a long-term solution, ensuring a more stable and reliable water supply for Engkilili's communities once it becomes operational.</p>	
3.	Transparency and communication lag in welfare assistance guidelines	Several residents report notable difficulties in accessing welfare assistance, often linked to prevailing perceptions of ineligibility during household inspections. There is a perception that eligibility assessments are frequently based on surface-level indicators - such as the physical condition of a home or the ownership of a vehicle - which are commonly interpreted as markers of financial stability. However, these indicators may not accurately reflect household vulnerability, particularly in rural contexts where vehicles are	<p><b>Welfare Department Lubok Antu (JKM)</b></p> <p>The Welfare Department receives many applications, however the status of single mother/single parent/PWD does not guarantee welfare assistance.</p> <p>PWDs - Employed PWDs are eligible for allowance if their salary is below RM1700. For unemployed PWDs, those between the ages of 18-59 are also eligible to receive a monthly allowance from JKN. This is in accordance with the latest government circular from</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>essential for mobility rather than a sign of affluence.</p> <p>Compounding these challenges are communication gaps between welfare officers and applicants. Residents describe instances where officers provided limited or unclear explanations regarding eligibility outcomes, leading to confusion and dissatisfaction. Such experiences have contributed to a growing sense of distrust toward the welfare department, with some residents perceiving themselves as excluded from support systems designed to assist them. From the perspective of welfare officials, eligibility decisions are guided by established regulations and criteria that must be applied consistently. However, the gap between regulatory frameworks and residents lived realities underscores the need for more transparent communication, clearer explanations, and culturally sensitive engagement to rebuild trust and ensure equitable access.</p>	<p>2025. However, this also depends on the Poverty Line Income (PLI).</p> <p>The PLI index takes into account the per capita household, so even if an individual is unemployed, they will not be eligible for any assistance afforded to those earning below the PLI if their household income is above the PLI.</p> <p><b>District Officer</b> Applications will go through several layers of investigation before they get approved. Welfare JKM has their own processes for approval. (N/B: possibly need to relook into the process)</p> <p>There is a filtering process to ensure the applicant meets the necessary criteria to receive any cash assistance.</p> <p>Community leaders (KMKK) play an important role in ensuring their community understands the policies and processes for application of welfare and other assistance.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
4.	Undocumented individuals and barriers of access to services	<p>Several individuals remain without identification documents (ICs) due to a range of factors, including undocumented adoptions, cross-border marriages, and the absence of birth registration. In the case of this kampung, it involves adults with disabilities and foreign-born children, who are further marginalised by their legal invisibility.</p> <p><b>Case Background:</b> An individual with Down Syndrome, currently 30 years old, was adopted informally following the death of his biological parents approximately three decades ago. At the time of adoption, there was no formal registration or documentation, including the absence of a birth certificate or adoption records.</p> <p>The individual is presently working as a manual labourer. Due to the lack of official identity documents, he faces significant barriers in accessing basic services, legal employment protections, and social welfare support.</p> <p>According to the guardian/adoptive family, an attempt was made to apply for documentation</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b> In cases involving children with disabilities, some parents do not deem it important to register their child's birth or obtain proper documentation for their child, with the mindset that an Identity Card (IC) would be useless.</p> <p>Any PWDs identified will be registered into the system, however constraints will arise if the person does not have an NRIC or birth certificate.</p> <p>There was a program just last week with the Federal Agencies, National Registration Department (JPN) in Lubok Antu as well as Engkilili, which gives an opportunity for affected individuals to attend and sort out documentation matters.</p> <p>(N/B: Such outreach programs are frequently conducted in border-proximate areas throughout Sarawak to facilitate registration and citizenship applications)</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>through the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kementerian Dalam Negeri). However, the application was reportedly unsuccessful, and no explanation or follow-up was provided by the authorities.</p> <p>Rigid administrative criteria and absence of legal literacy; cross-border birth and familial documentation gaps.</p> <p>Denied access to healthcare, education, employment, and welfare. Lifelong marginalisation and legal invisibility with some cases lasting over 30 years.</p>	
5.	Gaps, structural barriers and bureaucratic exclusion in rural housing aid access	<p>Since 2016, there have been no new recipients of the <i>Program Perumahan Rakyat Sejahtera</i> (PPRS), despite the continued presence of individuals in urgent need of housing assistance.</p> <p>Over the years, more than 15 individuals have applied for housing assistance under the <i>Program Perumahan Rakyat Sejahtera</i> (PPRS), including at least three vulnerable applicants in urgent need of support or guidance on alternative aid schemes. One notable case involves an elderly, visually impaired applicant who currently lives alone in a</p>	<p><b>Welfare Department (JKM)</b></p> <p>Despite the rising number of applications each year, the quota for PPRS has been reduced compared to previous years. This year, for example, there are only 10 slots available. As a result, the selection process has become more stringent, with officers from JKN and the DO conducting follow-ups to ensure assistance is directed to those most in need. Application forms are available at the DO. Requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Registered under eKasih</li> </ol>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>severely dilapidated family home. Despite her precarious living conditions, she was deemed ineligible for housing assistance solely because she does not possess the land deed for the property. Although she had also applied for other forms of assistance, it was claimed that there was no effort from the relevant agencies to provide guidance or explore alternative solutions.</p>	<p>2. Categorized as poor or hardcore poor</p> <p>In assessing applications for housing assistance, officers conduct ground verification checks. For instance, if a household is found to have Astro or Wi-Fi services, the prevailing logic applied is that they are not deemed sufficiently needy to qualify for aid, as the ability to afford such services suggests a certain level of financial capacity. This interpretation is guided by agency regulations and eligibility criteria</p> <p><i>Future Analysis: Why is the number of PPRS applicants increasing by the year, and why is this assistance still necessary?</i></p>
6.	<p>Exclusionary tendering at the Jelukong Rest Stop sidelining rural business owners from state-led development benefits.</p>	<p>A nearby newly established Rest &amp; Service Area (RSA), known as the Jelukong Rest Stop along the Pan Borneo Highway, has been a source of contention among local communities. Local entrepreneurs and small business owners in Engkilili and Lubok Antu allege that they have been systematically sidelined due to the prohibitively high tender prices required to operate stalls at the facility. These elevated costs effectively exclude local participation, paving the way for business</p>	<p><b>Public Works Department, Lubok Antu (JKR)</b></p> <p>The Jelukong Rest and Service Area (RSA) were constructed under the purview of the Ministry of Works Malaysia (KKR), although the facility is situated on land classified as state-owned. Consequently, the State Government has initiated steps to assume legal ownership, which would result in the transfer of jurisdiction to the Sarawak State Public Works Department (JKR). As of the status, it is not yet operational and maintenance responsibilities remain under KKR.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>operators from urban centres such as Kuching to dominate the lease agreements.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b>                      The asset transfer process is ongoing at the JKR administrative level. Upon formal completion of the transfer, JKR will commence the tendering process for the appointment of a licensed operator in accordance with state procurement protocols. Consequently, the operator will be responsible to look for vendors to rent the stalls at the RSA. The Lubok Antu District Council is willing to take on the operator role once the administrative process by JKR is completed.</p>

Table 5. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 2

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<p><b>FGD 2:</b> Dialogue with Engkilili Chinese Community  <b>Date:</b> 11 March 2025  <b>No. of Participants:</b> 16 participants  <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group</p>			<p><b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engkilili Administration Office</li> <li>2. District Office</li> <li>3. Royal Malaysia Police, Lubok Antu (PDRM)</li> <li>4. District Education Office, Lubok Antu (PPD)</li> </ol>
1.	Agriculture - Land and subsidy inequality	<p>Oil palm smallholders face significant limitations in expanding their cultivated land, coupled with unequal access to government subsidies.</p> <p>There have also been allegations of disparity in support, with some smallholders perceiving that opportunities and resources are disproportionately allocated across different ethnic groups. This perceived inequity has contributed to a growing sense of marginalisation among certain communities within the smallholder sector.</p>	<p><b>District Officer / Engkilili Administrative Officer</b>                      Individual smallholders can apply for assistance from MPOB or the Department of Agriculture. However, one of the conditions for application is to submit a certified copy of the land title or an official document verifying land ownership, issued by the relevant government department or agency (e.g., the Land and Survey Department or District Office). If the smallholder farmer is Chinese, they are not legally allowed to own or rent Native Customary Rights (NCR) land, as mentioned by the smallholders themselves.</p> <p><b>Engkilili Administration Officer</b>                      In Engkilili, it is more common for the Chinese to buy rather than rent NCR land, through informal transactions with the indigenous Iban community.</p> <p>However, they do not hold legal ownership or registered land titles for these properties under the</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
			current land administration framework (Sarawak Land Code 1958).
2.	Low pressure in water supply and services	Low water pressure results in insufficient clean water supply for household and farming use.	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>A state-wide installation of a water grid system is currently underway, spanning from Kuching to the Limbang Division. This ongoing initiative aims to improve access to clean water across the entire state. The water grid will interconnect multiple water catchment dams, including Bengoh and Batang Ai, through the refurbishment and installation of new HDPE pipelines throughout the region.</p>
3.	Reduced visibility of town access due to highway realignment	The reconstruction of the roadway and entrance to town bypassed Pan Borneo Highway and is lacking proper road signages and elevated way access has reduced traffic into Engkilili town, weakening local businesses and tourism.	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>JKR and the Lubok Antu District Council have installed a new signboard denoting Engkilili town at the junction along the Pan Borneo Highway.</p>
4.	Emergency services deficiency in Engkilili town	Lack of government prioritisation and staffing capacity. No fire station and an understaffed police post leaving the community vulnerable to fire and crime.	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>A proposal to construct a fire station in Engkilili has been approved. However, the proposed site is currently on state-owned land and must be converted to Federal Land Commission (FLC) status before construction can proceed, as the Fire and Rescue Department falls under federal jurisdiction. Initially, the site was identified in front of a local temple, but due to a subsequent request for relocation nearer to</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
			<p>the Pan Borneo Highway, the land conversion process has been delayed, thereby extending the overall project timeline.</p> <p><b>Royal Malaysia Police, Lubok Antu (PDRM)</b>                      Currently, there are seven officers assigned to oversee the entire Lubok Antu area, including coverage up to Skim Skrang. Staffing matters fall under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Department (JPA). Although JPA is not presently opening new vacancies, a proposal to increase manpower has been raised. However, the creation of new posts is not permitted; instead, any upgrades or additions must be achieved through a post-trade mechanism. For instance, upgrading the Officer-in-Charge of Station (OCS) position in Engkilili from Sergeant to Sergeant Major would require the surrender of at least three existing Constable posts to facilitate the reallocation.</p> <p><b>District Officer</b>                      There needs to be justification when requesting for increased manpower, such as population increase.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
5.	Education - Bureaucratic barriers to school expansion	<p>The community-funded expansion of SJKC Chung Hua has been delayed due to prolonged and unclear approval processes at the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>Despite strong local initiative and financial support from the community, bureaucratic hurdles at the institutional level have stalled progress, resulting in limited classroom space and infrastructure.</p> <p>This situation affects students, families, and school administrators alike, and underscores how bureaucratic inertia can hinder grassroots efforts to enhance educational quality and access.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>Schools are under federal jurisdiction. Like the case of the fire station, conversion and transfer of State land to the Federal Land Commissioner (FLC) would take time. Once State land is converted, it will remain federal land forever.</p> <p><i>Note: FLC refers to the Federal Lands Commissioner, an entity established by the Federal Lands Commissioner Act 1957 (Act 349) responsible for acquiring, holding, and managing land and other immovable assets on behalf of the Malaysian Federal Government</i></p> <p><b>District Education Office, Lubok Antu (PPD)</b></p> <p>The school in question is in town, with limited space for expansion. The proposed new hall may impose on land outside the boundaries of the school, which may be cause for delay in approval. The planning for the new hall may have been done earlier but the fundraising was done prior to receiving prior approval for the building.</p> <p>To erect a new building, prior approval from the Ministry of Education is necessary. The application must include plans approved by JKR and the Fire</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
			<p>Department. If the documentation is complete, the approval process should not take long. To their knowledge, the approval is now back at the State level in Kuching for approval.</p> <p><b>District Officer</b> Where public buildings are concerned, plans need to be approved by the State Planning Authority and State Building Design Committee to ensure full safety requirements are met.</p> <p>The process is straightforward if JKR is the project implementer, as it is aware of the standard procedures. However, if it is through the school board, they may not know the proper procedure.</p> <p>If the building is erected prior to approval from relevant agencies, they may face complications when applying for the Occupational Permit (OP).</p>
6.	Security concerns on temple theft and drugs	There have been ongoing concerns within the community regarding frequent thefts from local temples, which are suspected to be connected to drug-related activity in the area. Residents have expressed frustration over what they perceive as limited enforcement and a lack of visible response,	<p><i>*See response to previous issue concerning PDRM understaffing.</i></p> <p><b>PDRM</b> Police will take note of this matter and increase patrol rounds in Marup where the temple is situated.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>despite alleged awareness of the issue by local authorities.</p> <p>These incidents highlight broader challenges related to policing capacity and the persistence of drug circulation in rural areas, which continue to affect community safety and trust in law enforcement.</p>	
7.	Absence of gazetted community leader	<p>The absence of a formally appointed Kapitan for the RPR (low-cost housing) area has presented challenges for residents in navigating housing repair assistance processes, as official community representation plays a key role in facilitating such support.</p> <p>Furthermore, while applications have been submitted to the District Office, delays in approval have created additional hurdles, underscoring the need for more streamlined access to government housing aid and enhanced mechanisms for community engagement.</p>	<p><b>Engkilili AO</b></p> <p>The appointment of a Kapitan for the RPR area must be channelled through a divisional level KMKK panel. However, the RPR must first be granted the necessary jurisdiction (<i>bidang kuasa</i>) to undertake such appointments. This jurisdiction requires formal approval from the State Government through the <i>Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri</i> (MMKN).</p> <p>This is similar to creating a new post with a budgeted allowance. The paperwork for the Kapitan post creation has been submitted 2 years ago but has yet to receive any update.</p>

Table 6. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 3

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<b>FGD 3:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Ruekith Jampong, Langkang Ili <b>Date:</b> 11 March 2025 <b>No. of Participants:</b> 11 participants <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group			<b>Agencies that give feedback:</b> 1. Engkilili District's Administrative Officer
1.	Lack of clean and treated water access	<p>The longhouse has been unable to access treated, clean water due to its location along a private, non-gazetted plantation road. This situation has effectively excluded the community from basic infrastructure development and public utility services, including piped water, electricity, and public transportation. Jurisdictional challenges arising from private road ownership have further hindered the expansion of essential infrastructure.</p> <p>As a result, residents rely on bottled drinking water, which must be purchased in town. The cost and logistical burden of transporting these supplies - particularly given the community's remote location and high transportation expenses - further compounds the challenges of meeting daily basic needs.</p>	<p><b>District Officer / Engkilili District's Administrative Officer</b></p> <p>The land currently occupied by the community of Langkang was leased out to a private oil palm plantation company, meaning the community does not have access to their own land for agricultural activities.</p> <p>While the local council has plans to tar-seal the road in front of the houses, the estate owner has not granted permission for the works to proceed. Similarly, JBALB's proposed water piping project is also facing challenges, as the contractor is required to pay a RM20,000 deposit to access and use the estate road to complete the project.</p>
2.	Limited agricultural land coupled with unsafe	The limited availability of agricultural land and the unsafe conditions faced by the community have significantly affected their ability to sustain	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
	environmental surroundings	<p>traditional farming and livestock practices. This challenge arises from a combination of factors, including the loss of Native Customary Rights (NCR) land to commercial plantations, recurrent flooding from nearby rivers, and the increasing presence of crocodile infestations along the Batang Lupar River. These issues not only restrict access to safe and arable land but also exacerbate food insecurity and economic vulnerability, particularly for the aging population of the longhouse community.</p> <p>Ecological risks and topographical challenges, such as proximity to wildlife habitats, further complicate agricultural activities. Farming households, which depend on local food production, are increasingly reliant on purchased goods, reducing their food security.</p>	
3.	Outmigration, elderly dependent and isolation	<p>The longhouse community is experiencing a demographic shift, as most young adults have migrated to urban areas, leaving behind an aging population.</p> <p>These older adults face mobility challenges, largely due to the lack of accessible public transportation. As a result, they are heavily reliant on privately chartered vehicles for essential activities like grocery shopping and accessing healthcare services.</p>	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>The lack of local job opportunities and limited rural prospects contribute to the outmigration, while elderly residents, who often rely on intergenerational support, face growing social isolation. The community struggles with maintaining communal labour and increasing caregiving burdens.</p> <p>This generational trend has persisted for decades, illustrating the broader demographic shifts in rural Malaysia, where uneven development contributes to youth exodus and exacerbates the caregiving and aging-related challenges in these communities.</p>	
4.	Access to government services and transportation cost	<p>The remote location of the community significantly increases transportation costs to healthcare facilities. In the absence of public transport, households depend on informal networks or privately chartered services, with round-trip costs reaching up to RM200. While there is a bus stop within the nearby plantation, it is primarily designated for plantation workers and is not accessible to the general public, further complicating mobility and access to healthcare for rural residents.</p> <p>The lack of public transportation, driven by private land access and insufficient infrastructure,</p>	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>particularly affects sick individuals, the elderly, and pregnant women who need medical care. This situation leads to delayed treatment, higher out-of-pocket expenses, and the worsening of health conditions.</p> <p>This issue has been persistent and shows no signs of being addressed in the near future, exposing the structural health inequity faced by rural communities.</p> <p>It highlights how geographic isolation and the commodification of transport access in post-displacement contexts further exacerbate healthcare challenges.</p>	
5.	Loss of customary land ownership	The community has experienced the loss of their Native Customary Rights (NCR) land to a private oil palm plantation, despite their explicit refusal to participate in the plantation scheme. It was claimed that their NCR land - along with those of adjacent communities - was subsequently encroached upon and converted without any informed consent from the communities. Despite providing evidence (an arbitration document from the 1940s regarding the said land) - to demonstrate occupation and use of the said land prior to 1958 - fulfilling the requirements under Section 5(1) of the Sarawak	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		Land Code - the community has yet to successfully defend their rights to the land.	
6.	Crisis of recognition and dignity in ageing	<p>For the elderly residents of Langkang, one of the most profound challenges extends beyond material deprivation: it is the absence of institutional recognition and the erosion of social dignity.</p> <p>This manifests in several interrelated ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a persistent sense of exclusion from welfare assistance, despite repeated applications, which signals a lack of acknowledgement of their needs and rights.</li> <li>b) a condition of being peripheralized within their own ancestral space, now enclosed by commercial plantations, which denies them the opportunity to pursue self-sufficiency or alternative livelihoods; and</li> <li>c) a gradual erosion of dignity, as they are left with no viable options but to continue life in a setting that is itself facing decline, reinforcing the perception of abandonment and inevitability of disappearance.</li> </ul>	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

Table 7. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 4

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<b>FGD 4:</b> Dialogue with Persatuan Penternak Ikan Batang Ai <b>Date:</b> 14 March 2025 <b>No. of Participants:</b> 12 participants <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group			<b>Agencies that give feedback:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Office</li> <li>2. PDRM</li> <li>3. Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</li> </ol>
1.	Unsustainable aquaculture support programs	The policy design surrounding support for cultured fish rearers has been largely short-term, characterised by one-off subsidy assistance without sustained follow-up or capacity-building measures. This approach is particularly inadequate for newcomers to the industry, who often lack the necessary experience and technical knowledge to sustain their ventures independently.	<b>District Officer</b> The nature of this support programme is one-off and recipients are expected to plan on how they can sustain their cage culture in the long run without constant reliance on government subsidies. However, there are many other programs and assistance available from different agencies (Department of Agriculture, Peladang, etc.) as well as the local representatives that the fish culture farmers can apply for to sustain their activities. There were even hatcheries, but many members of the PPIBA are inactive, thus the project fell through.
2.	Environmental risk - drought and boat traffic	Prolonged drought conditions, coupled with the disruption of water stratification caused by frequent boat traffic, contribute to elevated fish mortality rates. These environmental stressors significantly impact aquaculture viability, particularly in open or semi-controlled water systems, and pose ongoing challenges to local fish rearers.	<b>District Officer</b> The fish farmers are given a choice to set up their cages within the allocated zones, and most choose to set them up closer to land where there would be heavier boat traffic as it is near the jetties.

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
3.	High operational costs - feed and inputs	<p>The cost of fish feed in this part of Sarawak ranges between RM88 to RM100 per 20kg bag, which is significantly higher compared to prices in West Malaysia. The elevated cost of fish feed in the whole of Sarawak is primarily due to the lack of local production facilities and the high transportation costs involved in sourcing feed from manufacturers in Peninsular Malaysia.</p> <p>In addition, fish feed sourced from Peninsular Malaysia typically arrives in Kuching before being transported onward to Lubok Antu, incurring further logistical costs. This additional layer of distribution significantly contributes to the overall price burden faced by fish rearers in interior regions such as Lubok Antu.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>High cost of animal feed is a major issue in Sarawak as all animal feed is currently imported. As one of the measures to overcome this issue, the Premier of Sarawak recently launched an animal feed processing facility in Merindun to ensure constant and more affordable supply of feed locally.</p>
4.	Market access and competition	<p>The lack of marketing training, coupled with the dominance of large aquaculture firms in the Batang Ai area, significantly limits the market reach and bargaining power of smallholder producers.</p> <p>These smallholders are further disadvantaged by competition from other aquaculture producers across Sarawak. While not all competitors use freshwater systems, many operate pond-based systems that allow for controlled growth conditions, enabling fish to reach larger sizes</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>The <i>Persatuan Penternak Ikan Batang Ai</i> (PPIBA) currently depends primarily on the local market, which is constrained by limited purchasing power. This overreliance restricts their income potential and overall growth.</p> <p>To improve economic sustainability, PPIBA must diversify its market outreach by targeting higher-value segments such as hotels, restaurants, and</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>compared to those reared in natural freshwater environments.</p> <p>Given the market's preference for larger-sized fish, smallholders - who are unable to afford sufficient feed inputs - struggle to meet consumer expectations, with their fish rarely reaching 1kg in weight.</p>	<p>export markets. Batang Ai tilapia is well-regarded for its premium quality and presents a viable export opportunity, particularly to markets like Singapore, where demand for high-quality, sustainably farmed fish is growing.</p>
5.	Weak brand protection and fair market access for smallholders	<p>Growing issue of mislabelling, where tilapia from other regions is marketed under the "Batang Ai" label, despite being raised outside the area. This misrepresentation, often evident through the unusually large size of the fish, undermines the authenticity and market identity of genuine Batang Ai cage-reared fish. As Batang Ai tilapia carries a strong reputation, the misuse of this identity further marginalises smallholders who depend on its branding to distinguish their produce.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>Suggest that the fish farmers under PPIBA register their product under Intellectual Property Corporation Malaysia (MyIPO) to protect their branding.</p> <p>Note: Recognising Batang Ai tilapia as a Geographical Indication (GI) is a potential strategy to strengthen rural livelihoods, promote quality aquaculture, and strengthen market competitiveness for Sarawak's agro-based products on the international stage.</p> <p>To pursue GI registration, a registered producers' association or competent entity (in this case, PPIBA) must compile a formal application with MyIPO, including a product specification dossier and relevant forms. Estimated initial costs are minimal (RM250 per application), and technical support is available through MyIPO and related agencies (<a href="#">MyIPO</a>).</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
6.	Post-COVID recovery and financial strain	<p>Fish farmers continue to face persistent challenges in recovering from the economic losses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the face of rising operational costs.</p> <p>Some have been forced to cease operations, abandoning their cage farms due to the financial burden of sustaining fish production.</p> <p>The increasing cost of inputs - such as feed, transport, and maintenance in addition to limited market - has rendered the business model unsustainable for small-scale operators.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b> The issue is not confined to one region but affects nations worldwide.</p>
7.	Lack of policing infrastructure or the absence of security investment	Recurring theft of fish stock, equipment, and boat engines with absence of formal security mechanisms in place.	<p><b>District Officer</b> These appear to be isolated cases and are not the norm.</p> <p><b>PDRM</b> PDRM has taken note of the issue and has asked if any official reports have been submitted for further action.</p> <p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b> The last reported case was around 3-4 years ago.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
8.	Neglect in basic infrastructural investment tailored to aquaculture	No collection centre, waste disposal, clean water supply, or composting toilets at fish farm sites.	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>As a form of government assistance, two big freezers have been provided at Batang Ai near the MDLA shop lots; however, it is still not in operation.</p> <p>Previously, when SALCRA was also involved in tilapia cage culture in Lubok Antu, a fish processing facility was built near the Aiman Jetty. However, the individual fish cage farmers do not utilise it as they may find it more convenient to process the fish at their own cages.</p> <p>The facility is now managed by <i>Pertubuhan Peladang Negeri Sarawak (PPNS)</i>.</p>

Table 8. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 5

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<b>FGD 5:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Bada, Nanga Talong <b>Date:</b> 15 March 2025 <b>No. of Participants:</b> 20 participants <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group			<b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b> 1. District Office
1.	Limitations in maintaining and operating remote off grid electrification systems	<p>The current energy production system, which combines a solar photovoltaic (PV) installation with a micro-hydropower facility, remains insufficient due to mechanical failures that have persisted for nearly a year without resolution. Local technical capacity to manage and maintain the PV system is limited: while residents have received training in basic maintenance, they lack the specialised skills necessary to perform major repairs.</p> <p>The community's remote location further exacerbates these challenges, causing delays in external technical support and undermining both the reliability of the system and consistent access to energy. As a result, residents are unable to operate essential appliances such as refrigerators, which directly affects food storage, nutrition, and overall quality of life.</p>	<b>District Officer</b> Sarawak Alternative Rural Electricity Supply (SARES) is a Sarawak Government initiative implemented by Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB) in collaboration with the Ministry of Utility and Telecommunication Sarawak to provide 24-hour electricity supply to remote rural communities in Sarawak that are not connected to the main electricity grid.  If the community is covered under this scheme and are paying monthly utilities, the maintenance of their electrical supply system should be under SEB. However, no representative from SEB was present to comment on the issue.
2.	Digital access and affordability constraint	The transition from subsidised to user-pay models has exacerbated digital exclusion in rural communities such as Nanga Talong.	<b>District Officer</b> The subsidised period for Jendela WiFi is only 5 months, subsequently, households will need to pay to

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>The Jendela WiFi service, which was previously subsidised, now requires households to pay between RM40 and RM80 per month. In some instances, expenditures can reach RM100 monthly, yet connectivity often remains unreliable and insufficient to sustain continuous access. Residents perceive this arrangement as inequitable, reflecting the disproportionate burden imposed on low-income rural households.</p> <p>Alternative sources of connectivity are limited. The only viable signal is transmitted from the Rantau Kemayau tower, located on elevated terrain behind the longhouse, which entails an approximately 30-minute uphill journey. Elderly residents have drawn parallels between these contemporary challenges and the limited connectivity conditions of the 1960s, highlighting enduring structural barriers to digital inclusion that intersect with geography, infrastructure, and socio-economic status.</p> <p>Residents must rely on intermediaries to access digital services. They are required to pay a transporter or another individual to travel to town to obtain an access code or PIN. Only once this code is delivered back to the longhouse can</p>	<p>use it. However, 127 out of 160 telecommunication towers have been erected in Lubok Antu under Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), which should improve network connectivity throughout the region.</p> <p>According to the timeline, all 160 towers will be erected within 18 months, of which 9 months is given for tower construction and the remaining 9 months will be to appoint a Telco service provider (e.g. Maxis).</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		residents access the internet, introducing both financial costs and temporal delays that further constrain digital connectivity.	
3.	Agricultural subsidy delivery inefficiency	<p>Recent policy changes in agricultural assistance - specifically the shift from a physical delivery system to a cash-based subsidy model (e.g., RM600 fertiliser aid - have created new challenges for remote communities.</p> <p>In the absence of coordinated pooled logistics support from the Department of Agriculture (DOA), much of the cash aid is spent on transportation costs, significantly reducing its intended impact of the agro-aid program.</p>	<p><i>There was no representative from the relevant agency- Department of Agriculture - to comment on the policy issue.</i></p> <p>There is an assumption that some recipients find it difficult and costly to transport the fertiliser to their longhouse, thus prefer to sell it to family members who live near town.</p>
4.	Outreach and transportation challenges to access social services	The lack of transparency in eligibility criteria, limited outreach by relevant agencies such as the Welfare Department (JKM), and the high transportation costs required to reach the nearest office all contribute to significant barriers in accessing social assistance for rural communities.	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>The Civic Assembly Program was a State Government-led initiative meant to serve as an important platform for engaging rural communities and integrating various government agencies into the development process.</p> <p><i>Also refer to previous response from JKM in FGD 1.</i></p>
5.	Geographic and climatic barriers to healthcare services	Poor road and transport infrastructure, combined with the absence of fully equipped intermediate clinics, significantly limits access to healthcare. The	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>The road development project from Nanga Talong to Lubok Pantu (Phase 2) is currently in progress,</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>nearest facility, located at Nanga Stamang and accessible only via a one-and-a-half-hour river journey, operates without a resident doctor. As a result, families have no options but to charter transport - costing up to RM300 to Lubok Antu or RM400 to Sri Aman for critical needs such as childbirth.</p> <p>These challenges are further compounded during the rainy season, when poor road conditions and hazardous waterways delay access.</p> <p>While flying doctor services do visit the community once a month, this remains insufficient to meet urgent or routine healthcare needs especially during the monsoon season (typically from November to February) where helicopters are not permitted to fly.</p>	<p>marking an important step in improving rural connectivity in the area.</p> <p>In terms of healthcare services, there is a clinic currently operating in Stamang, but it is staffed only by a Medical Assistant (MA) without a resident doctor, thus limiting the scope of healthcare services available.</p> <p>A new health clinic for Lubok Antu is in the pipeline, but the tendering and construction process has been delayed due to contractor-related issues. The project is expected to resume soon, with a projected completion timeline of one year once construction begins.</p>
6.	Undocumented individuals	Several individuals remain without identification documents (ICs) due to a range of factors, including intergenerational 'statelessness' due to improper birth registration procedures which are related to religious differences.	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

Table 9. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 6

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<p><b>FGD 6:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Guyu, Nanga Ukom  <b>Date:</b> 15 March 2025  <b>No. of Participants:</b> 35 participants  <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group</p>			<p><b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Office</li> <li>2. Public Works Department (JKR)</li> <li>3. District Education Office (PPD)</li> <li>4. Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</li> </ol>
1.	Post-logging resource depletion	<p>The community is now facing a shortage of timber to repair homes after previous involvement in logging, which depleted nearby resources. Past extractive activities were unsustainable, with no replanting or proper resource management, leaving the community without the materials needed for home maintenance.</p> <p>This issue affects all 35 <i>bilek</i> households, who are unable to maintain their homes, leading to deteriorating living conditions. Since the longhouse was rebuilt post-2015, the lack of sustainable resource management has become a growing challenge. This situation underscores the ecological aftermath of short-term resource exploitation and highlights the community's vulnerability in managing post-extraction recovery, further exposing the fragility of long-term sustainability in resource-dependent rural areas.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>"If that is my land, and I permit people to log, of course the timber will be depleted."</p> <p>This statement reflects a shared understanding within the community that logging licenses should not be issued without the express consent of the longhouse residents. However, the situation in Nanga Ukom is complicated by questions of origin and settlement. Many of the current residents trace their roots to Ulu Bawi rather than Nanga Ukom itself, while most of the original inhabitants of Nanga Ukom have since relocated to the resettlement area of Ukom Ili. This layered history complicates questions of land rights, consent, and authority over decisions regarding logging.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
2.	Unsafe landing jetty	<p>The primary river access point, a jetty, is unstable and rotting, posing significant safety risks. Both residents and tourists who rely on the jetty for access face heightened risks of accidents and restricted mobility. While the exact duration of neglect is unspecified, it has likely persisted for several years.</p> <p>There are three other landing points too surrounding the village, one was where the researchers arrived at and are all equally in poor conditions and may be dangerous for the people themselves and visitors.</p>	<p><b>Public Works Department (JKR)</b></p> <p>Further investigation by the Public Works Department (JKR) is warranted, as there remains uncertainty regarding the scope and implementation details of the proposed jetty project. In addition, intervention from the local Member of Parliament may be beneficial to help address community concerns and ensure the development of a safe and functional landing jetty. Further engagement and site assessments are expected to be scheduled to clarify these matters.</p>
3.	Lack of civil service representation	<p>The lack of advocacy and reduced representation (a Councillor) in local policymaking further limits the community's influence, contributing to ongoing structural challenges. This points to the institutional exclusion of remote communities from the broader bureaucratic apparatus, perpetuating political disenfranchisement and making it difficult for them to effectively engage in decision-making processes that impact their development.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>A local councillor has been appointed; however, they are not originally from the area.</p> <p>The community has been perceived as lacking interest in formal education for their children, due to a combination of factors. These include the need for children to support household livelihoods as well as a limited understanding of the long-term value and importance of education in improving future opportunities hence, local leadership representation is difficult.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
4.	Structural barriers to healthcare/other social services and logistical risk due to interior exclusion	<p>Residents in the Engkari area face significant structural barriers in accessing welfare assistance. On average, they spend approximately RM100 on transportation for each trip to town, as the welfare system requires in-person verification. This cost substantially reduces the net benefit of aid.</p> <p>Beyond financial strain, mobility itself poses serious risks. With the river as the only route, night-time travel for emergency healthcare is perilous due to the absence of guiding lights. Families report instances of becoming lost en route, and there have even been cases of child fatalities during journeys to the clinic. The clinic itself is located about 1.5 hours away by river, a distance that also means childbirths have occasionally occurred in boats during transit.</p>	<i>Refer to previous response from JKM in FGD 1</i>
5.	Digital and communication exclusion	The area lacks mobile signal and WiFi, as a more stable telecommunication infrastructure has not been extended to the settlement.	<i>The respective agency which is MCMC was not present for provide feedback</i>
6.	Expensive and unsustainable electricity supply	<p>The community remains unconnected to the national power grid and lacks access to renewable energy alternatives.</p> <p>As a result, households rely on petrol-powered generators, incurring costs of approximately RM20 per night - an unsustainable burden for many.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>This case warrants further investigation to better understand the underlying factors and to inform appropriate and sensitive interventions.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
7.	Lack of access to education facilities and services	<p>Field observations and community interactions indicate that some adults in their late 20s to early 40s remain illiterate, reflecting long-standing structural barriers to educational access.</p> <p>The issue is compounded by inconsistent schooling histories, often disrupted by financial constraints and the physical inaccessibility of schools. This uneven access has left enduring gaps in literacy, particularly among adults who are now the primary income earners for their households.</p> <p>Moreover, the community's perception of educational success is framed by a narrow benchmark: the attainment of a government position. The deeply held notion that one has only "made it" when employed as a public servant continues to shape local aspirations, underscoring both the value and limitations of current pathways for social mobility.</p>	<p><b>District Education Office (PPD)</b></p> <p>Although schools such as SK Tibu and SK Spaya are located nearby - just 5 to 10 minutes away via speedboat - awareness of the importance of education remains low among some community members.</p> <p>The issue appears to be rooted not in accessibility, but in challenges within the family institution, where support for and understanding of the long-term value of education are limited.</p>
8.	Paddy production affected by environmental change and also high agricultural input price and the loss of subsidy	Hill paddy farms with rice cultivated on the slope of the hill, were submerged when the river water suddenly rose, possibly due to changes in the water table from the dam or from unusually heavy rainfall. The communities were also affected by the change in subsidy policy.	

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
9.	Extractive tourism and the struggle for fair participation	<p>Although Nanga Ukom has been promoted as a tourism destination by a private travel company, the community's involvement in eco-tourism has yielded limited material benefits or capacity-building outcomes. Rather than serving as a vehicle for empowerment or improved living conditions, the current tourism model appears extractive in nature, positioning the longhouse as a static cultural exhibit rather than a dynamic, lived space.</p> <p>Particularly problematic is the commodification of deteriorating infrastructure, which is marketed as part of an "authentic" Iban experience - an approach that stands in stark contrast to the community's aspirations for better housing and essential services.</p> <p>Local participation in tourism remains undervalued, with community guides receiving as little as RM30 (USD 6.86) per forest trail tour - regardless of the number of participants - while cultural performers are paid as little as RM 12 (USD 2.74) per performance (Personal Communication, 15.3.2025).</p> <p>In addition, local residents often lack the knowledge or confidence to set appropriate prices for the services they provide, resulting in consistent undercharging. They express discomfort with</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>There has been no engagement with government agencies that could advise or support local communities on tourism development or related governance. Nor have community members raised these concerns with the relevant authorities, leaving tourism largely unmonitored and without formal oversight. The absence of collective agreements further exacerbates challenges, particularly for households without boats or designated drivers, who are unable to participate in or benefit from tourism activities.</p> <p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>In terms of tourism assets, the Tutong Waterfall - featured as part of the local tourism package - is not actually located within Nanga Ukom's territorial boundary. It belongs to a neighbouring community but has been "borrowed" or temporarily lent to Ukom for tourism purposes. This arrangement limits Nanga Ukom's full agency to monetise or make long-term decisions about the site, as they do not hold ownership or custodial rights over the asset.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>requesting higher payments, further limiting their ability to benefit fairly from tourism-related activities.</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>Transport costs remain high, with RM100 charged per boat (maximum three passengers) to Tutong Waterfall, and RM350 from the Batang Ai jetty to Nanga Ukom. While CPH currently rents access to the Tutong Waterfall for RM300 per month, only 10–15 households in Nanga Ukom own boats (around 30 in total), limiting wider participation in boat transfer services. At the same time, tour packages marketed from Kuching to Nanga Ukom are priced at around RM1,200 per person, with travel agents able to earn at least RM2,000 in profit from just two to three tourists.</p> <p>A key challenge is the community's lack of bargaining power, as no one in the longhouse possesses the education, skills, or negotiation experience necessary to engage directly with travel agencies for fairer compensation. While the Sarawak Forestry Corporation has noted that travel agents are open to negotiating prices, meaningful engagement has yet to take place.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
10.	Marginalisation from mainstream development	<p>The experiences and realities from Nanga Ukom highlight the community's being left behind in the broader trajectory of rural development. Residents point out that development in their area has been uneven, and that engagement with their elected representatives has at times felt distant.</p> <p>This has fostered a sense that their voices and needs are not always fully recognised. The Tuai Rumah's account of continuing to live in a wooden longhouse, as his father did before him, symbolises both the material stagnation and the aspiration for more modern housing, such as concrete structures seen elsewhere. His expression of <i>malu</i> (shame) does not reflect personal inadequacy, but rather a collective sense of falling behind in visible development progress.</p> <p>These reflections underscore the need for more inclusive planning approaches that ensure rural communities like Nanga Ukom are better integrated into broader development agendas.</p>	
11.	Undocumented elders	Several elderly and young individuals remain without identification documents (ICs) due to a range of factors, including the absence of birth registration and civil unions due to geographical inclusion.	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

Table 10. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 7

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<p><b>FGD 7:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Ninting, Nanga Jambu</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 16 March 2025</p> <p><b>No. of Participants:</b> 21 participants</p> <p><b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group</p>			<p><b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</li> <li>2. District Office</li> </ol>
1.	The decline of subsistence farming	<p>Paddy fields and fruit trees are frequently damaged by grey gibbons (<i>nyumboh empeliau</i>) and deer, leading to inadequate harvests for subsistence farmers. This issue arises from the community's proximity to natural habitats and the lack of effective mitigation systems to prevent wildlife damage.</p> <p>Households that rely on home-grown food face increased food insecurity, reduced motivation to farm, and significant losses. This problem has been ongoing and has worsened due to rising wildlife populations and the changing climate.</p> <p>It symbolises the tension between living in close proximity to biodiversity-rich zones and the challenges of maintaining subsistence livelihoods, highlighting the broader conflict between conservation efforts and rural communities' need for sustainable agricultural practices.</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>Owing to their relatively undisturbed environment, these areas provide habitat for several primate species, including pig-tailed and long-tailed macaques. While ecologically significant, the uncontrolled growth of macaque populations has at times created challenges for local communities, particularly through frequent disturbances to cultivated crops. Other species, such as the Bornean macaque, are also present in the area but are generally not associated with similar patterns of crop damage, particularly to staple grains such as rice. In circumstances where macaques cause substantial agricultural losses, communities may be permitted to hunt them for self-consumption. However, regulations strictly prohibit the commercialisation or trade of this wildlife, thereby ensuring that conservation priorities are upheld alongside community needs.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
			<i>Note: Similar feedback was also noted in the Nanga Sumpa section, reflecting comparable findings.</i>
2.	Food (in)security and self-sufficiency	<p>Traditional subsistence farming, particularly paddy cultivation, has declined due to frequent wildlife disruptions, the rising costs of farming inputs such as fertilisers, and an ageing farming population compounded by the loss of younger labour.</p> <p>Although farmers now receive an annual RM600 allocation for fertilisers - rather than direct provision as in the past - they must also bear the additional expense of transportation, an issue that will be elaborated in the key findings on transportation costs.</p> <p>Consequently, households face higher living expenses, as staple foods like rice must increasingly be purchased from town at inflated prices driven by geographical isolation and transport challenges. Moreover, traditional knowledge of paddy cultivation, such as the saving of heirloom seeds <i>padi pun</i><sup>8</sup> for sustainability, is no longer consistently practiced by all</p>	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

<sup>8</sup> See Peter G. Sercombe, "Review of *Crossing the Rubicon? Maintenance and Change among Today's Iban in Sarawak*," *Journal of Borneo-Kalimantan* 9, no. 2 (2023): 143–56. Sercombe notes that sacred rice (*padi pun*) was traditionally planted at the centre of a field to safeguard the harvest, while the synchronised ripening of crops among families reduced losses to insects, birds, and animals, and enabled commonly timed harvest ceremonies.

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		farmers in Nanga Jambu, signalling the erosion of a once vital strategy of sustainable paddy farming.	
3.	Decline in cash cropping & ageing farmers	<p>Pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) has long been the primary source of cash income for the community. However, many farmers have reduced or ceased cultivation of pepper due to the high input requirements of fertilisers and agrochemicals, alongside a rising prevalence of crop disease which are expensive to manage.</p> <p>The escalating costs of production now outweigh returns, a situation compounded by declining crop health. This shift has resulted in the loss of a key source of household income and heightened economic insecurity for traditional pepper farmers, with the decline in cultivation becoming particularly evident today.</p> <p>While rubber (<i>Hevea brasiliensis</i>) gardens were also notable along the river and some plots remain well maintained, many have been left untapped due to ageing farmers, possibly, persistently low market prices. A considerable number of rubber gardens have remained unused for years, largely as a result of labour shortages and the discouraging returns offered by the market.</p>	<p><b>District Office &amp; Sarawak Forestry Corporation</b></p> <p>There have been cash crop initiatives in Nanga Jambu, Menyang Taih, Nanga Sumpa, Delok, Tapang Pungga, and Paong, implemented jointly by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and USC, with funding from Germany. The project focuses on replanting pepper and establishing fruit tree plots to support sustainable livelihoods, particularly in areas adjacent to the Batang Ai landscape.</p> <p>Participation in the project is subject to quota availability and residency status. Households without full-time residents in their respective <i>bilek</i> (traditional apartment units) are generally not eligible to participate.</p> <p>In terms of income generation, tourism activities at Wong Seluai (which is a waterfall owned by the Nanga Jambu community) provide the people of Nanga Jambu with an estimated earning of no less than RM3,000-4,000.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>In addition, farming livelihoods and skills are no longer being passed down to the younger generation. The increasing emphasis on formal education has altered cultural priorities, while migration to urban areas in search of more stable employment has further replaced farming traditions.</p>	
4.	High ownership and maintenance costs for boats	<p>Timber boats used for tourism and transport require challenging and costly upstream journeys to collect suitable wood, as local timber availability is limited and traditional boat designs necessitate specific materials.</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation</b></p> <p>In Nanga Jambu, when boats become unavailable, the community will subcontract boats from Nanga Sumpa to meet tourism demand. In Nanga Delok, tourism activities are open to all travel agents without restrictions. However, in Nanga Jambu and Nanga Sumpa, tourism operations are primarily controlled by Borneo Adventure. A single boat typically has a lifespan of 2 to 3 years, and operators can recover their investment within 2 to 3 months of active use during the tourism season.</p> <p>The cost of building a boat involves multiple components, including purchasing a chainsaw, hiring skilled practitioners from upriver areas (Ulu), and acquiring materials such as <i>gam</i> (resin) and <i>paku</i> (nails). Labor costs are also a significant part of the overall expenditure.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
5.	Low earnings from water transportation services during seasonal tourism activities	<p>Boatmen are paid RM500 per trip, but after various deductions (RM100 for the frontman, RM120 for fuel, etc.), they are left with just RM100 over the course of three days.</p> <p>This reflects unbalanced compensation structures, elevated operating costs, and external control over pricing, which disproportionately affects boat operators and their families.</p> <p>The result is underpayment, exploitation, and demotivation, especially as tourism growth has intensified the issue.</p> <p>This situation highlights the inequitable distribution of value in community-based tourism labour, where workers bear significant costs and receive limited compensation, despite their crucial role in the tourism ecosystem.</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>While this issue is well known, it underscores the need for meaningful negotiation among all stakeholders to work towards a sustainable and inclusive future for ecotourism in the area. Achieving this requires clear commitment to a shared vision that respects both community rights and conservation goals. Ultimately, the path forward depends on empowering local communities to become more independent - equipped to self-manage tourism activities and to engage in fair negotiation with existing operators or controlling entities, ensuring benefits are equitably distributed.</p> <p><i>Note: Similar feedback was also noted in the Nanga Sumpa's section, reflecting comparable findings.</i></p>
6.	Rising mobility costs of remote riverine communities	<p>Due to the community's remoteness - located about a 2-3 hours journey by outboard engine boat, depending on water and weather conditions - the cost of travelling downstream to the nearest town is prohibitively high.</p> <p>In addition to the expense of fuel, residents must charter transport from the Batang Ai hydro-dam jetty, which requires an additional 30-minute drive to</p>	

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>access basic services such as fuel, banking, healthcare, secondary education, and government administration.</p> <p>While mobility has long been a challenge for such remote communities, the growing dependence on purchased food staples - linked to declining agricultural production and shifts in livelihood practices - has further intensified the burden of mobility. At present, the river remains their only access route.</p> <p>The high cost of mobility also reduces the effectiveness of government welfare support. For instance, monthly assistance schemes such as the RM300 disability allowance or the RM250 allowance for patients with chronic illnesses provide crucial income, but access is limited by the absence of financial services in the village.</p> <p>A return trip to Lubok Antu costs around RM150, meaning that a significant share of these allowances is effectively absorbed by transportation costs. Where more specialised services in Sri Aman are required, charter fees add another RM150, further eroding the value of these supports.</p>	

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		In effect, mobility costs collectively diminish the benefits of welfare aid for the entire community, reflecting how structural barriers of distance and access undermine livelihood security.	
7.	Tension between the needs of development and tourism	<p>Road access emerged as a central aspiration within the community, viewed as the very definition of development. While other nearby settlements have long been connected by road, residents in this upriver area continue to rely solely on the river, which they describe as their greatest hardship. The lack of road infrastructure not only isolates them from essential services such as healthcare, education, and markets, but also limits opportunities for livelihood diversification and intergenerational support.</p> <p>Community members expressed scepticism toward the promises of tourism, noting that tourism activities - such as wildlife viewing - generate little direct benefit for most households. As one elder remarked, "For those who can work, maybe there is some benefit... but for an elder like me, what benefit is there? Just watching - that's all." In contrast, road access is seen as offering tangible improvements: the ability to sell vegetables, transport goods, and enable younger family members to return and support rural livelihoods. For many, tourism represents benefits</p>	<p><b>District Officer &amp; Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>When development enters an area, ecotourism often undergoes significant changes. For example, in some <i>ulu</i> (remote) areas, the introduction of road access has led to a decline in ecotourism activity. A similar pattern could occur elsewhere; however, the impact largely depends on how well the community is able to adapt to these changes. Their ability to manage tourism sustainably, maintain cultural integrity, and respond to new opportunities will be key in determining the future of ecotourism in the area.</p> <p><i>Note: Similar feedback was also noted in the Nanga Sumpa's section, reflecting comparable findings.</i></p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>concentrated in the hands of a few, whereas roads are understood as a collective and inclusive pathway to development.</p> <p>This tension reflects a deeper structural conflict between external tourism branding - which often resists infrastructure development to maintain a remote, 'authentic' image - and the community's own vision of progress, centred on mobility, access, and economic opportunity. At the same time, residents also reject the practice of timber logging associated with road construction, signalling that their desire for connectivity does not equate to condoning environmentally destructive practices. Having access would also enable younger family members to return and support rural livelihoods and the flow to goods. For many, tourism represents benefits concentrated in the hands of a few, whereas roads are understood as a collective and inclusive pathway to development.</p> <p>At the same time, residents also reject the practice of timber logging associated with road construction, signalling that their desire for connectivity does not equate to condoning environmentally destructive practices.</p>	

Table 11. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 8

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<b>FGD 8:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Andah, Nanga Sumpa <b>Date:</b> 16 March 2025 <b>No. of Participants:</b> 41 participants <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 2 Groups			<b>Agencies that give feedback:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</li> <li>2. District Office</li> <li>3. Welfare Department</li> </ol>
1.	Human-wildlife conflict and the decline of subsistence farming	<p>In the previous FGD in Nanga Jambu, which is a separate community, the same issue are found in this community as well where farming communities face recurring challenges from wildlife that feeds on planted crops particularly paddy fields and fruit trees. These disturbances illustrate the complexity of co-existing within shared ecosystems, where human livelihoods intersect with wildlife habitats causing a great reduction in food farming activities.</p>	<b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b> <p>Owing to their relatively undisturbed environment, these areas provide habitat for several primate species, including pig-tailed and long-tailed macaques. While ecologically significant, the uncontrolled growth of macaque populations has at times created challenges for local communities, particularly through frequent disturbances to cultivated crops. Other species, such as the Bornean macaque, are also present in the area but are generally not associated with similar patterns of crop damage, particularly to staple grains such as rice. In circumstances where macaques cause substantial agricultural losses, communities may be permitted to hunt them for self-consumption. However, regulations strictly prohibit the commercialisation or trade of this wildlife, thereby ensuring that conservation priorities are upheld alongside community needs.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
			<i>Note: Similar feedback was also noted in the Nanga Jambu's section, reflecting comparable findings.</i>
2.	Low earnings from water transportation services from seasonal tourism activities	<p>Community members noted that boat operators engaged in transporting tourists often face significant difficulties sustaining their livelihoods. Tourism pricing is not determined by local boatmen. Each trip generates an income of RM500; however, this sum must be allocated to several mandatory expenses, including RM120 for fuel, RM100 to compensate the frontman, RM40 for transportation to town to procure additional fuel, RM20 for food allowances, and RM60 for fuel to return to their longhouse. Consequently, their net income from a single three-day trip amounts to only RM160, equivalent to approximately RM53.33 per day.</p> <p>The frequency of trips is contingent upon seasonal demand. During periods of low tourist activity, opportunities are limited, whereas in peak season, boatmen may undertake a maximum of four to five trips due to the rotational system. Even under optimal conditions, total monthly earnings range between RM800 and RM900, which remains substantially below the current Malaysian minimum wage of RM1,700.</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>While this issue is well known, it underscores the need for meaningful negotiation among all stakeholders to work towards a sustainable and inclusive future for ecotourism in the area. Achieving this requires clear commitment to a shared vision that respects both community rights and conservation goals. Ultimately, the path forward depends on empowering local communities to become more independent equipped to self-manage tourism activities and to engage in fair negotiation with existing operators or controlling entities, ensuring benefits are equitably distributed.</p> <p><i>Note: Similar feedback was also noted in the Nanga Jambu's section, reflecting comparable findings.</i></p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>However, in order to be able to work as a boatman, to own a boat is expensive. They would need at least RM11,000 to buy a boat with a 15HP outboard motor engine and propellers.</p> <p>These figures show the constrained economic viability of boatmen's work. High operational costs, limited control over tourism pricing, and seasonal fluctuations collectively restrict income generation, highlighting the structural vulnerability of boatmen and the challenges they face in achieving a sustainable livelihood within this sector.</p>	
3.	Boat operations challenges in low level water condition	<p>In the dry season, when riverbeds are exposed, boats must be hauled over rocks (<i>bebatak</i>),<sup>9</sup> creating twice the workload. The combination of low water levels and the lack of alternative transport routes results in physical strain, slower travel, and higher operational costs.</p> <p>In addition to high operational expenses, boatmen also face recurring maintenance costs, particularly for propellers which are prone to damage when navigating shallow or rocky sections of the river. A single propeller costs approximately RM200, and</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>A single boat can usually last around 2-3 years, and the cost of building one can typically be recovered within 2-3 months of use. The main expenses involved include purchasing materials such as a chainsaw, nails, and glue, as well as covering labour costs for workers to source and transport the timber from the upriver areas.</p>

<sup>9</sup> *Bebatak* is an Iban term referring to the arduous process of dragging or hauling boats across exposed rocky river beds during low water conditions, when navigation by boat alone is not possible.

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>boatmen reported that replacements are often required up to twice a month during low water seasons, amounting to an additional RM400 in monthly expenses. These costs are largely unavoidable, as propellers are easily damaged when boats strike submerged rocks, a frequent occurrence when water levels recede. Such recurrent expenditures further erode the already limited net income of boatmen, compounding the economic precarity of their occupation.</p>	
4.	Conflict between development needs and the case of 'authenticity'	The upstream communities' desire for road access to improve quality of life conflicts with tourism branding that frames inaccessibility as 'authentic'.	<p><b>District Officer &amp; Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>When development enters an area, ecotourism often undergoes significant changes. For example, in some <i>ulu</i> (remote) areas, the introduction of road access has led to a decline in ecotourism activity. A similar pattern could occur elsewhere; however, the impact largely depends on how well the community is able to adapt to these changes. Their ability to manage tourism sustainably, maintain cultural integrity, and respond to new opportunities will be key in determining the future of ecotourism in the area.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
5.	Craft artisan's dependency on institutional support for market participation	<p>Women craft artisans face significant challenges in marketing their products outside peak tourist months, largely due to the high costs of transportation and limited access to external markets. Opportunities to sell beyond the longhouse are often constrained, as travel to urban markets is financially prohibitive.</p> <p>On certain occasions, however, the artisans are supported to participate in larger markets and exhibitions in Kuching, such as the Sarawak Regatta Craft Market in 2024, where they were able to showcase and sell their products. Without such institutional or grant support, many artisans would not be able to self-finance their participation in these events, as the costs of travel and accommodation remain a major barrier.</p>	<p><b>Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC)</b></p> <p>The craft-making project in Nanga Sumpa has been actively supported by various government and corporate agencies. Last year, the community's handicraft products were showcased at an exhibition in Kuching. Whenever there are roadshows, exhibitions, or festivals involving trade or cultural exchange, the participating craft communities receive logistical and promotional support from agencies such as Sarawak Energy, the Sarawak Forestry Department, Sarawak Forestry Corporation, and Kraftangan Malaysia.</p> <p>Notably, these efforts continued even during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating a sustained commitment to supporting community-based cultural enterprises. The community remained active and engaged throughout the pandemic, maintaining visibility and participation in the craft sector.</p>
6.	Undocumented persons and intergenerational documentation gaps	<p>Nanga Sumpa continues to face challenges related to undocumented residents, with individuals across generations still without national identification cards. Despite repeated efforts by community leaders to assist their people with applications, many cases</p>	<p><b>District Officer and Welfare Department</b></p> <p>Many couples in the community do not formally register their marriages. Last year, a large-scale outreach program - led by the National Registration Department (JPN) and the Ministry of</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>remain unresolved. As of the latest accounts, approximately 20 individuals in Nanga Sumpa remain without identification, with some applications approved but delayed in issuance. This situation limits mobility, access to essential services, and opportunities for formal employment.</p> <p>Community members also voiced concerns regarding the processes at the Lubok Antu National Registration Department (NRD), citing difficulties such as long processing times and challenges with service quality. These circumstances have led some to seek assistance from NRD offices in other districts or divisions, which adds additional financial and logistical burdens, particularly for vulnerable households.</p> <p>The persistence of undocumented cases is also shaped by historical and geographic factors. In earlier decades, limited awareness of the importance of registration combined with the community's remote location made access difficult. Residents often had to pass into Kalimantan, Indonesia, before reaching Lubok Antu town, which created barriers to completing documentation processes.</p>	<p>Women, Family and Community Development - was held to assist with documentation, with a significant number of cases from Nanga Sumpa. However, there has been no substantial follow-up or feedback since, and many cases remain unresolved, reportedly stalled at the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN).</p> <p>It's important to note that customary (<i>adat</i>) marriages are not legally recognised in cases involving international partners. Unlike civil customary marriages, marriages conducted under <i>adat</i> (customary law) are recognised when registered under religious authorities such as JAIS (Jabatan Agama Islam Sarawak).</p> <p>These marriages hold legal standing under Islamic law once formalised through the religious system. However, for non-Muslim communities or cross-border/international marriages, <i>adat</i> marriages alone are not legally binding unless registered with the National Registration Department (JPN). Without this formal registration, such marriages may not be recognised under Malaysian civil law,</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>Due to their proximity to the Indonesian border, some residents also experience a sense of exclusion, as if regarded as outsiders. Community feedback indicates that being suspected of Indonesian origins - despite having lived their entire lives in Malaysia - has deepened feelings of marginalisation.</p> <p>This issue, while longstanding, reflects the combined influence of geography, historical circumstances, and service delivery challenges. It is also rooted in governance exclusions that trace back to colonial border legacies and the shortcomings of postcolonial integration mechanisms, which together have produced enduring legal marginalisation.</p>	<p>particularly in matters of legal documentation, inheritance, or citizenship.</p> <p><u>Note</u> The relevant agency, NRD (JPN), did not provide any response as they were not present.</p>
7.	Lack of engagement with government agencies	<p>The communities feel excluded from development processes and access to information, largely due to their distance from urban centres and the high travel costs required to connect with relevant agencies.</p> <p>They also reported limited awareness of the latest policies and programs, particularly in relation to undocumented status, welfare, and public information.</p> <p>Furthermore, they expressed feeling overlooked by government agencies, noting that the last official visit to their area was in 2015.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>Direct engagement has been infrequent due to limited or insufficient budget allocations. Previously, the Civic Assembly Program - a State Government-led initiative - served as an important platform to engage rural communities and to integrate various government agencies into the development process. However, this program is no longer in operation.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>The communities also voiced their wish for their elected representatives to visit them more frequently, with the hope that such visits would encourage accompanying government agencies to better understand and respond to their needs.</p>	
8.	Lack of access to public energy services	<p>Despite having a solar-powered rural electrification system, the community continues to face challenges in accessing a stable and sufficient source of electricity. Breakdowns in the system take time to repair by the relevant service providers, leaving households without reliable power for extended periods.</p> <p>Community members also report that the current PV solar system does not generate enough electricity to meet daily household needs, particularly for appliances such as refrigerators. During system disruptions, residents must rely on generators, which are costly to operate. These costs include transporting fuel from town and other expenses required to maintain the generator. Some households, unable to afford these costs, are left without any power, which also prevents them from connecting to services like Starlink for internet access.</p>	<p><u>Note</u> Energy and electrification matter in the area are overseen by Sarawak Energy Berhad. As a private entity, they were not obliged to attend the IAD session and therefore no input was provided during the dialogue.</p> <p>A recommendation for further exploration of this key finding can be raised with the Minister of Energy and Environmental Sustainability (MEESTY), Sarawak, during relevant engagements in the future.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>In essence, ensuring adequate electricity supply for a household requires significant expenditure, while incomes in the community are limited. Geographic isolation further exacerbates these challenges, making access to basic energy services both difficult and expensive.</p> <p><b>Centralised Solar Power System (CSPS)</b> The centralised solar electrification system in Nanga Sumpa is funded by Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB) under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative which is the predecessor to the current Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification System (SARES).</p>	
9.	Absence of access to quality education facilities and services	<p>Limited access to education in remote areas is shaped by geographic isolation and economic hardship. Many children in these interior communities lack adequate educational support due to poverty, which creates barriers to attending school. The nearest primary school is in Nanga Delok, a 20-minute boat ride away, while the closest secondary school is in Lubok Antu town, requiring a 2-3 hours journey by boat, in addition to any land travel.</p> <p>Schools in rural Sarawak often provide boarding facilities to accommodate students from distant areas, but the combination of distance, cost, and logistical challenges continues to limit access to education.</p>	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

Table 12. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 9

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<p><b>FGD 9:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Baing, Kumpang Langgir &amp; Rumah Kelly, Kumpang Langgir Sg Kum</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 17 March 2025</p> <p><b>No. of Participants:</b> 20 participants</p> <p><b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group</p>			<p><b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Office</li> <li>2. Public Works Department (JKR)</li> </ol>
1.	Lack of access to treated clean water	<p>Although piping infrastructure was laid in 2022, water meters have yet to be installed. The community continues to rely on a self-built gravity-fed system from the 1960s. Bureaucratic delays and logistical lapses in rural infrastructure execution have stalled service activation despite prior groundwork.</p> <p>Its impacts include limited access to clean, reliable water. Increases burden of water collection and exposure to health risks.</p>	<p><b>District Officer &amp; Public Works Department (JKR)</b></p> <p>It has been minuted that the case is currently under the PWD's investigation.</p>
2.	Dangerous road conditions	<p>Kumpang Langgir is located uphill along a tarred but winding route. The road is prone to erosion due to recurring landslides. Geographical terrain challenges compounded by insufficient road maintenance and erosion control measures.</p> <p>Restricts mobility, heightens risk of accidents, disrupts transport of goods and services, and isolates communities during heavy rains.</p>	<p><b>Public Works Department (JKR)</b></p> <p>Routine road maintenance issues can typically be resolved within a day. In the case of emergency situations, they have assured that such matters will be prioritised and addressed promptly to ensure minimal disruption and maintain accessibility.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
3.	Stateless children and mothers with barriers of access to services	<p><b>Case 1:</b> The first case centres on a 10-year-old child whose mother is an Indonesian citizen (but with an expired passport) and a Malaysian father with documents. Both of their marriage was officiated by the community leader, under <i>kahwin adat</i> however there was no civil union. Although his older sister holds legal citizenship, the 10-year-old remains stateless. The family however after many attempts are still unaware of what is the proper procedure to be taken.</p> <p>He is also excluded from formal education, with a claim saying that he is barred by the school and also the District Education Office (PPD) from attending.</p> <p>Parents are in constant grief trying to send the child to school.</p> <p><b>Case 2:</b> The second case involves a woman who remains undocumented. Although married to a local man through <i>kahwin adat</i> (customary marriage), the union is not registered with the National Registration Department (Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, JPN).</p>	<p><b>JKM</b></p> <p>For <i>kahwin adat</i> (customary marriage) to be formally registered or recognised by authorities, both partners must present valid identification cards (ICs). Without proper identification from both individuals, the marriage cannot be legally documented, which may affect access to legal rights, citizenship for children, and eligibility for government services.</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		As a result, she is unable to obtain legal recognition of her marital or residency status, thereby compounding her statelessness and limiting access to public services.	
4.	Shifts in climate and farming/fruited season	<p>Shifting weather patterns and changing climatic conditions are increasingly disrupting traditional agricultural practices. Farmers report that the planting and fruiting seasons of key crops have been affected, with flowering cycles no longer following predictable timelines. Harvesting has also become more challenging due to unseasonal rainfall, particularly during periods that were once reliably dry (typically March to May). The increasing unpredictability of rainfall has thus introduced new risks to traditional farming systems.</p> <p>In addition to climatic stressors, many farmers face limitations in knowledge and technical capacity. For instance, they often lack understanding of effective fertiliser use and crop disease management. As a result, they remain dependent on advice from Chinese merchants in town who supply agricultural inputs. This reliance highlights a gap in accessible agricultural extension services and the urgent need for targeted training and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Strengthening</p>	<i>No agency representative was present at the IAD</i>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		farmers' capacity in areas such as crop maintenance, soil health, and pest and disease management is therefore crucial to sustaining yields under changing environmental conditions.	

Table 13. Detailed Findings of Key Issues FGD 10

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
<b>FGD 10:</b> Dialogue with Iban Community of Rumah Manggat, Menyang Taih <b>Date:</b> 4 April 2025 <b>No. of Participants:</b> 14 participants <b>No. of Groupings:</b> 1 Group			<b>Agencies that provided feedback:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Office</li> <li>Public Works Department (JKR)</li> </ol>
1.	Deteriorated access pathway to the longhouse	<p>The trek from the village jetty to the longhouse presents significant safety and accessibility concerns. The route, which involves a 30-minute uphill walk through secondary forest, is in poor condition, with slippery cemented walkways and aging or dilapidated ironwood bridges.</p> <p>These conditions not only pose risks to residents, particularly the elderly, but also make the transportation of essential goods and supplies difficult.</p> <p>The village head has formally submitted a request for support and maintenance to the Lubok Antu District Council, highlighting the urgency of repairs to improve access and safety.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>The Ulu Batang Ai Road project has already been awarded to a contractor, and construction is expected to begin soon, and it will help with the upgrading of other access infrastructures.</p> <p><b>Public Works Department (JKR)</b></p> <p>However, access and infrastructure challenges remain widespread across many riverine areas, including Ulu Lemanak, Ulu Skrang, Ulu Engkari, and Ulu Batang Ai. These connectivity issues are considered “normal” by many local residents, yet they continue to affect mobility, service delivery, and economic opportunities. Addressing them requires consistent attention and remediation as part of broader rural development efforts.</p>
2.	Inconsistent electricity supply	The longhouse relies on a solar home system (SHS) provided by Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB) under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) program. While this system provides a renewable energy	<p><u>Note:</u></p> <p>Energy and electrification matter in the area are overseen by Sarawak Energy Berhad. As a private entity, they were not obliged to attend the IAD session</p>

NO.	ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY'S FEEDBACK
		<p>source, its reliability is heavily dependent on weather conditions.</p> <p>During extended periods of overcast skies or rain - typically after two consecutive days without sufficient sunlight - the system fails to generate enough power, resulting in frequent blackouts. This disrupts daily activities and limits the use of essential electrical appliances.</p>	<p>and therefore no input was provided during the dialogue.</p> <p>A recommendation for further exploration of this key finding can be raised with the Minister of Energy and Environmental Sustainability (MEESTY), Sarawak, during relevant engagements in the future.</p>
3.	Poor network connectivity	<p>Telecommunications access in Menyang Taih is unreliable and inconsistent. Mobile network reception is intermittent, forcing residents to adopt creative methods to maintain basic connectivity.</p> <p>For instance, phones must often be placed near windows to receive messages, and to take or make calls, individuals typically need to step outside onto the tanju (longhouse verandah).</p> <p>This lack of stable connectivity limits access to information, emergency services, and communication with external stakeholders, including partners in conservation and tourism.</p>	<p><b>District Officer</b></p> <p>Construction of telecommunications towers is currently underway; however, the timeline for when these towers will be fully connected to mobile networks remains uncertain. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), the goal is to achieve full connectivity across Sarawak by the end of 2025. Until then, communities in affected areas continue to wait for reliable access to communication services.</p>

## 4.2 Issue Prioritisation

### 4.2.1 *Prioritised Issue No. 1: Tourism, dignity and the pressure of “authenticity”*

Tourism has emerged as a promising sector within the Lubok Antu parliamentary constituency, particularly through the growth of ecotourism homestays, cultural heritage offerings, and nature-based experiences facilitated by operators such as Borneo Adventure and CPH Travel. These initiatives have contributed to supplementary income generation, increased youth engagement, and intercultural exchange, while simultaneously enhancing the visibility of Iban cultural identity. However, sustaining tourism as a long-term development strategy requires more than product creation. It demands the establishment of inclusive, community-led governance mechanisms, the protection of cultural heritage, and transparent systems for equitable benefit-sharing. Current gaps in institutional capacity, technical assistance, and resource accessibility - especially in areas such as digital marketing, financial management, business licensing, and content development - continue to constrain local communities' ability to effectively manage and lead tourism ventures. As infrastructure improves, particularly with the rerouting and enhancement of the inland Lubok Antu access road, communities are expected to experience both expanded opportunities and heightened vulnerabilities. While improved connectivity may enhance access to markets, education, and public services, it also increases the risks of cultural commodification, natural resource exploitation, and unchecked entry by external actors. Proactive measures - including institutional support, regulatory safeguards, and community capacity-building - are essential to ensure that tourism development remains inclusive, sustainable, and locally governed. The case of Engkilili town underscores the need for spatially sensitive policy responses. Once a key waypoint along the traditional travel corridor, the town now faces economic stagnation due to its exclusion from the Pan Borneo Highway alignment. Revitalisation efforts should be anchored in a comprehensive local development plan that prioritises livelihood diversification, activation of public spaces, and a place-based approach to urban regeneration. This will allow Engkilili to be repositioned within broader regional development frameworks and regain its socio-economic vitality.

- **Unequal benefit sharing in tourism**

Although Nanga Ukom has been promoted as a tourism destination by a private travel company, residents observe that their participation in eco-tourism has so far brought only modest material benefits and limited opportunities for skills development. While the longhouse has drawn interest from visitors as a cultural attraction, the current model does not fully reflect the community's broader aspirations for improved housing, services, and livelihood opportunities.

A recurring concern lies in how culture and infrastructure are represented. The emphasis on traditional housing and practices - particularly when deteriorating conditions are presented as part of an “authentic” experience - can create a dynamic in which the longhouse is perceived more as a static cultural showcase than as the centre of a living, evolving community. While heritage preservation is valued, these framing risks obscuring the residents lived realities and their aspirations for modernisation, dignity, and stronger socio-economic opportunities.

Questions of fair remuneration also feature prominently. Local guides may receive as little as RM30 (USD 6.86) for leading a forest trail tour, regardless of the number of participants, while cultural performers are sometimes compensated as little as RM12 (USD 2.74) per performance (Personal Communication, 15.3.2025; see Appendix). Many community members note their discomfort in setting higher prices or negotiating payment, resulting in systematic undercharging and limited returns from their labour. This points to the importance of support in areas such as pricing strategies, business skills, and tourism management to ensure that eco-tourism generates more equitable and sustainable outcomes for the host community.

In comparing themselves to neighbouring Iban settlements, residents often perceive themselves as developmentally lagging, particularly in terms of infrastructure and housing. At the same time, they face difficulties in maintaining the wooden longhouse aesthetic that is promoted externally as a cultural asset. They explain that, following decades of logging, there is now little timber left in the area to replace decaying materials. Compounding this, the longhouse was not originally built with durable hardwoods such as ironwood (belian), which traditionally formed the foundation of Iban longhouse construction, but with softer timbers that deteriorate more quickly. As a result, the community finds itself in a difficult position: while tourism narratives valorise the traditional appearance of the wooden longhouse, residents contend daily with its upkeep and express a strong desire for more permanent, concrete housing. This tension illustrates the broader challenge of balancing external expectations of cultural authenticity with the community's own aspirations for improved living standards and long-term development.

- **Conflict between development needs and the case of ‘authenticity’**

Since 1987, tourism has been the mainstay for Nanga Sumpa, with neighbouring communities such as Nanga Jambu and Menyang Taih also participating in shaping the Ulu Ai tributary as a destination. As the first community in the Batang

Ai basin to collaborate with an external operator, Nanga Sumpa has played a pioneering role in community-based tourism, building a reputation for conservation-linked hospitality. Over the past 38 years, this model has brought valuable benefits, including support for education, interest-free micro-loans, and long-standing contributions to forest and wildlife protection.

Nonetheless, many residents note that tourism has not substantially transformed household incomes or alleviated poverty, and a younger generation in particular expresses the need for greater agency in shaping tourism according to their own priorities. Broader livelihood realities - such as high transport costs, safety risks from navigating the Batang Ai hydroelectric reservoir, and increasingly unpredictable weather - have intensified calls for road access. For local families, connectivity is not only about convenience but about ensuring safety, reducing isolation, and creating opportunities for advancement.

At the same time, these aspirations intersect with wider considerations. Tourism narratives often market remoteness and limited accessibility as part of the “authentic” experience sought by international visitors, raising questions about how improved infrastructure might affect visitor expectations. This highlights a critical balance to be struck safeguarding the conservation gains and cultural value co-developed with tourism operators, while also recognising that the community is dynamic and evolving, with legitimate aspirations for modernisation, mobility, and better livelihoods. Framing development and conservation as complementary rather than competing goals may provide a constructive path forward. Improved access, if carefully planned, could strengthen rather than undermine tourism by diversifying visitor experiences, extending stays, and enabling more inclusive participation. Equally, it can ensure that conservation remains community-driven, protecting both ecological integrity and the dignity of local residents as partners in sustainable development.

- **Reduced visibility of town access due to highway realignment**

Engkilili town, once a thriving centre with a rich cultural identity shaped by its Chinese, Malay, and Iban communities, has experienced notable changes with the development of the Pan Borneo Highway. While the highway has improved regional connectivity and made access to larger towns more convenient, the realignment of the roadway has bypassed Engkilili itself. The absence of clear road signage and elevated access points has further reduced traffic flow into the town, weakening local businesses and limiting opportunities for tourism. As community members observe, these broader infrastructural improvements, though beneficial in connecting major urban areas, have had the unintended effect of sidelining

smaller towns like Engkilili, raising concerns about their long-term vitality and role in the regional economy.

Table 14. Summary of Issue 1

<b>Problems relating to prioritised issue</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unequal benefit sharing in tourism</li> <li>2. Conflict between development needs and the case of 'authenticity'</li> <li>3. Reduced visibility of town access due to highway realignment</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transition to community-based tourism (CBT)</li> <li>2. Capacity building and conservation training</li> </ol>
<b>Affected Group(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boatmen, crafts artisans, transporters, porters, guides</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	Nanga Ukom, Nanga Sumpa, Nanga Ukom, Menyang Taih, Kumpang Langgir
<b>SDG RELATED TO ISSUES</b>	
<b>Related SDG</b>	<b>Targets</b>
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	<p>Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, including through the formalisation and growth of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises.</p> <p>Target 8.5: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including youth and vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Target 8.9: Devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture.</p>
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Target 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, ensuring that tourism development supports heritage without compromising community well-being.

	Target 11.3: Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, ensuring that settlements are resilient, culturally sensitive, and provide access to service
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Target 12.2: Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, including forestry and construction materials for longhouses.  Target 12.b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable practices in tourism, ensuring local communities benefit and resources are conserved.

#### **4.2.2 Prioritised Issue No. 2: Diversification of livelihood amidst changing environment**

Rural communities in Batang Ai and Engkilili are experiencing intersecting pressures that reflect broader patterns of rural transformation in Sarawak. Demographic change, particularly the steady outmigration of younger generations to urban centres, has left many older residents in relative isolation. This shift has weakened traditional systems of collective labour and resource exchange, while deepening dependence on remittances as a primary source of household income. At the same time, agriculture - the historical foundation of subsistence and rural livelihoods - has become increasingly precarious. High input costs, labour shortages, climate variability, wildlife conflict, and declining land availability, especially for Iban communities affected by NCR land dispossession, have constrained both household food security and market participation. Alternative initiatives, such as cage aquaculture in Batang Ai resettlement areas, offer potential but remain undermined by one-off financial support, prohibitive input costs, and limited access to technical expertise and competitive markets. Spatial exclusion compounds these livelihood challenges. Engkilili town, once a thriving local hub, has suffered economic decline since being bypassed by the Pan Borneo Highway, while surrounding communities remain physically and infrastructurally marginalised, with restricted access to utilities and public services. The result is a rural landscape characterised by demographic ageing, weakened local economies, and structural barriers to participation in development programs. Taken together, these issues highlight not only the persistence of rural poverty and inequality, but also the need for more inclusive, resilient, and context-sensitive development strategies.

- **Shifting livelihoods and demographic pressures**

The demographic profile of the community is undergoing significant change, with a growing proportion of older residents remaining in the village, often living in relative isolation, while younger generations increasingly migrate to urban centres in search of education and employment. Although some younger individuals

continue to support their families from within the community, the majority now live outside, contributing instead through remittances. This shift has altered the community's economic base and weakened traditional systems of collective labour and resource sharing. A further challenge lies in the community's limited eligibility for formal assistance schemes. Many households find themselves excluded from support, creating gaps in safety nets and requiring alternative strategies to strengthen self-sufficiency. Agriculture, once the foundation of subsistence and cash income, has become increasingly difficult to sustain. The high and rising costs of agricultural inputs make it hard for smallholders to maintain pepper cultivation or grow staples such as rice at scales sufficient for household security. Labor shortages, climate variability, mobility constraints associated with ageing, as well as recurrent challenges from pests and wildlife conflicts, further compound these difficulties. As a result, reliance on remittances has grown, but this dependence introduces its own vulnerabilities and does not fully address the community's aspirations for resilient, locally based livelihoods.

- **Land constraints and market access to food security and economic resilience**

In the case of Engkilili, the three communities - the Chinese smallholder plantation owners, the Malay community, and the Iban community of Langkang Ili - face a shared set of challenges related to land access and agricultural viability. Chinese smallholders have limited access to farmland, constraining their capacity to expand or diversify production. The Malay community, despite historical ties to farming, demonstrates low levels of participation in agriculture, citing both generational shifts and practical barriers. Meanwhile, the Iban community of Langkang Ili has experienced significant reductions in land availability due to changes in land use and the loss of their native customary rights (NCR) land, limiting opportunities for subsistence and commercial farming.

Across these communities, there is a pressing need to explore alternative income-generating activities that can supplement or replace traditional farming. Conventional commodity crop production, such as oil palm, has either reached its limits or, in the case of Langkang Ili, contributed to socioeconomic vulnerability. Modern farming practices, particularly in food crop production, have been proposed as a potential pathway for resilience and income diversification. However, the communities consistently highlight that market access remains a critical barrier. Uncertainty regarding buyers, sales channels, and fair pricing has historically constrained both productivity and profitability.

Community members have called for more proactive engagement from government agencies tasked with food security and agricultural development.

Specifically, they emphasise the need for guaranteed buy-back systems and policies that prioritise farmers' interests over intermediary businesses. Ensuring direct support and viable market pathways would enable these communities to adopt modern farming practices effectively while maintaining food security, generating income, and reducing their dependence on vulnerable commodity systems.

- **Spatial exclusion and economic decline in Engkilili town**

Engkilili town, once a thriving small town with a rich cultural identity shaped by its Chinese, Malay, and Iban communities, has experienced a notable decline in economic activity and visibility following the realignment of the Pan Borneo Highway. While the highway has enhanced regional connectivity and facilitated access to larger urban centres, the new alignment bypasses Engkilili, and the absence of adequate signage and elevated access points has resulted in reduced traffic into the town. Local businesses and tourism operators report a sharp decline in foot traffic, undermining the town's historical role as a district hub and diminishing opportunities for small-scale enterprise. Food vendors and hawkers, for example, face challenges in maintaining viability due to declining customers and looming infrastructure constraints such as water supply limitations.

Peripheral communities, such as Langkang Ili, illustrate the compounded effects of spatial exclusion. Enveloped by private oil palm estates and controlled through gated entry and security personnel, residents encounter restricted mobility and limited access to public infrastructure, including piped water, electricity, and waste management. The case of Engkilili highlights a broader pattern in which infrastructural development prioritises central nodes while peripheral settlements experience marginalisation. The selective distribution of visibility and resources exemplifies legacies of centre-periphery logic, in which rural areas are treated as secondary or expendable within broader development narratives. Without strategic interventions to restore connectivity, ensure equitable service provision, and support local enterprise, towns like Engkilili risk continued economic stagnation and socio-spatial marginalisation.

- **Challenges facing smallholder cage farming in Batang Ai**

Communities resettled due to the Batang Ai hydroelectric dam have been encouraged to adopt cage aquaculture as an alternative livelihood to compensate for lost land-based resources. While the initiative offers potential for income generation, several structural and operational challenges have limited its effectiveness. A primary concern relates to the nature of financial support. Funding for cage farming has often been provided as a one-off assistance package,

which does not allow farmers sufficient time to gain hands-on experience and develop the practical skills required for successful aquaculture. Cage farming, like many specialised agricultural systems, requires iterative learning and adaptation, and short-term funding constrains farmers' ability to build expertise or scale operations sustainably.

The cost of inputs further compounds the challenge. Fish feed is expensive and is not currently produced locally, imposing recurrent costs that smallholders struggle to meet. There is clear community interest in developing local production of fish feed, which would reduce dependency on external suppliers, lower operating costs, and potentially stimulate additional economic activity in the area. Market access and competitiveness also pose significant obstacles. Small-scale producers face difficulty in branding and marketing their fish, and they must compete with larger, established suppliers such as Ecofish. Without effective marketing channels or cooperative structures, smallholders are often disadvantaged, selling at lower prices or struggling to find consistent buyers.

Table 15. Summary of Issue 2

<b>Problems relating to prioritised issue</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shifting livelihoods and demographic pressures</li> <li>2. Land constraints and market access to food security and economic resilience</li> <li>3. Spatial exclusion and economic decline in Engkilili town</li> <li>4. Challenges facing smallholder cage farming in Batang Ai</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diversification of livelihoods through cultural and craft-based enterprises</li> <li>2. Modern farming and technical skills development as a rural livelihood strategy</li> <li>3. Capacity-building and market integration in community fish farming</li> </ol>
<b>Affected Group(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth, ageing population, traditional farmers, traditional craft artisans</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	Kampung Melayu Engkilili, Engkilili Chinese Community, Langkang Ili, Small caged-fish farmers of Batang Ai, Nanga Talong, Nanga Ukom, Nanga Sumpa, Nanga Jambu, Menyang Taih, Kumpang Langgir

<b>SDG RELATED TO ISSUES</b>	
<b>Related SDG</b>	<b>Targets</b>
SDG 1: No Poverty	<p>Target 1.4: Ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, including land ownership, access to basic services, and control over productive assets.</p> <p>Target 1.5: Build resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations to climate-related shocks, economic disruptions, and other disasters, particularly in rural communities.</p>
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	<p>Target 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, including through secure and equitable access to land, inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and innovation.</p> <p>Target 2.4: Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity while maintaining ecosystems and strengthening capacity for adaptation to climate change.</p>
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	<p>Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, and innovation, particularly for rural communities and youth.</p> <p>Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET).</p>

#### ***4.2.3 Prioritised Issue No. 3: Information gaps, institutional accountability & community outreach***

The communities situated along the Batang Ai basin, including settlements on tributaries such as Engkari, Ulu Ai, and Ulu Ai Kanan, encounter multiple and interrelated barriers to development and state service access. Their geographical remoteness, with river transport across the Batang Ai hydroelectric reservoir often requiring several hours of travel, generates substantial logistical and financial burdens. The cost of outboard engine fuel alone - ranging between RM70 and RM150 per journey - constitutes a significant

strain on households with precarious and irregular incomes. This structural isolation is further compounded by digital exclusion. Although connectivity options such as Starlink and the Jendela program are available, connection fees (RM35 per use in Nanga Sumpa, or RM80-100 per household per month) remain prohibitively expensive, limiting sustained access. Consequently, awareness of government schemes and welfare assistance remains low, reinforcing cycles of marginalisation. Within this setting, the Tuai Rumah continues to serve as the principal intermediary between government agencies and longhouse residents. However, given that many longhouse leaders are elderly and lack digital literacy, the communication and interpretation of technology-dependent programs often remain incomplete or ineffective. These limitations are particularly consequential for vulnerable populations, including undocumented children, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities (OKU), who face additional obstacles in securing legal recognition and welfare entitlements. Post-application follow-up after outreach programs is frequently hindered by unclear procedural guidance, limited-service outreach, and referrals to distant administrative centres in Sri Aman or Betong, creating further socio-economic strain. Taken together, these geographic, financial, and institutional constraints produce persistent information and accessibility deficits. Addressing them requires systemic improvements in administrative service delivery alongside targeted, community-based capacity-building to strengthen governance and digital resilience at the longhouse level.

- **Limited access and digital exclusion in remote Batang Ai communities**

The communities along the Batang Ai basin, including those along tributaries such as Engkari, Ulu Ai, and Ulu Ai Kanan, remain geographically isolated. Access to and from these settlements is primarily by river, often requiring hours of travel across the Batang Ai hydroelectric reservoir. This isolation is further compounded by limited digital connectivity, leaving many communities largely disconnected from online resources and communication channels.

Government outreach programs, according to both district officials and community accounts, are often constrained by operational budgets and logistical limitations. Many initiatives are centred in Lubok Antu town, relying on residents to travel outward to access services or information. However, the cost of river transport—ranging from RM70 to RM150 for outboard engine fuel alone - poses a significant financial burden for communities with precarious and irregular incomes. Community leaders, such as the Tuai Rumah, typically take on the responsibility of travelling to town to stay informed and relay information back to their residents. However, these headmen are often elders, which can compound difficulties in navigating digital systems or understanding technology-dependent programs. Consequently, disseminating information to the broader community

remains a significant challenge. While connectivity options such as Starlink and other Wi-Fi access points exist, the cost of accessing these services is prohibitive for most residents. For instance, during fieldwork in Nanga Sumpa, a connection via Starlink was charged at RM35, and monthly subscriptions under the *Jendela* program could cost approximately RM80–100 per household. These expenses, when combined with other livelihood constraints, make sustained digital connectivity largely unattainable for many families.

As a result, awareness of aid schemes, assistance program, and government initiatives remains low. This combination of geographic, financial, and digital barriers, alongside the age-related limitations of community leadership, contributes to a persistent gap in accessibility, limiting the communities' capacity to fully benefit from available support and services.

- **Information gaps and access challenges for vulnerable undocumented individuals**

Community members in interior areas of Lubok Antu have highlighted challenges in navigating post-application procedures following outreach programs conducted by the Sarawak Special Taskforce on Preventing Statelessness. While these initiatives aim to support undocumented residents in regularising their documentation, many participants are uncertain about how to follow up on submissions, which can result in delays and difficulties in accessing official recognition. Cases of undocumented persons are particularly prevalent within these remote communities, making consistent outreach and follow-up support critical.

Travel to administrative centres poses a significant barrier. Costs for outboard engine fuel alone can range from RM70 to RM150 per trip and additional cost to travel to town, creating financial strain for households with limited or unstable income. For many residents, especially those living in remote riverside settlements, the combination of high travel costs, long journey times, and logistical challenges further restricts access to government services.

At the same time, some residents have reported that services provided by the National Registration Department (NRD) in Lubok Antu are not always easily accessible. Several individuals have experienced difficulties or confusion during visits, and in some cases, have been advised to seek services in other divisions such as Sri Aman or Betong without further details. These additional requirements can create further logistical and financial challenges, particularly for elderly or less mobile community members.

These challenges are compounded for vulnerable groups, including undocumented persons with disabilities (OKU), elderly residents, and children, who may face additional barriers in accessing timely and comprehensive support. The combination of procedural complexity, limited guidance, high travel costs, and past negative experiences contributes to information gaps and can affect confidence in engaging with civil registration services.

Table 16. Summary of Issue 3

<b>Problems relating to prioritised issue</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited access and digital exclusion in remote Batang Ai communities</li> <li>2. Information gaps and access challenges for vulnerable undocumented individuals</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving service quality and accessibility at administrative centres</li> <li>2. Capacity-building for community leadership and information dissemination in longhouse settings</li> </ol>
<b>Affected Group(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable individuals, ageing community, youth, Tuai Rumah (community leaders)</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	Nanga Talong, Nanga Ukom, Nanga Sumpa, Nanga Jambu, Menyang Taih, Kampung Melayu Engkilili, Langkang Ili, Kumpang Langgir
<b>SDG RELATED TO ISSUES</b>	
<b>Related SDG</b>	<b>Targets</b>
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	Target 9.c: Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2025
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	<p>Target 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.</p> <p>Target 10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard.</p>

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.  Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.
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## 5.0 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF SOLUTION PROJECT

Table 17. Preliminary Identification of Solution Project

	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
<b>Project Title</b>	<i>Projek 3P (Pembangunan, Penambakaan Pengurusan) Homestay Rumah Panjang</i>	Aram Bergempuru: Lubok Antu Community Awareness & Outreach Program	Crafting Futures: Handicraft and Weaving Empowerment for Lubok Antu
<b>Relevant SDG(s)</b>	SDG 8, 11, 12	SDG 3, 4, 11	SDG 1, 5, 8
<b>Objective(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and improve homestay facilities in Ulu Batang Ai (e.g., providing mattresses, solar lamps, painting visitor rooms, and basic amenities).</li> <li>• Enhance management and hospitality skills of the local community through training (e.g., room arrangement, homestay profiling on tourism platforms, and promotion).</li> <li>• Strengthen tourism potential by making homestays more comfortable, competitive, and sustainable, while preserving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to address community and individual issues by bringing government agencies directly to the people through town hall events, mobile village outreach, and a final one-stop exhibition.</li> <li>• Bridges the information gap with multilingual posters, road banners, and simple pamphlets to make services easier to understand.</li> <li>• Promotes face-to-face engagement, allowing residents to ask questions and receive direct assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to empower the people of Lubok Antu by revitalising traditional handicraft and weaving practices as a platform for economic development, skills enhancement, and cultural preservation.</li> <li>• It seeks to equip individuals, especially women and youth with the tools, knowledge, and networks to become successful social and craft entrepreneurs, ultimately transforming Lubok Antu into a vibrant hub for creative and sustainable livelihoods.</li> </ul>

	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
	cultural traditions and community-based tourism.	on healthcare, safety, education, and business opportunities.	
<b>Expected Outcome(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgraded homestay facilities in Ulu Batang Ai, including improved rooms, furniture (mattresses, beds, fans), solar lighting, and better amenities for visitors.</li> <li>At least 20 local community members trained in basic homestay and tourism management, including hospitality and promotion skills.</li> <li>Systematic visitor registration system established to improve efficiency in homestay operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness and access to government services among the people of Lubok Antu empowering individuals with knowledge on healthcare, safety, education, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship opportunities.</li> <li>Building a more informed, connected, and a resilient community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of 30 trained craft entrepreneurs and over 30 market-ready handcrafted products.</li> <li>The establishment of artisan support networks.</li> <li>A one-day creative exhibition featuring more than 10 booths.</li> </ul>
<b>Solution Provider</b>	<i>Jawatankuasa Kemajuan Dan Keselamatan Tapang Pungga Ulu, Lubok Antu</i>	Sarawak Dayak Graduates Association (SDGA)	<i>Persatuan Kebajikan Masyarakat Asal Engkelili Lubok Antu Skrang (PELASAR)</i>

	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
<b>Activities / Processes</b>	<p><b>Stage 1: First Month</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project launch meeting and briefing with the community and local agencies</li> <li>• Project discussions involving village heads around Ulu Batang Ai</li> <li>• Initial assessment of homestay needs</li> <li>• Procurement of items for the homestay (mattresses, pillows, bedsheets)</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 2: Second Month</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair works and reorganisation of applicant's homestay.</li> <li>• Installation of solar lamps at the applicant's longhouse.</li> <li>• Decoration using cultural elements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 3: Third Month</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 1: Stakeholder Engagement &amp; Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick-off briefing with partners and agencies</li> <li>• Logistics, outreach routes, and promotional material planning</li> <li>• Ongoing coordination and review meetings</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 2: Awareness &amp; Education Campaigns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town-level workshops, youth leadership sessions, and thematic talks (health, education, safety, entrepreneurship)</li> <li>• Poster and road signage installation across major routes and villages</li> <li>• Pamphlet and service directory distribution</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 3: Village &amp; Community Outreach</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village outreach</li> <li>• Program launch</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory Workshop: Traditional Weaving Skills</li> <li>• Beadwork Craft Workshop</li> <li>• Branding &amp; Product Design Training</li> <li>• Mentorship Clinic 1 – Pricing &amp; Costing</li> <li>• Mentorship Clinic 2 – Cooperative &amp; Market Access</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product Finalisation &amp; Peer Review</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition Prep: Booth Setup &amp; Pitch Practice</li> <li>• Exhibition Promotion Campaign</li> </ul>

	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homestay management and hospitality training for the community.</li> <li>• Training on homestay promotion via social media platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile info booths and health/safety demonstrations in villages</li> <li>• Fire safety, first aid, and water safety training</li> <li>• Village dialogues and education support activities</li> <li>• Poster placements at longhouses, churches, and community spaces</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 4: Health, Safety &amp; Business Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health screenings and public health education</li> <li>• Fire safety demonstrations (BOMBA)</li> <li>• Business clinics, youth entrepreneurship exposure, and business awareness kits</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 5: Media, Communication &amp; Digital Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media rollout (videos, stories, highlights)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stage 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final One-Day Creative Exhibition in Lubok Antu</li> </ul>

	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcements and coverage</li> <li>• WhatsApp groups and digital broadcasts for ongoing engagement</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 6: Monitoring, Feedback &amp; Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-program monitoring (feedback forms, digital polls, stakeholder reviews)</li> <li>• Data collection from screenings and community engagement sessions</li> <li>• Final impact reporting and documentation</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 7: Closing &amp; Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final One-Day Expo with multi-agency booths, youth showcase, and business pitching</li> </ul>	
<b>Total Funding (RM)</b>	RM 40,000.00	RM 40,000.00	RM 40,000.00

	<b>PROJECT 1</b>	<b>PROJECT 2</b>	<b>PROJECT 3</b>
<b>Location</b>	Rumah George, Tapang Pungga Ulu, Lubok Antu	Lubok Antu	Engkilili
<b>Duration</b>	3 months	3 months	3 months

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# APPGM-SDG

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