SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA) IN URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS IN SARAWAK

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INTRODUCTION

• The rapid growth of urban population in Sarawak has brought about **significant changes** in our landscape, resulting in the phenomenon of **urban sprawl**.

• This has driven the **occupation of land by squatters and rural migrants**, leading to the emergence of new settlements in major cities in Sarawak such as Kuching, Sibu, Bintulu and Miri.

• While this urbanization process presents new opportunities for economic growth and development, it also brings about **significant challenges** such as inadequate housing and infrastructure, environmental degradation, and social inequality.
• Population: 2.9 million (2020)
• Population Growth: 0.2% (2011-2020)
• Area: 124,450 km²
• Sarawak has the lowest population density with 20 people per square kilometer
• The **urbanization rate in Sarawak increased from 45.1% in 2010 to 49.5% in 2020**, indicating a significant increase in rural-urban migration.
URBAN RENEWAL

• A process that involves **transforming underutilized and neglected parts** of cities, urban settlements, and villages into modern and functional built-environments that meet the contemporary needs of residents.

• This process aims to bring about **lasting improvements across economic, physical, social, and environmental** conditions in disadvantaged communities, contributing to a conducive and favorable living environment that supports a healthy, safe, and comfortable lifestyle.

• As a result, we can create vibrant and sustainable communities that are **culturally sensitive, economically viable, and environmentally responsible**.
URBAN RENEWAL IN SARAWAK

- Aiming to create vibrant and sustainable communities by enhancing the physical and social well-being of residents.
- These projects are designed to ensure that no one is marginalized, but rather everyone benefits from the improvements made.
- By 2030, we aim to become a developed state that's not only economic prosperity but also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

Source: SURIG, 2018
SURIG were introduced in the year 2018.

The State Urban Renewal Projects Committee (SURPC) has been formed to provide a framework and oversees the implementation of SURIG, provides guidance and support to stakeholders and reviews the guidelines regularly.

SURIG requires community engagement, social impact assessment (SIA), and equitable distribution of project benefits to avoid the displacement of low-income residents and marginalized communities.
URBAN RENEWAL’S OBJECTIVES

- **Uplift** the physical and social well-being of the communities;
- **Provide** conducive, safe, healthy and orderly development;
- **Increase** the income of the communities through creation of new job and business opportunities;
- **Generate** wealth for the property owners and future generation; and
- **Provide** affordable and quality housing for both the property owners and their extended families.

*Source: SURIG, 2018*
Since 2018, SIA is mandatory for Sarawak's urban renewal, with reports submitted before redevelopment begins.

The formation of SIA Technical and Steering Committees to oversee and enhance the quality of SIA studies.

"People First, Public Participatory" approach prioritizes urban renewal for social, livelihood, and economic benefits.
OBJECTIVES OF SILA

- To **identify**, **predict**, **evaluate** and **communicate** social impacts of development projects.
- To **anticipate** potential social impacts and **recommend** modifications to reduce or mitigate negative impacts.
- To propose **mitigation measures** to ensure sustainability and social acceptability of proposed projects.
Proposed Overall Development Planning and Implementation Approach

**Proposed Structure Plan**
Note: A Strategic Plan containing:
- Strategic development framework & plan
  - General Land Use Blocks
  - Identification/recommendation of priority Action Areas

- **Detailed Re-Development Master Plan**
  - Including detailed zoning and precinct plans:
    - Infrastructure & utilities planning
    - Transportation & traffic etc.
    - Other Supporting plans & studies

- **Priority Action Areas**

- **Land Availability Investigation**
  - Siting Approval and Acquisition / Alienation

- **Action Area Plan**
  - Detailed Site-Specific Plan
  - Site 1: Affordable Urban Housing
  - Site 2: Mixed-Use Urban Re-Development Blocks (Pilot Area)

- **Detailed Siting and Precinct Site Layout Plans**

- **Detailed Authorities Approvals**:
  1. Land
  2. Site Planning
  3. Detailed Plans
  4. Engineering Plans
  5. Building Plans
  6. Others

- **Projects Realisation**: Physical Implementation, Construction and Completion

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**THE IMPORTANCE OF SIA IN PLANNING PROCESS**
SI A FOCUS IN URBAN RENEWAL

Local Characteristics

Potential Demographic Impacts

Community/Institutional Arrangements

Potential Struggles Between Local Residents and Newcomers/Communities in Transition

Community Infrastructure

Individual and Family Level Impacts

Source: SURIG, 2018
The idea of Darul Hana project was introduced and initiated in April 2011, involving an area of 722 acres.

To develop the area into a modern neighbourhood while retaining the Malay traditional architecture.

Will involve 4,469 families from 14 settlements/villages along the Sarawak River, namely Kampung Seberang Hilir area with a combined population of about 17,135 people.

The project is spearheaded by the Land Custody and Development Authority (LCDA) under Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources (MUDeNR) Sarawak.
OBJECTIVES OF DARUL HANA DEVELOPMENT

1. To elevate the quality of life, security and health of the residents of 14 villages in Kampung Seberang Hilir, Kuching North;

2. To raise the image and quality of 4.1 km river edge spaces from Kampung Boyan to Kampung Bintawa Hilir;

3. To redevelop the existing residential areas into a well-structured community development while maintaining the “village ambience” that builds the community and act as a pull factor that creates employment and business opportunities;

4. To provide better and integrated public amenities to the local community; and

5. To provide better and continuous learning facilities.
KEY FINDINGS IN SIA REPORT

ISSUES AND CONCERN

- Willingness to move
- They will lose their village identity and sense of neighborhood
- Cost incurred

NEEDS AND ASPIRATION

- Uplifting the standards of living and quality of life of the community
- Clear information
- Retain their village identity
- Availability of recreational facilities
- Community participation in the business opportunity
- Hoping that extended families will be given a unit of house too

MI TIGATING MEASURES

- Community engagement
- Participation in business opportunity
- Setting up of data base on availability of workforce and inherent skills of the community - linking talent pool to the respective employer at various industries or workplace.
- Youth engagement programme
- Community risk
- Sustaining the traditional values and cultural performances

Community engagement was a crucial finding in SIA report for the Darul Hana Redevelopment Project (2018).

- Involve community from planning stage to build trust.
- Engagement helps resolve conflicts and clarify roles.
- Community must be involved in decisions.
- Working together sustains community participation.
- Proper consultation and motivation can resolve conflicts.
- Community knows their context and geography best.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Finalize the Communication & Engagement Plan

LAND ACQUISITION

Finalize House Allocation & Selection

RESSETLEMENT OF THE VILLAGERS

Relocation of the Villagers

CONTINUOUS MONITORING

Grievances Management

Community Communication & Engagement Programs
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Focus Group Discussion
Workshop
Survey
CSR
Public Forum/Townhall
Interview

ENGAGEMENT
CHALLENGES

- Resistance
- Land issues
“To modernise a village, we will need the villagers to play their role by accepting changes, having a mindset shift and giving cooperation. We are sure that the Darul Hana project has big potential, especially as one of the tourism spots in the state.”

YAB Premier Sarawak, 17 May 2011
CHALLENGES FOR EFFECTIVE SIA IN URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS

- Limited public participation due to awareness, language and information
- Complexity of Sarawak's diverse cultures and ethnic groups
- Limited social impact data
- Limited SIA capacity and expertise
ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SIA IN URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS

- Engage with community, groups and stakeholders
- Consult affected parties early and regularly
- Use a participatory approach for data
- Monitor and evaluate SIA process
SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA)

- SIA is an important tool for ensuring that urban renewal projects in Sarawak promote social sustainability and meet the needs of affected communities.
Let’s continue the conversation!
Post questions and comments in the IAIA23 app.

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