



**GRANTEE**

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)  
Malaysia



**WATERBODY**

South China Sea Large Marine Ecosystem



**PROJECT DURATION**

May 2014 – October 2016



**AMOUNT**

US\$149,259

**COFINANCING**

US\$451,599

**CASE 7**

# Marine Biodiversity Conservation in the Tun Mustapha Park, Sabah, Malaysia

**PROJECT CONTEXT**

In March 2003, the Government of Sabah announced its approval of the proposed Tun Mustapha Park (TMP), a marine area covering 1.02 million hectares in the northern part of Sabah. The marine protected area (MPA) was previously known as the Kudat-Banggi Priority Conservation Area, and is one of the priority areas identified under the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) as being globally significant for its high biodiversity and rich natural resources. Geographically, the area is located within the Coral Triangle and is home to some of the richest marine flora and fauna complexes in the world (WWF-Malaysia, 2011)

The proposed Tun Mustapha Park will be the largest marine protected area in Malaysia once it is formally designated in government gazettes. Due to its size and the commercial activities that occur in the region, a multidisciplinary and collaborative management system is necessary to administer it. An interim steering committee was established in 2011 to guide the preparation of a management plan for the park, and community consultation is on-going to gather feedback for a comprehensive draft of the zoning and management plan.



## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

This is a strategic project supported by the UNDP implemented GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). The project is implemented by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature in Malaysia (WWF Malaysia) aiming to scale up interventions for marine biodiversity conservation in Tun Mustapha Park. The project includes the following four components for community based marine biodiversity conservation: 1) building capacity and empowering local communities and stakeholders to conduct patrolling and collaborative enforcement, 2) promoting environmental stewardship, 3) developing conservation enterprises linked to resource management, 4) building capacity for the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. (WWF, 2014)

To promote capacity development and community empowerment, a series of community consultations have been undertaken. Community members have also received training in reef assessment and monitoring. To patrol the park, in order to enforce lawful use, the project collaborated with local government enforcement agencies and local communities in establishing regular joint patrolling activities. The project also hosted session to share the experiences and lessons learned by the community groups, and discussed strategies to ensure the sustainable management of the park. To promote environmental stewardship, the project focused on raising awareness among youth groups on the merits of sustainable marine management. In terms conservation enterprises, the communities decided to further develop sustainable sea cucumber production, mangrove conservation for ecotourism, and traditional natural farming as alternative livelihood activities. In fisheries management, the project has focused on capacity development for the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. Training materials were developed and training was conducted with participants from the local communities.



## RESULTS AND UPSCALING

The project has supported the scaling up of community participation in resource management and capacity building to advocate for the establishment of the TMP, and facilitate livelihood improvement as emphasised in the TMP proposal. Capacity building has been important in ensuring the involvement and participation of the communities in sustainably and collaboratively managing their resources, especially in the designated Community Use Zones in the Tun Mustapha Park.

This project also strengthened the formation of a coalition of all the existing community based organizations in the Tun Mustapha area, which resulted in the founding of the Tun Mustapha Park Community Conservation Group (TMPCCG). This group has as its objective to be the voice



and representative of the communities in MPA at the park management level and in the governing body of the park that will be formed once the park is fully operational. The formation of TMPCCG was a result of the active engagement of all communities supported by the project.

The scaling up is planned and facilitated through this strategic project of SGP to expand the areas of coverage and increase the number of sites and people involved in biodiversity conservation in the park. The rationale for increasing the number of sites and community engagement was to ensure that the communities dependent on the protected area for their livelihoods have the capacity and are able to take part in the management

of the park. The focus on capacity building in conservation enterprise was another step to this end and to ensure that the communities' livelihoods were sustainable for the community and the marine ecosystem. It should be noted that SGP has also funded several other projects that have contributed to the integrated management of Tun Mustapha Park, and towards the preparations for the park to be officially designated as a national park by the government.

### EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Community engagement and consultations take time at all sites. Communities and the areas they reside in all have particular types of natural resources, social dynamics, and different level of receptiveness to getting involved in the management of Community Use Zones within the protected area. As a result, the approaches, types, and dynamics of community engagement and consultations vary. In this sense, replication does not mean repetition, but reflects the adaptive and broader adoption of tried and tested practices.

Community-based organizations, such as the Banggi Youth Club and Kudat Turtle Conservation Society are important partners and allies in providing lessons learnt and testimonials, and in building support within the community for project engagement. At the local government level, the government appointed community leaders in administrative roles to provide guidance about traditional customs and law. These individuals are also key partners and allies in providing credibility to the project. At the state government level, partnership with Sabah Parks, Sabah Wildlife Department, Sabah Fisheries Department, Malaysia's Maritime Enforcement Agencies, and the Marine Police among others, are important to ensure the issues raised by the communities are given the proper attention and response. These government agencies, being the authorized management agencies, are critical in the success of the capacity building in collaborative enforcement and community empowerment.

Table 2 outlines the different projects funded by SGP that contributed to the preparedness of local community towards the official establishment of Tun Mustapha Park, which is expected in 2017.

**TABLE 2**  
**Outcomes from projects funded by SGP that contributed to the preparedness of local communities towards establishment of Tun Mustapha Park**

PROJECTS	GRANTEE PARTNER	START AND END DATE	FUNDING (US\$)	FOCUSED OUTCOMES
Community based resource management and conservation of marine biodiversity in the proposed Tun Mustapha Park (TMP), Sabah, Malaysia. (Strategic Project)	WWF-Malaysia	May 2014 – Dec 2016	150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved the reef status through participation of patrolling from community and enforcement agencies</li> <li>Established 5 local associations and community groups to contribute to conservation activities and support the establishment of TMP</li> <li>Developed the capacity of 50 community members to be involved in livelihood programme that contributes to conservation</li> <li>Fisheries management of TMP using ecosystem approach through capacity building</li> </ul>
Raise Awareness of the Local Community to the Plight of the Sea Turtle Population of the Kudat Area	Persatuan Pemuliharaan Penyu Daerah Kudat, Sabah	Dec. 2013 – Jan. 2016	50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation of turtle through turtle hatchery management training.</li> <li>Improved local livelihood through ecotourism</li> <li>Demonstration of micro-credit projects for establishment of coral nursery, handicraft development and organic farming</li> </ul>
Protection of Marine Resources Through Environmental Awareness Program and Patrolling	Banggi Youth Club, Kudata, Sabah	Oct. 2014 – Jun. 2016	25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth participation in sea patrolling, coral restoration and mangrove replanting</li> <li>Awareness raising and supporting of establishment of TMP</li> </ul>
The Development and Replication of Handicraft As an Alternative Livelihood in Maliangin Within Proposed Tun Mustapha Park	Persatuan Penduduk Pulau Maliangin, Banggi, Kudat, Sabah	Nov. 2014 – Jan. 2016	10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building in natural resource management through development of livelihood programme</li> <li>Promote sustainable livelihood through handicraft development and marketing</li> </ul>