
Malaysia

Kota Kinabalu Sabah

Cultural Cities Profile
East Asia

May 2021

Contents

Introducing Kuching	05
City Vision/Mission/Slogan	06
Creative Industries and Cultural Services	07
Kota Kinabalu in Numbers	09
Context	11
Location/Region	11
Ethnic Diversity	11
Cultural, Arts and Civic Policy	12
Capacity Building and Inclusive Development	13
Environment and Sustainability	16
Cultural Ecosystem and Infrastructure	20
Heritage Assets and Activation	22
Sample of 'Movers and Shakers' in the Cultural and Creative Sector of Kota Kinabalu	26
Events, Festivals and Creative Marketplaces (selected)	32
Creative Infrastructure, Hubs and Assets (selected)	35

Special Thanks

Commissioned by the British Council, the research is led by Dr. Tom Fleming, director, Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy (TFCC); Nana Yu I Lee, senior researcher, TFCC and in collaboration with Jia Ping Lee, Founder and Principal, Tempatico; Ee Lin Lim, consultant, Tempatico; and Lim Sok Swan, Special Project Officer, Penang Institute (PI); Morana Lefilliatre, Administrator & Research Assistant, PI; Joyee Yap, Analyst, Socioeconomics & Statistics Programme, PI; Mohammad Zulhafiy Bin Zol Bahari, Intern, Heritage & Urban Studies, PI.

The **British Council** builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. <https://www.britishcouncil.org>

Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy is the leading international consultancy for culture and the creative economy. We offer research, strategy and policy leadership across the creative, cultural and arts sectors. We offer technical expertise, strategic thinking and the tools to position creativity to the heart of society. With offices in London and Porto and associates in 12 countries, we are an international agency operating in every region. <http://tfconsultancy.co.uk>

Tempatico is a place consultancy offering place strategy, placemaking and place narrative in creating or rejuvenating cities or organisations. We EMPOWER governments, corporations with the know how on creating and managing human centric workplaces, districts and cities. <https://tempatico.com>

Penang Institute, one of Malaysia's most influential policy think tanks, raises local and regional socio economic, urban and environmental issues through its events, its political, social and academic network, and its publications, such as Penang Monthly and ISSUES. <https://penanginstitute.org>

Introducing Kota Kinabalu

Kota Kinabalu (often referred to as 'KK') is the cultural and economic centre of north Borneo. The city is a base for cultural tourism attracted by the surrounding bio and cultural diversity. It is also a pioneer in environmental protection and indigenous rights. The city is an innovator for sustainable development through culture, connecting the urban to the natural environment; supporting local communities to take ownership of development and to practice traditional culture.

Located in the northern corner of the island of Borneo, Kota Kinabalu is the capital of Malaysia's Sabah state. According to the Third National Physical Plan 2016, the Greater KK metropolitan area includes the district of Kota Kinabalu, Tuaran, Putatan and Papar.¹

Sabah State's primary economic activities include tourism, agriculture (palm oil), natural resources (forestry; oil, gas and energy) and secondary industries of manufacturing and logistics.²

A teal diamond-shaped icon containing a white quotation mark.

Kota Kinabalu... is a charming modern city offering international-standard hotels and resorts. [It] is... the gateway to one of Southeast Asia's tallest mountains, Mount Kinabalu and also serves as the gateway to the rest of Sabah. To go around and out of KK, public transportation such as taxis, buses, trains, and e-hailing services are available.

Sabah Tourism Board

¹ The Third National Physical Plan, 2016. P. 3 – 6.

² <https://infocus.wief.org/sabah-people-planet-profit-potential>

City vision/Mission/Slogan

The vision of the Kota Kinabalu City Hall is “Prosperous Kota Kinabalu” with the missions of:

- Making the city a clean, green and liveable,
- Creating a conducive and innovative business environment,
- Empowering and improving the quality of life of the rural community,
- Enhancing city service delivery by strengthening the enforcement of the city hall’s by-laws
- Establishing an effective monitoring and management system for the squatters and providing adequate housing.³

The **Sabah Development Corridor (SDC)**, was launched to enhance the quality of life by accelerating the growth of Sabah’s economy, promoting regional balance and bridging the rural-urban divide while ensuring sustainable management of the state’s resources, including Sabah’s geographical location, natural resources, cultural heritage and biodiversity for balanced growth.

- The development programme is a joint initiative by both the Federal and Sabah State governments, introduced during the Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP) (Malaysia’s Master Plan for National Development during the period 2006 to 2010).

The SDC programmes are underpinned by the three key principles that will guide development in Sabah, namely the need to capture higher value economic activities; promote balanced economic growth with distribution; and ensure sustainable growth via environmental conservation.

In order to expedite the implementation of SDC, the Sabah State Legislative Assembly had approved the instrument for the establishment of the Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (SEDIA) in 2009. SEDIA has been entrusted as the One-Stop Authority to drive SDC, with the primary responsibility to plan, coordinate, promote and accelerate the development of the SDC.

Some of the key functions are to recommend to the federal government on projects of potential growth and opportunities to be included in the SDC, to promote and market SDC as an attractive business and investment location and to recommend to the state and federal governments the incentives for SDC to name a few.

Mount Kinabalu – the highest mountain on Borneo.

Photo © Mount Kinabalu – a world heritage site

³ Kota Kinabalu City Hall. <https://dbkk.sabah.gov.my/index.php/en/info-dbkk/info-korporat/visi-misi>

Creative Industries and Cultural Tourism



Visitors to Kota Kinabalu can explore nearby attractions ranging from islands and beaches, museums and art galleries, cultural villages, local markets, and notable landmarks. Apart from KK's majestic beauty, be spoiled for choices as KK also offers a wide range of food selection.

Sabah Tourism Board⁴

According to Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (SEDIA), the state is endowed with a rich tourism offer anchored on bio and cultural diversity.⁵ (See below Cultural, arts and civic policy section for more).

A portion of Sabah Development Corridor (SDC)'s RM105 billion was spent to upgrade infrastructure for tourism development, raise awareness of environmental protection, guide local people to organise community-based tourism activities, provide training for tourism service skills.

- Since the Corridor was established in 2008, the GDP of Sabah has increased to 10.7%, higher than the national economic growth rate of 4.8%. Tourism has now become the third most important economic sector in Sabah after agriculture and oil mining.
- In the Phase 2 of Sabah Development Corridor Blueprint, Creative Content Incubator Projects will be a focus.⁶

SEDIA has listed certain enclaves as primary development focus for different industries. For instance, under the Kinabalu Gold Coast Enclave (KGCE) for Kota Kinabalu, SEDIA has a number of incentives for tourism and creative clusters.⁷ KGCE lists the following industries under its creative cluster programme, where tax incentives are provided.⁸

- Design Academy: Product design; Fashion/ accessories design
- Academy of Art: Arts and crafts; Drawing; Sculpture
- School of Arts: Dance; Drama; Music

In addition to the tourism and creative clusters, the education cluster is situated in Sandakan and covers tax incentives for private universities, colleges, training centres and upskilling centres.

⁴ <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/12/651370/maximise-income-sabah-parks-plans-reactivate-investment-arm>

⁵ Annual Report 2018 https://www.sedia.com.my/SEDIA_AR2018.pdf, accessed in July 2021.

⁶ Sabah Development Corridor Blueprint. https://www.sedia.com.my/SDC_Blueprint.html

⁷ https://sedia.com.my/SDC_Incentives.html

⁸ The listed programmes are eligible for full tax exemption on statutory income for 5 years; or Investment Tax Allowance of 100% on qualifying capital expenditure for 5 years – can be offset against 100% of statutory income; and full exemption on import duty and sales tax exemption subject to current policy.

Sabah's Tourism Industry



Tourism and services have become a vital economic contributor in Sabah after agriculture and forestry.

In 2019, the tourism revenue has reached RM9 billion. In the same year, Sabah received 4.1M visitors (2.7M Malaysian and 1.4M international visitors) through Kota Kinabalu International Airport (KKIA). Among the international visitors:

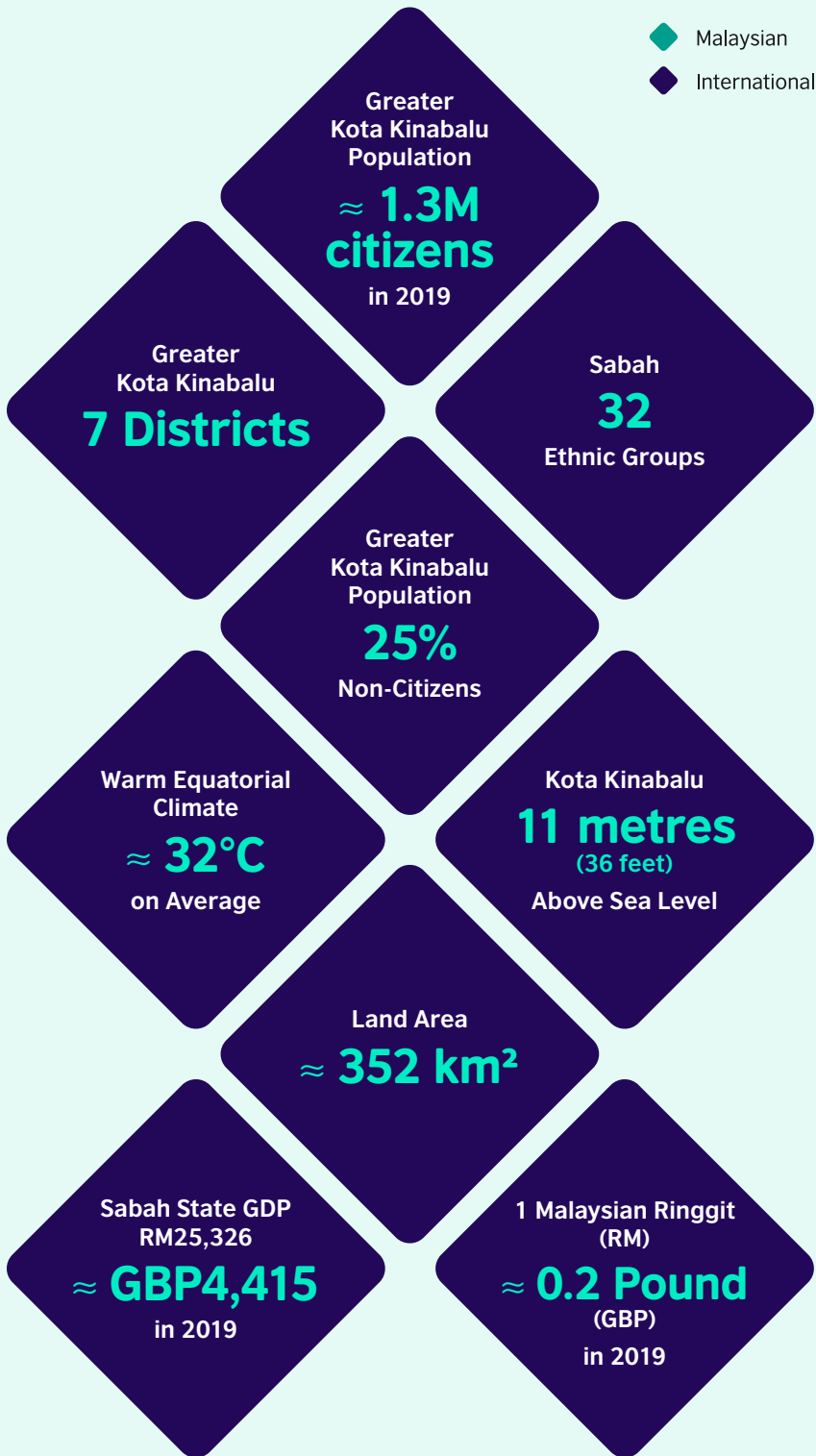
- China 598K,
- South Korea 396K
- Indonesia 115K
- Brunei 78K
- The Philippines 35K
- Singapore 34K
- UK and Ireland 29K

Eco-tourism is a key part of Sabah's tourism strategy.

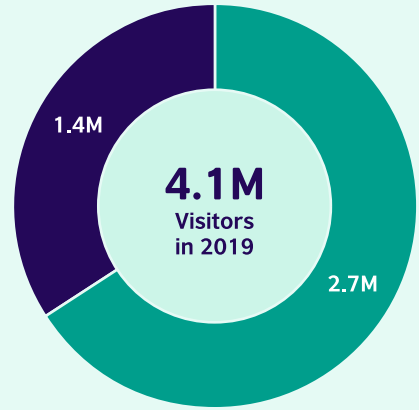
- The state has 6 nature conservation parks, including 3 terrestrial parks and 3 underwater parks: Kinabalu National Park; Crocker Range National Park; Tawau Hills Park; Turtle Islands National Park; Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park; and Pulau Tiga National Park.
- Kinabalu National park was established in 1964. It is the first heritage site in Malaysia which was recognised by UNESCO.⁹

⁹ ITDR, Sabah Tourism Board.

Kota Kinabalu in Numbers



◆ Malaysian
◆ International



Sabah State Policy on the Environment 2018 – 2033,
launched in 2017, was the first state policy of its kind in Malaysia

Mount Kinabalu has more than
2K flora species

Tun Sakaran Marine Park
is Malaysia's largest, covering
340 km²
of sea and coral reefs,
10 km² of land
and **8 islands**

Kota Kinabalu has

**5 government hospitals,
7 private hospitals, and
21 government clinics**

as of 2018

Community-based

PACOS trust,

which seeks to support indigenous
communities in Sabah, operates in

**14 districts and
23 geographical areas**

in Sabah

Context

After Sabah became part of Malaysia in 1963, Jesselton maintained its position as the capital city but was renamed Kota Kinabalu in 1968. It received official city status from the Malaysian government in 2000.¹⁰

Location/Region

Kota Kinabalu, is located in the West Coast of Sabah.

It has live partnerships with sister cities such as Vladivostok, Russia since 2010, Portland, USA since 2015, Gapyeong, South Korea since 2019 and with friendship cities like Rockingham, Australia since 2006, Wuhan, China since 2015 and Hangzhou, China since 2019.

Ethnic Diversity

Bahasa Malaysia is the national language which is spoken widely across ethnicities in Sabah. It has also been acculturated into the Sabahan Baku dialect; which is different from the dialects of West Malaysia.

Apart from the respective indigenous mother-tongues such as Kadazan, Dusun, Bajau, and Murut, Mandarin and some Chinese dialects like Hakka and Cantonese, as well as English are also widely spoken.¹¹

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, KK has 572K population in 2019. Among which:

- Bumiputera (Native) 306K
- Chinese 104K
- Others (includes Indians) 19K
- Non-citizens 143K

Inclusive Growth



Sabah Ministry of Community Development and People's Wellbeing was formed in October 2020.

Primary policies on inclusive growth include:

On welfare and equal opportunities:

- Welfare Services Policy to provide welfare services to Malaysian citizens who are in need in Sabah.
- Women's Development Policy to increase the participation and involvement of women in the development of Sabah and Malaysia.
- Prevention, Protection, Rehabilitation, Development and Integration Policy to assist the person with disability to be independent and enjoy a more secure, healthy and prosperous life.

- State Social Program Policy to ensure school children especially from the low-income group are able to attend school.

On knowledge promotion and awareness:

- Library Services Policy to create a knowledgeable society by increasing knowledge accessibility.
- Consumerism Policy to enhance consumer right and awareness among the community.
- Family Development Policy to raise awareness through happy family campaigns that can provide the foundation for the formation of a prosperous society.¹²

¹⁰ Sejarah awal Kota Kinabalu. <https://dbkk.sabah.gov.my/index.php/en/info-dbkk/latar-belakang-dbkk/profil-dbkk>

¹¹ Introduction. <https://www.sabah.gov.my/cms/?q=en/content/introduction>

¹² Kementerian Pembangunan Masyarakat dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna Negeri Sabah. P. 6 – 7.

Cultural, Arts and Civic Policy

Recognising cultural diversity as one of its strengths, the Sabah Cultural Board under the State Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment prioritises the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage.

Through the Sabah Art Gallery, the state also organises exhibitions which focus on gender issues. This is part of the effort to encourage more women to produce artworks and grow the art scene in Sabah. The gallery also organises masterclasses to help nurture budding local artists.

The Sabah Ministry of Resource Development & Information Technology has set up an online portal to list and track NGOs and social services in the state. This virtual community for Sabahans also allows easier access to information, updates and community news on arts and culture.

Key Policies in Cultural Industries

The Department of Industrial Development and Research (DIDR)

The DIDR was formed in 1977 by Sabah's State Cabinet directive and placed under the Ministry of Trade and Industry (previously known as the Ministry of Industrial Development).

- Its Investment Promotion Division actively promotes Sabah by meeting with potential investors, publishes

investment guidebooks, organises and coordinates trade and investment missions overseas, domestic and international seminar/business conferences, and trade exhibitions.¹³

Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (SEDIA)

In its 2018 annual report, SEDIA outlines strategic priorities in the creative economy, including:

- Develop coastal tourism
- Develop and modernise KK city as a leading creative city by boosting tourism attractions in Greater KK, improve mobility and travel experience, boosting private-public healthcare for health tourism and upgrade early childcare education.
- Under its encouragement, University College Sabah Foundation has launched an animation programme to train talents in animation and graphic design.¹⁴
- **ITCC Penampang** is a "Private Sector Initiative Project" by SEDIA. It acts as a catalyst to spur creative macro and micro economy in Penampang as a technology hub, propelling Sabah into the innovation-led economy. It also provides a large space for tourism and exhibition activities, and Information Technology related innovative products in particular, and offers incubator business facilities for both local and overseas entrepreneurs to enhance value added products.¹⁵

Sabah Cultural Board



Substantive amendments to the Sabah Cultural Board Enactment (1996) were made in 2010 and 2017 respectively.

- It sought to expand the functions of the Sabah Cultural Board in creating a mechanism for cultural preservation, including to protect and promote cultural products as indigenous

intellectual property for the interests of cultural entrepreneurs in the State, and include the Sabah Art Gallery in the function to set up, maintain, coordinate and promote cultural centres.

- It offers a protection framework to cultural intellectual property for third-party personal interests.¹⁶

¹³ Department of Industrial Development and Research. <https://didr.sabah.gov.my>

¹⁴ https://www.sedia.com.my/SEDIA_AR2018.pdf, accessed in July 2021.

¹⁵ About ITCC Penampang. <https://www.itcc.com.my/about-itcc-penampang>

¹⁶ Sabah Cultural Board; Borneo Post.

Capacity Building, Digital Development

Key programmes carried out under the auspices of the Sabah Cultural Board include publications, recordings and festivals. The Board aims to celebrate and document the variety of cultural practices and groups in the state.

- Sabah Art Gallery forges partnerships and regular collaborations with local and foreign agencies and corporations.
- To empower the indigenous community, PACOS Trust runs KeTAMU¹⁷, a creative fair in collaboration with Green Borneo: to create a space for eco-social

equality. Mindful of fair trade, sustainable production and consumption, KeTAMU provides a market platform for Sabahan enterprises and independent creatives to connect and do business.

- Forever Sabah¹⁸ identifies itself as a civil society entity that drives a collaborative social movement. It aims to synthesise Sabahan knowledge and experience by working across areas of expertise in different sectors. With an emphasis on responsible custodianship of the environment and indigenous culture, the organisation dedicates its work to build a circular economy.



There is a number of youths, including fresh graduates from Institut Kraf Negara, who are interested to learn traditional handicrafts. The plus point is they are using social media channels to boost sales. There's so much potential in local handicraft. It's a matter of finding the right channels to market it... Over 300 craftsmen across Kota Belud are registered with Kraftangan Malaysia (Sabah). They run their small-time business from home, right from sourcing for raw materials to creating intricately designed pieces.

Abdul Halim Ali, Director of Kraftangan Malaysia (Sabah)¹⁹

¹⁷ <https://pacostrust.com/2019/08/21/ketamu>

¹⁸ <https://www.leapspiral.org/work>

¹⁹ <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/12/651370/maximise-income-sabah-parks-plans-reactivate-investment-arm>

Culture and Inclusive Development – case studies

69

[The Black Box is] the first of its kind here in Kota Kinabalu. It will provide artists with an affordable and manageable venue for their events. [It] will also have a fully-equipped experimental workshop area. The availability of such a space here will help develop higher standard of performances; serving talents from a broad spectrum, from drama to storytelling, from film to puppetry, from mime to music and stand-up comedy. It would be available to everyone in the arts scene and to private and public organisations.

Datuk Adeline Leong, founder of the Society of Performing Arts, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (SPArKS)²⁰

²⁰ <http://dailyexpress.com.my/news.cfm?NewsID=89122>

BENTARAKATA

BENTARAKATA aims to empower the deaf and LGBTQ+ community, with art programmes that focus on community films and poetry. The organisation leverages non-violent direct action (NVDA) and hosts regular workshops in KK, as well as Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Bangkok.²¹

Black Box KK – Sabah’s First Community Theatre

Black Box KK is Sabah’s first community theatre for performing arts set up by the International Institute of Human Capital and Entrepreneur Sabah (IINSCAPE).

The theatre seats 400, and provides a multi-functional performing arts space. It aims to:²²

- Enable professional development of young Sabahan artists, performers, groups and companies by featuring showcasing performances by diverse talents.
- Provide a fully-equipped experimental workshop facilities for capacity building among Sabahans
- Develop a theatre-going public in Kota Kinabalu to inculcate appreciation and support for the performing arts.
- Provide and curate public programmes such as exhibitions and screenings by artists, photographers and filmmakers to introduce a variety of art forms to the local community while presenting Sabahan creatives through tourist-friendly shows.

Sabah Foundation (Yayasan Sabah Group), 1966 – present

Established through Enactment No. 8 of the Sabah State Legislative Assembly, the group aims to uplift the quality of education and educational facilities for Sabahans, mainly by providing scholarships and student loans.²³

Teaching and Learning Factory (TLF), 2014 – present

The Teaching and Learning Factory (TLF) was established as an ancillary arm of University College Sabah Foundation in 2014. It develops and coordinates educational programmes that further human talent development, through short courses. Its work is targeted at the marginalised, especially those who are in the bottom 40% of the income distribution, and working adults seeking professional development.²⁴

Special Programme for Sabahan Youth, Program Khas Anak Negeri (PKAN), 2015 – present

PKAN is a special programme created by University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF) in 2015. It is funded by the Malaysian Prime Minister Department (JPM). One part of this programme is for capacity building, to assist Sabahan youths who come from the bottom 40% income (B40) group.

- The programmes are designed to impart basic knowledge and skills, especially in the creative industry via short-term training workshops.
- With a hands-on coaching-approach, students not only gain artistic skills, but also advance economically through transferrable entrepreneurship – critical skills in the gig economy.²⁵

City panorama.

Photo © Tourism Malaysia

²¹ <https://bentarakata.substack.com>

²² Black Box KK – Sabah’s First Community Theatre. <http://kepkas.sabah.gov.my/inside-kepkas/black-box-kk-sabahs-first-community-theatre>

²³ Education. <http://www.yayasansabahgroup.org.my/education.cfm>

²⁴ Program Khas Anak Negeri (Pkan) Sabah. <https://www.ucsf.edu.my/pkan>

²⁵ Program Khas Anak Negeri (Pkan) Sabah. <https://www.ucsf.edu.my/pkan>



Environment and Sustainability

Sabah State government has prioritised environmental education and highlight the voice of the indigenous community in approaches to sustainable development and the management of local natural and cultural heritage assets.

Since the early 2000s, under its environmental education policy, the Bornean Biodiversity and Ecosystems Programme has mobilised stakeholders together to better connect and share knowledge and best practice on sustainable development.

- Sabah Environmental Protection Association (SEPA)²⁶ has been at the forefront of championing

environmental awareness, education and conservation. SEPA was instrumental in holding the government accountable and to drive policy change in energy development. For instance, it has combined forces with 4 other NGOs to form the GREENsurf alliance, which has resulted in a successful abrogation of a coal-fired power plant in 2011.

- WWF-Malaysia is also vocal in mobilising community and political actions. Their recent call-for-action survey asked respondents to address their environmental concerns to local political leaders.²⁷



... Sabah [is] a world class eco, wellness, health and sports tourism destination.

Sabah.LEAP Long Term Strategic Action Plan 2035²⁸

Key Policies in Environment and Urban Planning

Sabah Structure Plan 2033 (SSP2033). Town and Regional Planning Department, Sabah

This plan is shaped by a range of factors including living in a clean place, access to good transport systems, equitable access to services and facilities, high standard of affordable housing, education and health care, confidence in safety, opportunities for employment, freedom of worship and embraces

diversity, a culturally and intellectually stimulating environment and foster a sense of identity and belonging.²⁹

Sabah LEAP (Long Term Strategic Action Plan 2035). Unit Perancang Ekonomi Negeri (UPEN)

Published in 2018, the action plan provides a roadmap to elevate Sabah into an ‘innovative, knowledge-based, competitive and resilient economy’ via high-end, environmentally friendly investment. It positions Sabah as a world class eco, wellness, health and sports tourism destination.³⁰

²⁶ <https://www.sepa.my>

²⁷ <https://www.wwf.org.my/?28067/Protecting-Sabahs-Environment-is-a-Collective-Responsibility>

²⁸ http://bigconnectivity.org/beta/sites/default/files/2018-10/ADB.Briefing.Sabah_.LEAP_.Highlights.July2018_REV.pdf

²⁹ Sabah Structure Plan 2033. P. 2 – 4. <http://www.townplanning.sabah.gov.my/en/Structure%20Plan.html>

³⁰ http://bigconnectivity.org/beta/sites/default/files/2018-10/ADB.Briefing.Sabah_.LEAP_.Highlights.July2018_REV.pdf

Bornean Elephant Action Plan 2020 – 2029. Sabah Wildlife Department.

The goal of this Bornean Elephant Action Plan 2020 – 2029 is to provide direction and guidance on the strategies, priorities and actions for elephant conservation at the state level for the period 2020 – 2029 (10 years).

- It is the continuation of a five-year State Action Plan that was published in 2012. Under the 2012 initiative, Bornean elephant was listed as ‘Totally Protected’ and the government has successfully created more protected areas to reach about 26% of Sabah’s land mass at the end of 2018.
- Actions proposed in the follow-up plan intend to implement ways to secure a future for this iconic species and to allow for a smooth socio-economic development of the areas where the elephants are roaming. It aims to improve the protection and halt elephant killings to reduce current levels of elephant deaths, to improve landscape connectivity and permeability, to ensure the best ex-situ practices for elephant management and conservation and to monitor and predict elephant population trends.³¹

Mantanani Island Ecotourism Pilot Project 2017 – 2021

The Malaysian Government and the State of Sabah have identified the Mantanani Islands off the northwestern coast of Sabah as a potential site for developing a pilot ecotourism island resort to serve as a benchmark for similar developments in BIMP-EAGA (Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area). To bring a more sustainable

and inclusive use of natural resources, the project requires the preparation and implementation of a stakeholder-based integrated strategy to deliver the following outcomes:

- A sustainable marine and terrestrial environment management planning framework to be known as the Mantanani Marine Spatial Plan (MMSP), that sets the context and regulatory framework for all future development and conservation activities at Mantanani;
- Enhanced living standards for the local community derived from improved sustainable utilities, education and health;
- Strong community participation in the tourism supply chain, based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) sustainable destination criteria set within the framework of the MMSP;
- Well-developed supporting economic and social infrastructure;
- Controlled daily visitor volumes at Mantanani, by introducing capacity limits and low impact tourism under the MMSP, and higher quality tourist facilities and services.

The project is estimated to take 51 months to complete from 2017 to 2021. The public sector component of the project is estimated to cost USD16.1 million, while the private sector component is estimated to cost up to USD50.4 million.³² Meanwhile, Yayasan Hasanah (Hasanah Foundation) and Reef Check Malaysia (RCM) are working with local communities on Mantanani island to protect underwater ecosystems through education and coral rehabilitation programmes.³³

³¹ Bornean Elephant Action Plan 2020-2029. Executive Summary.

³² Ecotourism Pilot Project: Mantanani Islands. P. vii – ix.

³³ Sabah’s Hidden Gem. <http://yayasanhasanah.org/sabahs-hidden-gem>

State Government Leadership in Eco-education



Sabah Environmental Education Policy, launched in 2009, aims to implement environmental stewardship and promote a sustainable lifestyle among Sabahans by:

- Crafting a proactive role of various stakeholders to actively participate and implement environmental education, including government agencies, educational institutions non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the media, private sectors, professional bodies and the public.
- Devoting resources to increase efficacy of environmental programmes through networks such as the Sabah Environmental Education Network (SEEN), while enhancing the capacity and capability of environmental educators to deliver results.³⁴

Sabah State Policy on the Environment 2018 – 2033, launched in 2017, was the first state policy of its kind in Malaysia. It aims to provide a vision for environmental conditions and standards, an environmental framework for regulatory mechanisms, and guidance for decision makers and agencies.

- The policy principles are based on clean air, healthy rivers and forests, productive land, bountiful seas and cohesive communities.
- Additional strategies and action plans have also been identified with the latter scheduled to be implemented between 2018 and 2033.³⁵

Culture, Environment and Rural Communities – case studies

Raleigh Borneo

The charity focuses on providing safe water access and sanitation, building resilient communities, and conserving Borneo's biodiversity. Raleigh Borneo and Sabah's rural communities run awareness campaigns, led by villages, under its WASH programmes. It also helps develop sustainable livelihoods for young people.³⁶

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Eco Campus, 2013 – present

UMS' Eco Campus contains a gallery, medical and marine museums, and a nature educational camp. The camp offers many activities such as hiking, camping or even night frogging.³⁷

Nature Inspiration Art Gallery (NIAG), 2014 – present

The art gallery was set up by University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF) as an initiative to fulfil its Green Concept and Philosophy's vision of conserving the rich cultural identities of people in Sabah and its biodiversity.³⁸

³⁴ Sabah Environmental Education Policy.

³⁵ Borneo Post.

³⁶ Raleigh Borneo. <https://raleighinternational.org>

³⁷ UMS Eco Campus Tourism. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/ums-eco-campus-tourism>

³⁸ Nature Inspiration Art Gallery (NIAG). <https://www.ucsf.edu.my/nature-inspiration-art-gallery>

Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre 1964 – present

Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre was founded in 1964, to rehabilitate orphaned orangutans. The site is 43 km² of protected land at the edge of Kabil Forest Reserve. Today around 60 to 80 orangutans are living free in the reserve. It provides medical care for orphaned and confiscated orangutans as well as dozens of other wildlife species.

- It is also considered by the Wildlife Department to be a useful educational tool with which to educate both the locals and visitors alike, but they are adamant that the education must not interfere with the rehabilitation process. Visitors are restricted to walkways and are not allowed to approach or handle the apes.³⁹

Kinabalu Ecolinc Project

Initiated by Sabah Parks, the environmental project is a partnership between Kinabalu Park and Crocker Range park to create a harmonised habitat corridor for people, plants and wildlife. It also aims to complement current conservation practices, guided by the principle that local communities are best placed to protect their natural environment and heritage.

- Kinabalu Ecolinc Zone, representing the zoning areas between the two parks, was selected as one of the three demonstration sites for the European Union (EU) – REDD+ Climate Change Action programme namely “Tackling Climate Change through Sustainable Forest Management and Community Development”, starting from January 2014 to December 2017.⁴⁰

Semporna Islands Darwin Project – Marine Conservation Society (SIDP-MCS)

Since 1998, the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and Sabah Parks have been collaborating on the ‘Semporna Islands Project’ (SIP) to protect the marine biodiversity in the Semporna area and the livelihoods of those who work in the area.

- The project birthed the Tun Sakaran Marine Park in 2004. It is Malaysia’s largest marine park, situated off the southeast coast of Sabah and covering 340 km² of sea and coral reefs, 10 km² of land and 8 islands.
- The post-project phase, Semporna Islands Darwin Project, concentrated on enhancing understanding and awareness of marine biodiversity and the benefits of marine protected area (MPA) management, and working with local communities to encourage alternative livelihoods to take pressure off reef resources.⁴¹

Community Use Zone (CUZ)

The CUZs aim to balance existing local communities’ needs with conservation, encourage participation of and collaboration with the local communities under Crocker Range Park Management, and protect their cultures and traditional knowledge.⁴²

Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF)

The initiative is a partnership of six countries, formed in 2007 to address the threats facing coastal and marine resources. Malaysia’s CTI-CFF National Plan Action has proposed for one million hectares in the northern part of Sabah (Kudat, Marudu and Pitas, including 50 islands) to be designated as a park.⁴³

The Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC), 2008

The Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre is the only sun bear conservation centre in the world. It was founded in Sabah, Malaysia in 2008 with two aims: to provide care and rehabilitation to rescued sun bears, and to increase awareness of sun bears internationally.⁴⁴

Tunku Abdul Rahman Park in Kota Kinabalu.

Photo © Tourism Malaysia

³⁹ Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. <https://www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/about-us/sepilok-orangutan-rehabilitation-centre>

⁴⁰ Kinabalu Ecolinc Project. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my>

⁴¹ SIDP-MCS. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my>

⁴² Community Use Zone (CUZ). <https://www.sabahparks.org.my>

⁴³ Coral Triangle Initiative. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my>

⁴⁴ The Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre. <https://www.bsbcc.org.my/index.html>



Cultural Ecosystem and Infrastructure

As per other Malaysian cities, the main local cultural funders like Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA), Yayasan Hasanah (Hasanah Foundation), Yayasan Sime Darby (Sime Darby Foundation) and international bodies such as the British Council, Japan Foundation, Goethe Institute offer grants for issue-specific arts and culture projects.

Sabah has a diverse indigenous culture comprising, Kadazan-Dusun, Chinese, Bajau, Malay, Bugis, Murut. There have been growing calls to ensure these various indigenous ethnicities and their lands are protected. Many local and international funders have risen to the call.

Driven by government direction and a vocal and involved grassroots community, the cultural development in Kota Kinabalu is underpinned by eco-social missions. NGOs such as LEAP Spiral⁴⁵ and Coalition 3H⁴⁶ are at the centre of activating local, regional and cross-border collaborations, specifically around sustainability and responsible stewardship.

- LEAP Spiral stands for Land, Empowerment, Animals and People is a linchpin of KK. It has facilitated more than 50 local, regional and international partners. The organisation aims to increase policy transparency, build local conservation capacity and develop effective and inclusive conservation projects to protect and restore Sabah's remaining forests and wildlife populations. Key LEAP projects include: support for community-based conservation initiatives, restoration of degraded lowland forest, establishment of a bio-bank to finance long-term restoration of 34,000-hectares Orang Utan habitat, to name a few.
- Coalition 3H comprises the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC), Borneo Futures, Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC), Forever Sabah, Jaringan Orang Asal Se-Malaysia (JOAS), Land Empowerment Animals People (LEAP), PACOS Trust and WWF-Malaysia.

Regional Stakeholders and Case Studies of Strategic Partnerships

Sabah is increasingly connected to and collaborating with cities and other stakeholders in its wider region – e.g. on a range of cultural, economic and environmental agendas.

Greater Sulu-Sulawesi Corridor

The Greater Sulu–Sulawesi Corridor is a maritime corridor that covers North Sulawesi in Indonesia, Sabah in Malaysia, and Mindanao and Palawan in the Philippines. The corridor is mainly determined by the geography of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, a highly biodiverse, globally significant biogeographic unit in the heart of the Coral Triangle—the centre of the world's highest concentration of marine biodiversity. The corridor also serves as the centre of barter trade in BIMP-EAGA, particularly in agriculture and aquaculture products.⁴⁷

Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA)

The Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, or BIMP-EAGA, is a cooperation initiative established in 1994 to accelerate development in remote and less developed areas in the four participating Southeast Asian countries.

- These areas cover the entire sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, the provinces of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku and West Papua of Indonesia, the states of Sabah and Sarawak and the federal territory of Labuan in Malaysia, and the island of Mindanao and the province of Palawan in the Philippines.
- Through BIMP-EAGA, the objectives of the countries are to generate balanced and inclusive growth as well as contribute to regional economic integration in the ASEAN Economic Community, boost trade, tourism, and investments by easing the movement of people, goods, and services across borders, make the best use of common infrastructure and natural resources, and take the fullest advantage of economic complementation.

⁴⁵ <https://www.leapspiral.org>

⁴⁶ <https://www.humanshabitatshighways.org>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

West Borneo Economic Corridor

The West Borneo Economic Corridor is BIMP-EAGA's oil and gas corridor and traverses the areas of Brunei Darussalam, West Kalimantan in Indonesia, and Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia, which are major exporters of crude petroleum and natural gas. It has a well-established transport infrastructure and linkages from Pontianak in West Kalimantan to Kuching in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. There are existing trade and investment ties within the corridor through traditional border crossing points.⁴⁸

Investment Tax Incentive Package for Sabah Development Corridor (SDC)

Under the Sabah Development Corridor, investors are given tax incentives. Investors in the creative cluster (design academies, art academies and art schools) receive full tax exemption on statutory income for 5 years, or investment tax allowance of 100% on qualifying capital expenditure for 5 years which can be offset against 100% of statutory income, and full exemption on import duty and sales tax exemption subject to current policy.⁴⁹

2nd Asia Parks Congress, 2022

The Asia Parks Congress was developed to address the increasing pressures on the region's protected areas, discuss the different challenges, share experiences and learnings, and promote collaboration among participants. The 1st Asia Parks Congress took place in 2013, while the 2nd Asia Parks Congress is scheduled to be held in Kota Kinabalu in 2022.⁵⁰

5th Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia (PASEA), 16 – 22 July 2018

The 5th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia was hosted by the Department of Sabah Museum in Kota Kinabalu. This Study Group is open to all ICTM members who are involved in research and documentation on the performing arts (including music, dance and theatre) of Southeast Asia.⁵¹

The Turtle Islands Heritage Protected Area (TIHPA) Project

TIHPA is the first transboundary protected area for the green sea turtle in the world. It covers nine islands, three in Malaysia and six in the Philippines. The islands in Malaysia are Pulau Selingan, Pulau Bakungan Kechil and Pulau Gulisan. Its mission is to conserve and manage marine turtles and other natural resources, and to make TIHPA a model transboundary conservation area.⁵²

The United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC)

UCLG ASPAC is one of the Regional Sections of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), formed of the International Union of Local Authorities, United Towns Organization (ITO), and World Association of the Major Metropolises (METROPOLIS). It was established in Taipei in 2004, and is the key knowledge management hub on local government issues in the Asia Pacific region. The Malaysia Association of Local Authorities (MALA) is a member of UCLG ASPAC.⁵³

Asia Protected Areas Partnership – Sabah Parks (member), 2018

The Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) serves as a platform to help governments and other stakeholders collaborate for more effective management of protected areas in the region. Initiated in 2013 at the first-ever Asia Parks Congress held in Japan, it is chaired by IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, and co-chaired by an APAP member organisation on a rotational basis.⁵⁴

Tourism Promotion Organisation for Asia Pacific Cities (TPO)

The organisation is an inter-city network to develop the tourism industry and economies of Asian Pacific cities as a whole. There are 10 member cities from Malaysia. Kota Kinabalu is one of them.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Economic Corridors. <https://www.bimp-eaga.asia/about-bimp-eaga/economic-corridors>

⁴⁹ Investment Tax Incentive Package for Sabah Development Corridor (SDC). https://www.sedia.com.my/SDC_Incentives.html

⁵⁰ Asia Park Congress. <https://internationalrelations.sabahparks.org.my/apc.php>

⁵¹ 5th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia: Call for Papers. <https://ictmusic.org/group/ictm-study-group-performing-arts-southeast-asia/post/5th-symposium-ictm-study-group-performing>

⁵² TIHPA Project. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my>

⁵³ The United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific. <https://uclg-aspac.org/en>

⁵⁴ Asia Protected Areas Partnership. <http://www.asiaprotectedareaspartnership.org/index.php/2015-08-07-07-34-12>

⁵⁵ Tourism Promotion Organization for Asia Pacific Cities. <http://aptpo.org/eng>

Heritage Assets and Activation

The Sabah government has gazetted 24 historic places as state heritage sites. The move is part of the provision made by the recently passed State Heritage Enactment 2017 bill. The implementation of the enactment had been entrusted to the Sabah Museum Department.

The gazetted historic sites include the old Kota Kinabalu post office now the office of the Sabah Tourism Board, the Atkinson Clock Tower, the Kota Kinabalu Padang Merdeka, the Mat Salleh Memorial in Tambunan and Semporna's Tengkorak Hill archeological site.⁵⁶

The Kota Kinabalu Heritage Walk is actively promoted by Sabah Tourism – led by professional tourist guides, these scheduled free walks take the visitor to landmarks around a city giving visitors a chance to experience its history, heritage and culture. The sites are also marked on city maps, visitors can also independently plan their visits. Many highlights of the KK Heritage Walk are war time and colonial historical sites.

- Many highlights of the KK Heritage Walk are war time and colonial historical sites.
- Others like the Pillars of Sabah are derelict buildings currently owned by the Sabah Art Gallery. As an intervention of the derelict site, artists are invited to propose activation plan, including murals and other participatory public arts projects. Pillars-related activation programmes are managed by a dedicated coordinator and executed by the local arts community with funding from both public and private collaborators.⁵⁷

Heritage activation – a selection

Heritage Village, 1985 – present

Located within the Ethno Botanical Gardens in the Sabah Museum Complex, the Heritage Village enables visitors to view the different traditional houses of Sabah. These include a Bajau House, a Murut longhouse, a Chinese farmhouse, a Bamboo House and a House of Skulls.⁵⁸

Koisaan Cultural Village (KCV) Cultural Village, 1989 – present

The cultural village is 15 minutes away by car from Kota Kinabalu, at the Kadazandusun Cultural Association located at Hongkod Koisaan, Penampang. The village focuses on the Kadazandusun tribes in Sabah and offers visitors a chance to view these tribes' lifestyles in homes identical to the ones they used to live in years ago.⁵⁹

Monsopiad Cultural Village, 1996 – present

The Monsopiad Cultural Village commemorates the lives of the legendary Kadazan and head hunter warriors, Monsopiad. It is built by descendants of Monsopiads, and sits on the actual site where the warriors lived centuries ago.⁶⁰

Mari Mari Culture Village, 2008-present

The culture village introduces visitors to the different traditional homes of Sabah's five major ethnic communities – the Bajau, Lundayeh, Murut, Rungus and Dusun. The homes are built by descendants of the tribes which they represent. Demonstrations which take place at the village include blowpipe-making, fire-starting, and tattoo-making. Visitors are also able to sample traditional cuisines from each ethnic group.⁶¹

⁵⁶ 24 historic places gazetted as Sabah heritage sites. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2018/02/22/24-historic-places-gazetted-as-sabah-heritage-sites>

⁵⁷ <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/12/14/community-art-project-pillars-of-sabah-returns-with-30-new-artists>

⁵⁸ Department of Sabah Museum. <https://museum.sabah.gov.my/exhibition/68>

⁵⁹ Koisaan Cultural Village (KCV). <https://kdca.org.my/about/KCV>

⁶⁰ Monsopiad Cultural Village. <https://www.monsopiad.com>

⁶¹ Mari Mari Culture Village. <https://www.sabahatourism.com/destination/mari-mari-cultural-village/?locale=en>



The Mari Mari Cultural Village is situated amidst a remote forest setting in Kionsom, Inanam; away from the hustling and bustling city. Its surrounding atmosphere may faintly remind you of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s ‘The Lost World’ in the Sabahan sense.

Sabah Tourism Board

UNESCO Titles In and Around KK

World Heritage Site – Kinabalu Park

The Kinabalu Park is located on the northern end of the island of Borneo. Its main attraction is Mount Kinabalu (4,095m), the highest mountain between the Himalayas and New Guinea. Despite its geological youth, it possesses an exceptionally high number of species with living relics of natural vegetation covering over 93% of the Park area.

- The park contains an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 vascular plant species including representatives from more than half the families of all flowering plants. Faunal diversity is also high and the park represents an important centre for endemism. The majority of Borneo’s mammals, birds, amphibians and invertebrates (many threatened and vulnerable) also live in the park.⁶²

UNESCO Global Geopark – Kinabalu

Kinabalu Geopark covers an area of about 4,750 km² and includes the traditional and indigenous villages of Kadazan-Dusun, Bajau and Rungus tribes. Kinabalu started to become an aspiring geopark in 2015 and in 2019, it was designated as a National Geopark. It was awarded the UNESCO Global Geopark status due its outstanding geological heritage as well as substantial biological and cultural assets.⁶³

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves – Crocker Range

The Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve (CRBR) is the largest area in Malaysia with terrestrial ecosystems and natural landscapes. Located in Sabah’s west coast, CRBR has a rich biodiversity and consists of legally protected Crocker Range Park and three forest reserves. The area serves as a water catchment for towns and surrounding communities.⁶⁴

⁶² World Heritage Sites. <https://internationalrelations.sabahparks.org.my/whs.php>

⁶³ Kinabalu Geopark. <https://internationalrelations.sabahparks.org.my/geopark.php>

⁶⁴ Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve (CRBR). https://internationalrelations.sabahparks.org.my/mab_crbr.php

Cultural and Natural Assets

Atkinson Clock Tower, 1905 – present

One of the most enduring landmarks in Kota Kinabalu, it stands prominently on a bluff along Signal Hill Road adjacent to the old Police Station. This all-wood, no-nails structure was built in memory of Francis George Atkinson – the popular District Officer of Jesselton during the British North Borneo Chartered Company Administration. The Clock Tower has the distinction of being the oldest standing wooden structure in Kota Kinabalu that survived the destruction of Jesselton town during World War II. Still keeping time, it is managed by the Sabah Museum under its Antiquity and History section.⁶⁵

Gomantong Caves

Gomantong Caves is located within the Kinabatangan area, and a two-hour drive from Sandakan. It is one of the biggest cave systems in Sabah, and part of the Gomantong Forest Reserve which was gazetted in 1925 and covers an area of 3,000 ha. Gomantong Caves are made up of the black cave which reaches a height of 60m and is easily accessible to the public while the white cave is not accessible as it is much higher and requires caving and climbing equipment to traverse the treacherous terrain.⁶⁶

Sabah State Mosque, 1977 – present

This state mosque is a masterpiece of architecture with its dove-grey walls and glittering majestic domes with gold inlay. It is centrally located at Jalan Tunku Abdul Raman and it is a proof of unique combination of Islamic architecture and contemporary design. Up to 5,000 worshippers can be inside at one time. The mosque has become a popular place for visitors from all over the world. During prayer time, even Muslim women can visit the mosque as a special balcony is built that can fit 500 persons.⁶⁷

Tabin Wildlife Reserve, 1984 – present

Tabin Wildlife Reserve is located in the centre of the Dent Peninsula in eastern Sabah and 50 km northeast of Lahad Datu. Apart from its mammal population, this area is a haven for birds and birders as the secondary forest is not as tall as the primary forest, causing the birds to perch lower, making viewing, identification and photographing of birds easier.⁶⁸

Danum Valley Conservation Area, 1986 – present

Danum Valley Conservation Area is located in eastern Sabah, about 2.5-hour drive from the town of Lahad Datu. This is arguably one of Sabah's most important conservation biospheres covering primary lowland rainforest of 438 km². The conservation area has more than 300 species of birds, especially surrounding the Danum Valley Field Centre and the Borneo Rainforest Lodge.⁶⁹

Pillars of Sabah, 2018 – 2020

The Pillars of Sabah is a community art initiative and street art project that turned the abandoned site into an art showcase. It was led by filmmaker Jared Abdul Rahman, designer Melissa Lo and artist Red Hong Yi with the support and sponsorship of WWF-Malaysia and Nippon Paint Malaysia.

- “Pillars of Sabah 1” focused on a selection of Sabah personalities who have achieved significant success or played a role in the state's development.
- “Pillars of Sabah 2” was launched in conjunction with Earth Hour 2019, with 30 selected Sabah artists showcasing 30 different endangered animals from the state.⁷⁰
- In 2020, the theme of the project focused on unity and it was inaugurated on 20 December, International Human Solidarity Day.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Atkinson Clock Tower. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/atkinson-clock-tower/?locale=en>

⁶⁶ Gomantong Cave. <http://birdsmalaysia.my/sabah/#top5>

⁶⁷ Sabah State Mosque. <https://kotakinabalu.com/to-do/attractions/sabah-state-mosque>

⁶⁸ Tabin Wildlife Reserve. <http://birdsmalaysia.my/sabah/#top6>

⁶⁹ Danum Valley Conservation Area. <http://birdsmalaysia.my/sabah/#top3>

⁷⁰ The Pillars of Sabah: From the ashes, a derelict space becomes a community art space. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/life/2019/05/14/the-pillars-of-sabah-from-the-ashes-a-derelict-space-becomes-a-community-ar/1752724>; Official Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pillarsofsabah>

⁷¹ Community art project Pillars of Sabah returns with 30 new artists. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/12/14/community-art-project-pillars-of-sabah-returns-with-30-new-artists>

Kinabalu Park, 1964 – present

Kinabalu Park, gazetted as a park in 1964, became the first Park in the state of Sabah. The park covers an area of 754 km² and its main feature is Mount Kinabalu (4,095.2 m), the highest mountain between the Himalayas and New Guinea.⁷²

Crocker Range Park, 1984 – present

Crocker Range Park is located in the west coast of Sabah. It is the largest state terrestrial park comprising an area of 139,919 ha. Most of the park is covered with forest with a tract of perhaps the last remaining hills of dipterocarp forest in the west coast of Sabah. It is an important water catchment area, being the headwater of five major rivers in the west coast of the state.⁷³

Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, 1974 – present

Tunku Abdul Rahman Park is a state park located in Gaya Bay, 3 kilometres offshore from Kota Kinabalu. Gazetted in 1974, the park covers an area of 50 km², consisting of 5 islands, their surrounding reefs, and sea. The main objective of the park is to protect its fauna, flora, and marine ecosystems.⁷⁴

Pulau Tiga Park, 1978 – present

Pulau Tiga Park, gazetted in 1978, covers 158 km², most of which is sea. It comprises three small islands – Pulau Tiga, Pulau Kalampunian Besar and Pulau Kalampunian Damit (snake island) and it was named after the largest island, Pulau Tiga. It possesses interesting flora and fauna and a rich marine life, with good diving and snorkelling over the reefs.⁷⁵

Lok Kawi Wildlife Park, 2007 – present

The Lok Kawi Wildlife Park, located along the Penampang-Papar old road, was officially opened to the public on 17 February 2007. The main objective of the park is to become a family-oriented destination and the emphasis is placed on the Children's Zoo. Among the inhabitants of the zoo are the Borneo Pygmy elephants, Proboscis monkey, Malayan tiger, as well as different species of deer. Visitors also have the opportunity to go jungle trekking along the botanical trail.⁷⁶

TAHAL Tinopikon Park, 2008 – present

TAGAL Tinopikon Park is located at Kg. Notoruss, in Penampang, Sabah. The park enables visitors to experience an authentic village life focusing on nature as well as enjoy local food prepared by the local community.⁷⁷

Tun Adnan Sports Complex (Kompleks Sukan Tun Adnan), n.d.

It is a sports centre managed by Innoprise Capital Sdn. Bhd. which is funded by Sabah Foundation Group (Yayasan Sabah Group).⁷⁸

⁷² Kinabalu Park. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my/kinabalu-park>

⁷³ Crocker Range Park. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my/crocker-range-park>

⁷⁴ Tunku Abdul Rahman Park. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my/tunku-abdul-rahman-park>

⁷⁵ Pulau Tiga Park. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my/pulau-tiga-park>

⁷⁶ Lok Kawi Wildlife Park. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/lok-kawi-wildlife-park/?locale=en>

⁷⁷ Tagal Tinopikon Park. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/tagal-tinopikon-park>

⁷⁸ Kompleks Sukan Tun Adnan. <http://www.yayasansabahgroup.org.my/bm/facilities.cfm>

Tamparuli Arts Camp 2019 – basic drawing, airbrush and basic woodcut.

Photo © Tamparuli Living Arts Centre
(TaLAC)



Sample of ‘Movers and Shakers’ in the Cultural and Creative Sector of Kota Kinabalu

The creative community draws on inspirations of local culture and natural landscape. As consumers become increasingly conscious of eco-friendly and responsible consumption, homegrown brands such as Chanteek Borneo – a print motif textile studio; Sang Tukang – a pottery atelier; and JF Productions – design company that specialises in upcycling – are gaining traction.

A teal diamond-shaped icon containing a white quotation mark.

It’s exciting to see how many of us in Sabah are utilising our Borneo heritage and trying to include that within modern art forms. It makes it raw and exciting. I think Sabah is going through something of our own ‘artistic renaissance’ at the moment.

Nadira Ilana, an independent filmmaker⁷⁹

⁷⁹ <http://borneoartcollective.org/featuredprojects/2016/6/17/big-stories-kampong-bongkud-and-nadira-ilana>

Table 1 Selected Kota Kinabalu stakeholders⁸⁰

Media/Film/Digital	Arts	Crossover – Culture/Arts/Lifestyle
NG Picture, 2013 – present	Amandus Paul Panan, dancer	Don. C, streetwear designer
Siung Films, 2013 – present	Borneo Dance Theatre, 2012 – present	Japson Wong, upcycling artist
Nadira Ilana, indie filmmaker and activist	Red Hong Yi, artist	Nadira Ilana, founder of Telan Bulan Films
Aaron Lam, organiser, Jesselton Artisan Market (JAM)	Rithaudin Abdul Kadir, dancer	Pangrok Sulap, 2010 – present
Andrew Lee, event organiser, emcee and radio host	Adam Kitingan, Sang Tukang	Pison Bin Jaujip, entrepreneur and advocator of local and traditional produce and dishes from Sabah
	Yee I-Lann, artist	Society of Performing Arts Kota Kinabalu Sabah (SPArKS), 2007-present
	Anne Antah, founder of Chanteek Borneo	Tamu-Tamu Collective, 2015
		Jennifer Linggi, managing curator of Sabah Art Gallery
		Cynthia Ong, founder of LEAP Spiral

Media/Film/Digital

NG Picture, 2013 – present

NG Picture was founded by Nova Goh in 2013. It is an award-winning documentary production house based in Kota Kinabalu. Nova Goh has been creating content all over Borneo for decades, winning awards for his independent documentaries and screened at festivals across the world such as “The Last Ring Lady” and “The Love of Tapang Tree”.⁸¹

Siung Films, 2013 – present

Siung Films was established to share on the screen the stories and legends of the peoples of Borneo to the world. The company is dedicated in the preservation of the environment and also offers education programmes for children with emphasis on the environment, welfare of children and community development.⁸²

Nadira Ilana, indie filmmaker and activist

Nadira Ilana is the first East Malaysian filmmaker to receive the Justin Louis Grant. The documentary The Silent Riot of this 32-year-old tells the political-historical story of the 1986 Sabah riots.⁸³ She is also an advocate for national representation of East Malaysian culture.⁸⁴

Andrew Lee, event organiser, emcee and radio host

Andrew Lee⁸⁵ is a KK-based emcee and radio host of Sabah VFM⁸⁶. His programme features up-and-coming performers such as vocalist and guitarist Angelyca Laura, singer-songwriter Phoebe Tsen, musician Straw Lim, to name a few.

⁸⁰ For the purpose of this report, cultural influencers are defined as the media or cultural sector go to people comprising key opinion leaders who are networked into the public, private and cultural scene. They or their organisations, where possible, have a substantial following (>50,000 followers) especially on social media and/or digital channels and are seen as credible experts in their field and can influence change, innovating culture and arts practices through their programmes. In order to provide a sampling of the movers and shakers, they have been categorised into 3 key sectors comprising media, film and digitals, the arts, and those within a crossover of culture, arts and lifestyle.

⁸¹ NG Picture. <https://www.ng-picture.com>

⁸² Siung Films. <https://siungfilms.com/our-team>

⁸³ <https://www.telanbulanfilms.com/pressmedia/tag/nadira+ilana>

⁸⁴ <https://www.nst.com.my/lifestyle/pulse/2018/12/441559/indie-filmmaker-dusun-descent-advocates-more-cultural-representation>

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/emceeandrewlee>

⁸⁶ <http://sabahvfm.rtm.gov.my>

**Aaron Lam, organiser,
Jesselton Artisan Market (JAM)**

Aaron Lam runs the bi-monthly JAM creative marketplace that provides an opportunity for local artisans. Founded in 2017, JAM features a wide genre of creative activities from decorative arts, jewellery, furniture, clothing, food items to handmade creations. Lam expanded online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A teal diamond-shaped icon containing a white quotation mark.

JAM online is a good opportunity for us to reach people outside of KK and other parts of Malaysia... People from everywhere can experience the market in the comfort of their homes... Our followers have said that they love how the online market is presented online, and they still feel connected with their favourite artisans' goods... We want to build a culture appreciating and contributing to the growth of our local musicians... Of course, the whole goal of the market is also to encourage people to support our local businesses in difficult times like these.

Aaron Lam, organiser, Jesselton Artisan Market (JAM)⁸⁷

⁸⁷ <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2021/02/663594/kota-kinabalu-beloved-jesselton-artisan-market-goes-virtual>

Arts

Amandus Paul Panan, dancer

Amandus Paul Pananis a young well-known dancer. He performed contemporary and Malaysian traditional dances, including the intricate and almost mystical Kelantanese dances. He lectures part time at the Faculty of Creative and Artistic Technology in that University in Shah Alam, Selangor. He is also the artistic director of Abantug Production, a company that deals in dances, creative arts and films.⁸⁸

Borneo Dance Theatre, 2012 – present

Borneo Dance Theatre is a full-time professional dance theatre in Borneo founded by Christopher Liew Vui Ngee, who graduated in Degree in Dance from Chinese Culture University in Taiwan. The Borneo Dance Theatre aims, through cross-field combination of dance art and multimedia productions, to present the culture and other special facets of Borneo.⁸⁹

Red Hong Yi, artist

Red Hong Yi is a Chinese-Malaysian contemporary artist who creates artworks that showcase her heritage and Chinese diasporic consciousness and merges traditional craftsmanship with digital technology.⁹⁰ She was involved in a community art project called “Pillars of Sabah” in 2019.

Rithaudin Abdul Kadir, dancer

Rithaudin Abdul Kadir is from Sabah. He loves to experiment with a mix of traditional culture that he has been exposed to and learnt. He used to do research to deepen the understanding of any kind of dance he came across or creating new works. He tries to make his work as an edu-tainment for the audience. With 19 years of experience and exposure, his work has been recognised in the local and international dance scene especially in site specific work.⁹¹

Adam Kitingan, Sang Tukang

Founded by Adam Kitingan, Sang Tukang is an artisanal brand from Sabah that focuses on pottery, textile, sculptures, jewellery and traditional instruments inspired by the ethnic tribes of North Borneo. Through Sang Tukang, Adam seeks to show the rich history and cultural heritage of Borneo.⁹²

Yee I-Lann, artist

Yee I-Lann is an artist whose work focuses on issues of culture, power and social experiences. She is a co-founding member of LabDNA, an art collective based in Kuala Lumpur. She is also a creative director, curator, and organiser of several projects. Some of these are To Catch A Cloud at Planetarium Negara (1996), Blue Skies held at Pudu Jail (1997), Bonding With Gaya Street (2012), Singapore Biennale: If The World Changed (2013), The Ricecooker Archives: Southeast Asian Rock 'n' Roll Treasury (2016). Yee is currently part of KOTA-K studio.⁹³

Anne Antah, founder of Chanteek Borneo

In 2014, Anne Antah first founded Chanteek Borneo⁹⁴ Gallery which was later turned into the Chanteek Borneo Indigenous Museum. In 2019, she further diversified the works of Chanteek Borneo to produce textile design and printing with North Borneo motif.⁹⁵

A workshop at KOTA-K Studio.

Photo © KOTA-K Studio



⁸⁸ Beating the odds. <https://www.theborneopost.com/2012/08/13/ beating-the-odds>

⁸⁹ Borneo Dance Theatre. <https://www.facebook.com/ borneodancetheatre>

⁹⁰ About Red Hongyi. <http://redhongyi.com/about/#bio>

⁹¹ Rithaudin Abdul Kadir. <https://sacpa-pelem.com/ rithaudin-abdul-kadir>

⁹² Sang Tukang. <https://www.facebook.com/sangtukang/about>

⁹³ About Yee I-Lann. <http://yeeilann.com/about-2>

⁹⁴ <https://chanteekborneo.com.my>

⁹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/anne.antah>

Crossover – Culture/ Arts/Lifestyle

Don. C, streetwear designer

Don C. is the founder and creative director of Sweed, a brand that integrates art into streetwear. Set up in 2019, the clothes produced by the company are hand crafted custom T-shirts and available for all ages and genders.⁹⁶

Japson Wong, upcycling artist

Japson Wong is the founder of JF Productions, a local upcycling retail and interior decorating company that he established in 2014, which transforms discarded items into artworks.⁹⁷

Nadira Ilana, founder of Telan Bulan Films

Nadira Ilana is a filmmaker from Sabah. Her first foray into documentary filmmaking began with the political historical documentary 'The Silent Riot', which won Best Human Rights Documentary at Freedom Film Fest in 2013.

- She founded her own production company, 'Telan Bulan Films' in 2016. She is an alumni of the Berlinale Talent Campus, NAFF Fantastic Film School, SGIFF SEA Film Lab and Luang Prabang International Film Fest's Talent Lab.⁹⁸

Pangrok Sulap, 2010 – present

Pangrok Sulap is an art collective of artists, musicians and social activists whose aim is to empower rural communities through art. Pangrok Sulap believes in doing things yourself, hence the slogan '*Jangan Beli, Bikin Sendiri*' (Don't Buy, Do It Yourself). The collective is based in Ranau, Sabah.⁹⁹

Pison Bin Jaujip, entrepreneur and advocator of local and traditional produce and dishes from Sabah

Pison is an entrepreneur from Sabah who sells local produce, such as rice from Kota Belud farmers, as well as native inspired ingredients and products.¹⁰⁰ Through social media, Pison has been posting local, traditional and exotic recipes from Sabah since 2016. Pison's food recipes were showcased on local television and he was invited as a guest exhibitor at many food festivals.¹⁰¹

Society of Performing Arts Kota Kinabalu Sabah (SPArKS), 2007 – present

SPArKS is established to promote performing arts in Kota Kinabalu, and to provide opportunities for performances and workshops. It has invited international artists to perform in the city, and has played a pivotal role encouraging the growth of international conferences and congresses related to performing arts in Kota Kinabalu.¹⁰²

Tamu-Tamu Collective, 2015 – present

Tamu Tamu Collective is an initiative to gather artists, artisans, crafters and all talented individuals making handmade and home-grown products both traditional and contemporary under one collective. It is also a platform for the exchange of ideas and skills, as well as learning and igniting traditional crafts through outreach programmes with rural craftsmen and communities.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Don C: Founder and Creative Director of Sweed. P.2. <http://breezeborneo.com/sites/default/files/uploads/issue/pdf/135/march-issue-143.pdf>

⁹⁷ Japson Wong: Level-up Upcycling. P.4. <http://breezeborneo.com/sites/default/files/uploads/issue/pdf/24/breeze-120.pdf>

⁹⁸ Nadira Ilana. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nadirailana>

⁹⁹ Pangrok Sulap. <http://borneoartcollective.org/featuredprojects/2016/6/17/pangrok-sulap>

¹⁰⁰ Young Sabahan promotes local food through social media accounts. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2017/10/287910/young-sabahan-promotes-local-food-through-social-media-accounts>

¹⁰¹ Pison Bin Jaujip. P.3. <http://breezeborneo.com/sites/default/files/uploads/issue/pdf/115/127-compressed.pdf>

¹⁰² Society of Performing Arts Kota Kinabalu Sabah. (2020). <http://sparks.org.my/about>

¹⁰³ Tamu-tamu collective. <https://www.facebook.com/tamutamucollective>

Jennifer Linggi, manager curator of Sabah Art Gallery

Jennifer Linggi is the Deputy General Manager of the Sabah Cultural Board, manager curator of Sabah Art Gallery and sits on the industry panel of Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA).¹⁰⁴ She worked as an architect in London and Brunei Darussalam before returning back to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah in 2004 to teach architectural design and documenting the traditional crafts of Sabah. Linggi is also the writer of *The Kampung Legacy: A Journal of North Borneo's traditional baskets*.

Cynthia Ong, founder LEAP Spiral

Cynthia Ong, a Sabahan then working in the U.S., founded the organisation as a response to the call for help from groups at the forefront of ecological conservation in Sabah. LEAP has facilitated partnerships between more than 50 local, regional and international partners and leveraged these relationships into more than 20 new and innovative projects and initiatives. This work has included support for community-based conservation initiatives, restoration of heavily degraded lowland forest, establishment of a biobank to finance long-term restoration of 34,000 hectares of Orangutan habitat, acquisition of critical parcels of habitat, and successfully opposing through a civil society coalition the construction of Sabah's first coal-fired power plant. In the process, LEAP has helped foster a new culture of openness, transparency, and collaboration amongst government, industry and civil society.

Pangrok Sulap making a woodcut print.

Photo © Pangrok Sulap



¹⁰⁴ <https://www.cendana.com.my/corporate/about-us/industry-advisory-panel/jennifer-linggi>

Events, Festivals and Creative Marketplaces (selected)

In KK, mixed-used events venues and creative hubs play an important role. For instance, the Black Box KK is Sabah's first community theatre set up by the International Institute of Human Capital and Entrepreneur Sabah (IINSCAPE). Located in a shopping mall, it is a flexible performing arts space which also aims to hold events to discover and develop talent from the city.

KOTA-K Studio, located in Tanjung Aru Old Town, is an office space during office hours and arts space after. Run by a collective of young creative entrepreneurs, KOTA-K organises cross-disciplinary activities such as Friday After Work Drinks social time, workshops, performances and talks related to arts, architecture and crafts.

In addition to cultural hubs, marketplaces such as Jesselton Artisan Market (JAM) and KeTAMU also function as bridges and facilitators to connect stakeholders across the creative economy.

Sabah Fest, 1988 – present

Organiser: Sabah Tourism Board

Sabah Fest is a 3-day extravaganza that kicks off the month of cultural celebrations. Since 1988 Sabah Fest has showcased Sabah's cultural dance traditions, and the modern Sabah Fest brings together the traditional performances with a storyline expressed through modern dance and a grand stage production.¹⁰⁵

Sabah International Boat Festival, 1996 – present

Organiser: The Federation of Chinese Associations, Sabah

The festival is held every year on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.¹⁰⁶ The Dragon Boat Festival is typically a time to strengthen familial bonds, and encourages the expression of imagination and creativity.¹⁰⁷

Sabah International Folklore Festival (SIFF), 2001 – present

Organiser: Sabah Cultural Board

The SIFF is an opportunity for culture enthusiasts to enjoy and witness the rich cultural dances of various ethnic groups around the world. It aims to promote tourism among participating countries, and to introduce travellers to Sabah's rich and unique cultures.¹⁰⁸

Gaya Christmas, 2005 – present

Organiser: Sabah Council of Churches

The Gaya Christmas celebration started in 2005. It was organised by the Sabah Council of Churches (SCC) and in collaboration with Kota Kinabalu City Hall. It is not just an event for Christians but also celebrating together with other communities.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Sabah Fest. <https://sabahbah.com/events/sabah-fest>

¹⁰⁶ Sabah International Dragon Boat Race. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/premier-events/sabah-fcas-international-dragon-boat-race>

¹⁰⁷ Dragon Boat Festival. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/dragon-boat-festival-00225>

¹⁰⁸ Sabah International Folklore Festival - Peace Through Culture. <https://www.facebook.com/SabahFolkloreFestival>

¹⁰⁹ Gaya X'mas has something for all. <http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news.cfm?NewsID=79992>

Kota Kinabalu Jazz Festival (KKJF), 2007 – present

Organiser: Rotary Club of Kota Kinabalu (RCKK) and the Society of Performing Arts Kota Kinabalu Sabah (SPArKS)

The jazz festival brings international musical artists together, and uses the funds raised from ticket sales to benefit the community through clean water projects, literacy programmes, environment protection projects and many more.¹¹⁰

Kota Kinabalu International Film Festival (KKIFF), 2009 – present

Organiser: Kinabalu Film Association Sabah

Borneo's first film festival, the KKIFF has made a name for itself within the international film community. The event provides audiences with the opportunity to see local, Asian and international commercial and independent films, nurtures young and emerging ASEAN talents in the creative industry and promotes Sabah as a stage for filmmaking professionals.¹¹¹

International Youth Folk Dance Festival, 2009 – present

Organiser: Sabah Cultural Board

The objectives to have the International Youth Folk Dance Festival is to enhance the public awareness among young people, especially school children on the importance of conserving and preserving the diverse cultural heritage of Sabah, to foster brotherhood and understanding among participants through culture, and provide a platform for students in particular to showcase talent and skills in the arts and folk dance.¹¹²

Kota Kinabalu Food Festival, 2011 – present

Organiser: MOE Corporate Events Sdn. Bhd

The city's food festival is a three-day event that showcases food and beverage establishments, food suppliers and food manufacturers from all across Malaysia. It promotes dining options and experiences in the country, catering to the tastes of gourmards as well as those who simply appreciate good food. It attracts up to 20,000 visitors each year.¹¹³

Sabah Traditional Food Festival

Organiser: Taginambur Tourism Association

Different from the Kota Kinabalu Food Festival, the Sabah Traditional Food Festival emphasises traditional delicacies such as hinata (raw buffalo meat with lemon), and tutumakon (marine worms). Its many activities include cooking competitions, eating contests and cooking demonstrations.¹¹⁴

Kaamatan Festival

Kaamatan is usually celebrated throughout May, culminating on 30 and 31 May. Most natives in Sabah were farmers in the past, and Kaamatan is to give thanks for a bountiful harvest. It is normally celebrated with food and drinks as well as other forms of merry-making. A Harvest Queen called the Unduk Ngadau is selected every year.¹¹⁵

North Borneo Rainforest Festival (NBRF), 2019 – present

Inaugurated in 2019, the two-day NBRF is a heritage-focused festival that aims to revive community appreciation around traditions and indigenous art.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ KK Jazz Festival. <https://kkjazzfest.com/about-kkjazzfest>

¹¹¹ Kota Kinabalu International Film Festival. <https://www.kkiff.com/about-kkiff>

¹¹² International Youth Folk Dance Festival 2019. <https://www.sabah.gov.my/cms/?q=ms/content/tugu-budaya-etnik-sabah-ke-10-international-youth-folk-dance-festival-2019>

¹¹³ Kota Kinabalu Food Festival 2015. <https://www.sabaheats.com/kota-kinabalu-food-festival-2015>

¹¹⁴ Sabah Traditional Food Festival. <https://sabahbah.com/events/sabah-traditional-food-festival>

¹¹⁵ Sabahans urged to mark Kaamatan symbolically. <http://dailyexpress.com.my/news/152911/sabahans-urged-to-mark-kaamatan-symbolically>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/North-Borneo-Rainforest-Festival-100828097977343>

Cultural and Creative Marketspaces

Jesselton Artisan Market (JAM), 2017 – present

The Jesselton Artisan Market is currently an online platform showcase of Malaysia's skilled artisans and their creations based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah by Salt x Paper Stationery. Through its physical and online platforms, local artisans can sell decorative arts, jewellery, furniture, clothing, food items to handmade creations.¹¹⁷ It's events are often accompanied by performances by local artists and various public engagement programme.

KeTAMU

To empower indigenous community, PACOS Trust runs KeTAMU¹¹⁸, a creative fair in collaboration with Green Borneo: to create a space for eco-social equality. Mindful of fair trade, sustainable production and consumption, KeTAMU provides a market platform for Sabahan enterprises and independent creatives to connect and do business.

Handicraft Market

The Handicraft Market caters to locals and tourists, offering a large variety of products ranging from sarongs, pareos, t-shirts, kaftans, jewellery and other traditional items. The market is located in Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens.¹¹⁹

Kampung Siasai

The *kampung* (village) is a parang-making centre which produces handmade *parangs* (straight-edged knife) by the Bajau people of Kota Belud.¹²⁰

Sabah Trade Centre (STC)

The Sabah Trade Centre is located on Jalan Istiadat, Teluk Likas, 3km from Kota Kinabalu city centre. It is a venue for a wide range of activities such as exhibitions, conventions, seminars, and meetings.¹²¹

A session at Asylum Art Club.

Photo © Hubs For Good



¹¹⁷ Jesselton Artisan Market. <https://www.saltxpaper.com/pages/jesselton-artisan-market>

¹¹⁸ <https://pacostrust.com/2019/08/21/ketamu>

¹¹⁹ Handicraft market. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/handicraft-market/?locale=en>

¹²⁰ Kampung Siasai. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/kampung-siasai>

¹²¹ Sabah Trade Centre. <http://bdcsabah.com.my/index.php?p=stc>

Cultural Infrastructure, Hubs and Assets (selected)

Kota Kinabalu has a concentration of Sabah State cultural agencies and their facilities. This includes the State Library, Museum, Art Gallery and Cultural Centre.

Kadazandusun Cultural Association Sabah (KDCA) is an umbrella association of 40 indigenous communities in Sabah. Advocating for the “preservation, development, enrichment and promotion of the Kadazandusun multi-ethnic cultures”, it has its own cultural village and hosts events like the Kaamatan Festival.

Sabah Craft Centre (PKS: Pusat Kraftangan Sabah) is a milestone for the development of the handicraft industry in Sabah. It strives to reduce poverty in the state by helping rural communities achieve high income. It develops Sabah’s handicraft heritage, provides training and undertakes research and development, and markets handicrafts in domestic and foreign markets. PKS products are available at its

outlet at the Sabah State Administrative and Galleria Artisan.

Resonating with the national trends of a burgeoning creative scene, many co-working spaces have mushroomed and are aimed at facilitating start-ups, supporting young entrepreneurs, and accelerating new digital working trends. These new offices also offer facilities for f&b, meetings and there may be opportunities to host small arts and culture events should the need arise. For instance, Breaker’s Bistro KK was hired for KK Jazz Festival and has become a popular venue for performances. Ampersand Specialty¹²² on the other hand, is not only one of the top 10 café¹²³ in KK but also provides co-working space and a regular programme of performances and talks.



...there are still many who incorporate traditional elements such as tribal motives in Sabah... [C]ulture is formed from the experience... Thus, the concept of art and culture in Sabah as a whole is still growing and continuing to grow.

Herman Duang, Airbrush and Tattoo Artist at Tamparuli Living Arts Centre (TaLAC)¹²⁴

¹²² <https://www.facebook.com/youampersandmekk>

¹²³ <https://tallypress.com/malaysia-top-10s/top-10-cafes-in-kota-kinabalu>

¹²⁴ Interview by Penang Institute.

Tamparuli Living Arts Centre (TaLAC), 2011 – present

TaLAC is a space for local artists and communities to use as studios at an affordable price.¹²⁵

Sabah Animation and Creative Content Centre (SAC3), 2014 – present

The centre acts as an incubator for creative content development. It is designed and developed as one of the pioneering initiatives for the creative industry in Sabah. It offers certificates in animation, visual arts, and video/film production.¹²⁶

The Asylum Art Club

The Asylum Art Club is based in Kota Kinabalu and promotes arts and culture by empowering local emerging artists. It was established by a group of artists from CrackoArtGroup and Tamu-Tamu Collective in 2016 to give the city a space to express art.¹²⁷

KOTA-K Studio, 2017 – present

The studio is a shared physical space between two architectural design firms, Arkitrek and Phyllisophy Creatives. It operates as an office during the day, and as an arts space otherwise. The studio aims to develop a community of makers and thinkers through workshops and talks related to all things in arts, architecture and crafts.¹²⁸

Sabah Creative Economy and Innovation Centre, 2020 – present

The Sabah Creative Economy and Innovation Centre works with grassroots communities, start-ups, venture firms, academic and research institutions. It provides legal, investment, marketing and technological support, whilst creating job opportunities.¹²⁹

Sabah State Library, 1953 – present

Established under the Department of Information to provide library services and information for the population in Sabah, the Sabah State Library (SSL) was turned into a department by itself in 1972 and is now governed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.¹³⁰

Sabah Museum, 1965 – present

Sabah Museum started out at the shophouses in Gaya Street, Kota Kinabalu. Following rapid expansion, the museum was moved to its current and much larger site at Bukit Istana Lama in 1984.¹³¹

Bin Art Trail Kota Kinabalu, 2018 – present

The Bin Art Trail covers locations from the city hall up to Tanjung Lipat in Kota Kinabalu, and features 15 mural spots covered with street art, drawn by different Sabahan artists.¹³²

Foh Sang Street Art, 2019 – present

Located in Kota Kinabalu's Chinatown, Foh Sang Street was turned into a vibrant and energetic community hub for the people of Sabah when 25 local artists came together and re-decorated 28 shops. All the mural artworks reflect the daily hustles and bustles of Foh Sang and the business focus of the premises in which they were drawn.¹³³

Kota Kinabalu City Mosque, 2000 – present

Situated near the sea, this majestic white mosque boasts similar features to the Nabawi Mosque in Medina. This floating mosque has a prayer hall which houses three madrasahs and accommodates from 9,000 to 12,000 people at a time.¹³⁴

¹²⁵ Tamparuli Living Arts Centre - Ta LAC. <https://www.facebook.com/TamparuliLivingArtsCentre2019>

¹²⁶ Sabah Animation Creative Content Centre - SAC3. <https://www.facebook.com/sac3sabah>

¹²⁷ Asylum Art Club Kota Kinabalu. <https://www.facebook.com/asylumkk>

¹²⁸ Kota-K Studio. <http://www.kota-k.com/main>, accessed in July 2021.

¹²⁹ The Sabah Creative Economy and Innovation Centre on Track to build Resilient Community. <https://www.borneotoday.net/the-sabah-creative-economy-and-innovation-centre-on-track-to-build-resilient-community/>
Official website: <https://www.facebook.com/SCENICSabah>

¹³⁰ About Sabah State Library. <https://library.sabah.gov.my/index.php/en/about-us/introduction>

¹³¹ Department of Sabah Museum. <https://museum.sabah.gov.my/content/our-history>

¹³² Self Guided Tour. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/activity/self-guided-tour>

¹³³ Self Guided Tour. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/activity/self-guided-tour>

¹³⁴ City Mosque. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/city-mosque/?locale=en>

Marlin Statue, 2000 – present

The giant Marlin Statue is located on the waterfront in Kota Kinabalu, with Pulau Gaya in the background. The statue was constructed on 2 February 2000 to celebrate Kota Kinabalu being awarded city status.¹³⁵

Sipadan Island Park, 2009 – present

Sipadan Island is Malaysia's only oceanic island, rising 600 metres (2,000 ft) from the seabed and formed by living corals growing on top of a volcanic cone. It lies in the Celebes Sea just off the east coast of Malaysian Borneo, close to the borders of Indonesia and the Philippines. The centre of one of the richest marine habitats in the world.¹³⁶

"I LOVE KK" Landmark, 2017 – present

The landmark "I LOVE KK", in bold red and silver colours, is located at Segama Waterfront in Kota Kinabalu and aims to further accentuate the beauty of the city.¹³⁷

Tanjung Aru Perdana Park, 2011 – present

Perdana Park is a leisure area which offers a range of recreational activities and eateries. The park features a running track, a reflexology path and two playgrounds for children. The park is also handicap-friendly with wheelchair ramps.¹³⁸

Menara Tun Mustapha, 1977 – present

Menara Tun Mustapha is situated 5 km away from Kota Kinabalu's city centre. The iconic circular tower of steel and glass stands 30 storeys high and contains an auditorium, two mini-theatres, exhibition foyer, gymnasium, kindergarten, research library and a gallery.¹³⁹

- The gallery provides a detailed biography of Tun Mustapha and has a souvenir shop retailing crafts inspired by the traditional ethnic motifs of Sabah's tribes.¹⁴⁰

Sabah Art Gallery, 1984 – present

The gallery promotes local and international artists through events all year round. The Annual Art Selection is conducted to encourage local talent and to increase the collection of the Gallery.

- The Sabah Art Gallery Conservation Building is located in Kota Kinabalu and is the first 'Green' building in Borneo. Its distinctive design makes it an attraction in itself.

Laman Seni, Wisma Budaya Sabah, 1999 – present

Located in the city centre, Laman Seni at Wisma Budaya showcases the artwork of various local artists.¹⁴¹

Pogunon Community Museum Penampang, 2000 – present

The museum is situated on an ancient graveyard of megaliths which served as grave markers. Ceramics originating from 16 – 19th century China and human remains in jars were found at the site of the museum in 2000, and are now housed within the museum.¹⁴²

JKKN Sabah Complex, 2012 – present

The complex was constructed under the 9th Malaysian Plan over a period of four years. It houses an auditorium, and studios, and is suited for hosting small to mid-scale events.¹⁴³

Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC), 2020 – present

A six-hectare multi-function complex, the Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC) is the largest waterfront purpose-built conference, exhibition and entertainment facility in Borneo. It contains a convention hall, performing arts hall, exhibition halls, meeting rooms, VIP rooms and a private VVIP lounge.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁵ Merlin. <http://kotakinabalu.com/to-do/attractions/merlin>

¹³⁶ Sipadan Island Park. <https://www.sabahparks.org.my/sipadan-island-park>

¹³⁷ New landmark highlights beauty of Kota Kinabalu. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2017/05/238290/new-landmark-highlights-beauty-kota-kinabalu>

¹³⁸ Perdana Park. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/perdana-park>

¹³⁹ Menara Tun Mustapha (Sabah Foundation Building). <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/menara-tun-mustapha-sabah-foundation-building>

¹⁴⁰ Tun Mustapha Gallery. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/tun-mustapha-gallery>

¹⁴¹ Laman Seni, Wisma Budaya Sabah. <https://www.sabahtourism.com/destination/laman-seni-wisma-budaya-sabah>

¹⁴² Pogunon Community Museum Penampang. <http://sabahruraltourism.com/west-coast/penampang/pogunon-community-museum-penampang>

¹⁴³ JKKN Sabah Complex, the new landmark building of Sabah. <http://www.jkkn.gov.my/en>

¹⁴⁴ Sabah International Convention Centre. <https://www.siccsabah.com/venue.html>

Tanjung Aru Library, 2019 – present

The new Sabah State Library opened its door to the public on 1 April 2019. The new State Library is located beside Perdana Park at Tanjung Aru, replacing the previously demolished library at Kota Kinabalu City Centre. The uniquely designed, Tanjung Aru library spans a built-up area of 62,000 ft².¹⁴⁵

69

The [new Tanjung Aru] library was a joint corporate social responsibility (CSR) project undertaken by Lahad Datu Water Supply Sdn Bhd and Sabah Development Bank, in which each organisation contributed RM20 million for the project... the Tanjung Aru library would also be equipped with digital technology, with computers on every floor to allow users to have access to broader information... the library would be stocked with a wide range of publications, including children's books, reference books and even having an e-resource centre.

Wong Vui Yin, Sabah State Library Director¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ New Kota Kinabalu library opens at Tanjung Aru Plaza. <http://www.sabaheats.com/new-kota-kinabalu-library-opens-at-tanjung-aru-plaza>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.theborneopost.com/2019/03/27/new-state-library-to-open-april-1>



