



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025 | VOLUME 15

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Greetings everyone.

As we close another eventful quarter, I am pleased to share some significant milestones and activities that reflect our unwavering commitment to advancing high-impact research and strategic communication for Sarawak's development.

First of all, the celebration of our 30th Anniversary was held successfully with the presence of the Right Honourable Premier of Sarawak as our Guest of Honour. His presence highlighted the Institute's enduring role in shaping policies and fostering dialogue on Sarawak's economic prosperity, social inclusivity, environmental sustainability, rural transformation, and governance. This milestone is not only a testament to our past achievements but also a call to strengthen our collective efforts for the future.

In line with our objective to undertake socio-economic research and strategic communication focusing on new and emerging development priorities of the Sarawak Government, we are delighted to share Part Two of the Series on Carbon in our feature article, which continues to explore critical issues toward climate action for Sarawak.

We are also pleased to share on a new research "The Development of a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Scheme for Water Catchment Areas at Gerugu Reservoir Dam, Sarikei" in collaboration with the Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources (MUDeNR) Sarawak. This study is pivotal in promoting environmental sustainability and innovative approaches to resource management.

As we reflect on the accomplishments throughout the year in this early phase of SDI's transformation, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all members for your steadfast support and contributions. For the new members joining SDI this year, we welcome you to the SDI community and look forward to your active participation and contribution.

With the theme of our 30th anniversary "Celebrating 30 years of research excellence: Towards Sarawak's era of transformation", let us continue to champion informed decision-making and collaborative action. I look forward to all members' continued engagement as we advance our shared vision to be a high-impact research organisation for a progressive and inclusive society.

Happy New Year 2026 to all.

Warm regards
Lelia Sim
Chief Executive Officer

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Message from the CEO

Feature Article

Special: 30th Anniversary Celebration

Past Public Talk

Past Event

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New Research

New SDI Members



Merry Christmas

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR



FEATURE ARTICLE

A series on ^{CO₂} **CARBON**

Part
2

With Sarawak making inroads into low carbon economy guided by the PCDS 2030, we believe there is a need to expound further on concepts and information about the topic. This article series on Carbon are insights shared by Mdm. Belinda Lip, SDI's Policy Analyst.

Progressing the Climate Action in Sarawak

Delegates from all over the world gathered again for discussions on climate action at the 30th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Climate Change Conference in November 2025 in Brazil, amidst rising global temperatures. The World Meteorological Organisation confirmed 2024 as the warmest year on record, with the global mean temperature increase recorded at 1.55°C, the first year where temperature increase has gone above 1.5°C from the pre-industrial average. Sarawak is not spared from the impact of climate change where average temperatures are on an increasing trend and have risen 0.13°C per decade, between 1969-2023 (Malaysian Meteorological Department). The temperature rise translates into more intense and frequent extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. This year's unprecedented flood in Bintulu (February 2025) and the peat fires raging across Mukah (August 2025) paints a stark picture of our current realities and the extent of devastation that could occur. One of the sectors most impacted by climate change is the agriculture sector.

Agriculture in Sarawak

1.7 Million

Hectares of land
(Sarawak Facts and Figures, 2024)

10.6%

Contribution to the GDP
(Source: PCDS 2030. Highlights 2023)

18.7%

Sarawak's Biggest
Employment Sector in 2023
(Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing)
(Sarawak Facts and Figures, 2024)

Climate Change Risks to Agriculture

- Crop yields depend heavily on temperature, sunlight, and irrigation.
- Extreme weather increases the risk of reduced productivity.

World Bank Report 2021 :

- Drought affects rubber, palm oil, and cocoa production.
- Droughts and floods early in the rice season can reduce yields by up to **60%** in Malaysia.

Amongst those affected, low-income earners are more vulnerable and likely to be more impacted due to their lack of capacity to adapt to the impacts. For example, during periods of intense heat, those who cannot afford air conditioners, fans, and refrigerators are likely to suffer more health impacts compared to those that can. Likewise, farmers who cannot afford irrigation systems will have more agricultural losses in periods of drought. For this group of people, policies that improve climate resilience and adaptation are urgent, aside from efforts to mitigate climate change.

Sarawak Faces Climate Risks

Climate Change Poses Risks to Sarawak's Agriculture



Low-income earners are particularly vulnerable to climate change



Can't afford air conditioners, fans, refrigerators

Can't afford irrigation systems

Sarawak has already embarked on the journey to transition towards a low carbon economy as a part of its efforts to combat climate change. The state will be producing a Net Zero Strategy and Carbon Plan (NZCP) to serve as a strategic guide for its emission reductions. Sneak peeks of this plan were shared in an event organised by MEESty Sarawak on 7th October 2025, where topics and exhibition materials related to Sarawak's drive to accelerate climate action were shared. A carbon and net zero plan, focused on addressing issues of climate change would certainly be an important framework. Net zero means cutting greenhouse gas to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere by the oceans and forests (www.un.org). Hence, Sarawak's forests are critical for its NZCP goals.

SARAWAK : NET CARBON SINK

(2016 - 2021)



In a year, Sarawak's forests absorb more CO₂ than the total emissions from the whole State

2016

-79.4 Mt CO₂ eq

(Sarawak Sustainability Vision 2030. Presentation Slides. KWAP Inspire Conference 2024)



2021

-31.5 Mt CO₂ eq

(Gallery Posters. Accelerating Climate Action in Sarawak. An Open Day for the Sarawak Net Zero Strategy and Carbon Plan. 7-8 October, 2025)

This makes Sarawak a net carbon sink rather than a carbon emitter, primarily due to its vast remaining forests. Therefore, Sarawak's forests play a crucial role in achieving its NZCP goals.

However, temperature and carbon dioxide increases in the atmosphere also affect nature's processes, including its capacity to absorb carbon. Recent studies have shown that the efficacy of these natural carbon sinks have also declined and the single most important action for sustaining and increasing the forest carbon sink is to halt the emissions from deforestation and degradation while protecting the existing carbon stocks that have been locked by the forest biomass over decades and centuries (Pan, Y. et al., 2024). This declining capacity needs to be accounted for in the Net Zero Strategy and Carbon Plan for Sarawak. Without the forests' optimum buffering capacity, Sarawak runs the risk of becoming a net emitter of carbon. Therefore, the carbon and net zero plan for Sarawak should intensify strategies to reduce deforestation, increase restoration, and improve management. It should also accord priority to any domestic carbon offsets needed from the forest sink for those critical processes that support food production.

Strengthening Sarawak's Path to Net Zero through its forests



Reduce Deforestation

1



Increase Restoration

2

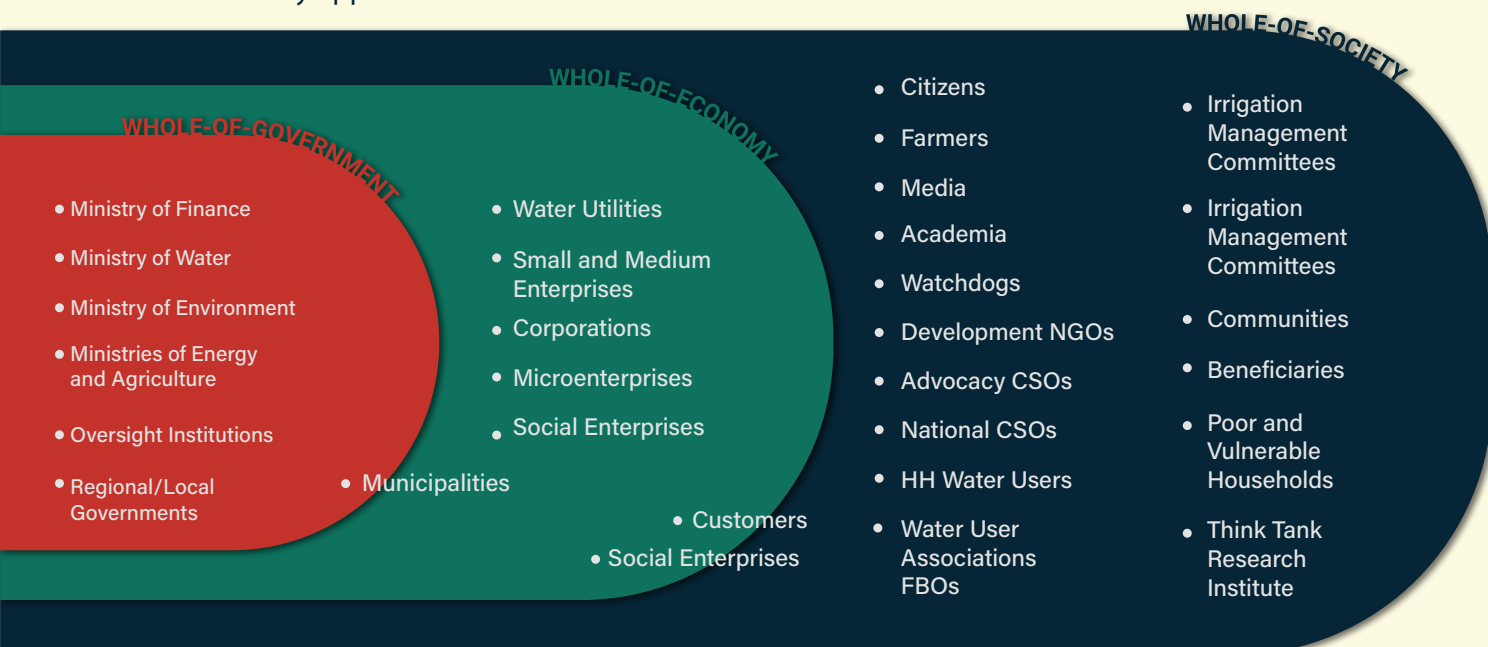


Improve Management

3

Studies have also shown that for a durable net zero to be achieved globally, any remaining fossil-origin carbon production must be balanced by carbon capture or recapture and stored over multi-century to millennial timescales. The commitment to scale up this 'geologically stored fraction' is also urgently needed (Allen, M.R., et al., 2024). This means that the carbon capture and storage initiatives driven by Sarawak are necessary tools in the toolbox albeit must be carefully implemented.

We are in unprecedented times and the urgency for action is now. All hands are needed on board. Climate adaptation and resilience initiatives need equal and urgent attention. Sarawak has been strong on its climate mitigation initiatives, with significant interests on the investment opportunities. To progress meaningfully on its climate outcomes, it is imperative that every section of society is enabled to drive actions. For this, Sarawak needs to shift from a predominantly whole-of-government and whole-of-economy approach towards a whole-of-society approach.



Source: World Bank Blogs, November 19, 2024.

In addition to industries and businesses, climate actions and benefits need to be made more accessible and inclusive, especially for those living in or near forest landscapes, given the criticality of maintaining Sarawak's forests for its climate needs. These include rural communities, whose incomes are intimately tied to land and agriculture. Their proximity to forests can be leveraged. Sarawak can consider more policies that create avenues for their participation, for example through income generating incentives for forest stewardship, provide support to improve efficiency of land use for agriculture and sustainable agriculture practices such as soil/land suitability and crop matching and provision of early warning systems that help planning for climate smart agricultural activities to increase income resilience and reduce losses.

A more inclusive policy making is also needed to capture the diverse circumstances and issues faced and to tap into every opportunity to drive multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder actions. This requires engagement and inclusion of stakeholders beyond government sectors. Linking with SDG groups that cover all aspects of society from climate action to food security, human wellbeing and the environment can be a way to facilitate voluntary actions. A more inclusive policy making can drive towards enhanced awareness, cohesion and collective efforts and as stated in the COP30 opening updates from UNFCCC - "connect climate action to people's real lives".

We are happy to share a new dashboard on PCDS 2030 Highlights hosted on our website at www.sdi.com.my/pcds-2030-dashboard!

This dashboard is developed in-house by our Data Analyst and Research Leads, referring to sources such as the PCDS 2030 Highlights 2023 Report and the 13th Malaysia Plan for Sarawak Report. Do check it out!



SPECIAL: 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



On Friday, 28 November 2025, SDI proudly celebrated its 30th Anniversary under the theme “Celebrating 30 Years of Research Excellence: Towards Sarawak’s Era of Transformation.” The milestone event was graced by The Right Honourable Premier of Sarawak as Guest of Honour, alongside distinguished guests including YB Dato Henry Harry Jinep, Deputy Minister of Transport II; YB Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Abu Bakar bin Marzuki, Sarawak State Secretary; SDI Board members, corporate members and members; stakeholders, and members of the media.

Upon arrival, the Premier was welcomed by Datuk Amar Jaul Samion, who led him through a mini exhibition showcasing SDI’s contributions over the past three decades and introduced the newly developed PCDS 2030 dashboard, a strategic digital tool built by the Secretariat to visualise PCDS 2030 in an easy-to-digest format.

The evening commenced with a captivating cultural performance by Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak’s Sape Ambassadors and the band Mozaik, featuring traditional Sarawak melodies such as Puteri Santubong, Puteri Sejinjang, and Terkayo-kayo. This was followed by a welcoming address from Datuk Amar Jaul Samion and a video montage highlighting SDI’s 30-year journey and its future direction.

In his main address, the Premier reflected on his long-standing association with SDI and outlined key development priorities for the Institute’s continued work—accelerating rural development, advancing the new economy and emerging technologies, strengthening STEM education, expanding renewable energy initiatives, restructuring state-owned enterprises, promoting social sciences and heritage, and enhancing workforce competitiveness.



A highlight of the evening was the launch of “Sarawak Civil Service Administration and Development: Reflections and Reminiscences over 60 Years”, a special publication produced in collaboration with Faradale Media-M Sdn Bhd and funded by the State Government. This commemorative book captures six decades of public service transformation and the contributions of officers who shaped Sarawak’s development.

The Premier also presented tokens of appreciation to past chairmen, Board members, and long-standing corporate members - SEDC and SAINS, followed by the ceremonial cutting of the 30th Anniversary cake.

The Board of Directors and the Secretariat extend heartfelt gratitude to all members for their support and contributions over the past 30 years. Together, let us continue to advance Sarawak’s vision of economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social inclusivity.



PAST PUBLIC TALK

Public Talk on Advancing Sustainability and Future Proofing for SMEs

24th October 2025 | Zoom Meeting

This talk featured Mr. Eric Chong, Vice-President of ESG Association of Malaysia (ESGAM), who emphasised the need for SMEs to start their ESG journey in response to current global market demands and the need for increased environmental sustainability and better business practices. He highlighted the realities and challenges experienced by SMEs to remain competitive while facing new costs of adopting the ESG framework, as well as other new mandated requirements and regulations. Mr. Eric also indicated interest in continuing to explore collaborative opportunities with SDI, particularly to support the SMEs in Sarawak.

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES TO FUTURE-PROOF VIA ESG



PAST EVENT

49th Board of Directors' Meeting



A Board of Directors' Meeting was held on 5th December at Hilton Hotel Kuching to discuss proposals and decide on the direction and activities for the Institute for 2026.

29th Annual General Meeting



The annual general meeting was held on 15th December at Sheraton Hotel Kuching and was well attended with a quorum of 42 members (including 14 proxies). Our appreciation to all members and corporate members who contributed to the discussions at the meeting.

ON-GOING RESEARCH

Master Plan for Community Development in the Resettlement Areas 2050

The Final Draft 2 for the project had its second presentation to the Study Steering Committee, on 18th December 2025 and the committee gave its verbal consent to accept the report subject to the incorporation of comments and amendments to be made.

Greater Together: Mapping of Paddy Production Ecosystem in Batang Lupar Granary Area, Sri Aman

The Steering Committee agreed to extend the study deadline to February 2026 due to delays in approving the Inception Report. The research team continued with more data collection in December 2025. The Interim Report is scheduled for submission in January 2026.

**Assessment of
Domestic Household
Solid Waste
Management
Dynamics in
Sarawak**

The team is in discussion with Rare's Centre for Behaviour and the Environment, an international organisation, to seek support in providing input and advice to the study team on behavioural change towards the environment. Part of the study will include surveys to gather insights on behaviours of domestic household waste generators to support design strategies for waste management, recycling, and awareness campaigns. The team have met twice with the Ministry of Public Health, Housing and Local Government Sarawak to seek their opinion and perspective of the waste management reality in Sarawak.

NEW RESEARCH PROJECT

SDI & MUDeNR Sarawak Collaboration for Technical Studies Supporting the Development of a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Scheme at Gerugu Reservoir Dam, Sarikei

MUDeNR Sarawak has initiated exploratory studies for the potential applications of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme to strengthen protection and sustainable management of watersheds.

The studies, initiated in Gerugu, Sarikei are conducted with support and collaboration from SDI. PES covers a broad set of mechanisms in which the basic principle is that beneficiaries of ecosystem services (e.g. consumers receiving clean water supply) pay the ecosystem service providers (e.g. communities living or cultivating lands near rivers) to maintain the desired services, thereby establishing incentives for the provision and maintenance of an ecosystem service. The exploratory studies are expected to be completed within nine months.

A site familiarisation visit was successfully carried out in September 2025, led by MUDeNR Sarawak officials. During the four-day visit, the team met and held discussions with officers and staff from the Resident's Office of Sarikei, District Office of Sarikei, Bayong Water Treatment Plant (BWTP), as well as several community leaders from the study area. In addition to stakeholder consultations, the team collected Global Positioning System (GPS) points of resettlements for digital mapping purposes. Stakeholder interviews were carried out with the Ministry of Utilities and Telecommunications (MUT) Sarawak, MUDeNR Sarawak, M-FICORD Sarawak, Sarawak Forest Department, JBALB, and the Department of Land & Survey Sarawak between October to December. Further engagements were also conducted in the same period with the communities in the study area to explain on the studies as well as to share awareness on concepts of PES. The study is currently in progress and expected to complete in May 2026.



NEW SDI MEMBERS

**Associate Professor Ts. Noraziah
Binti Abdul Wahab**

Associate Professor
Department of Chemical
Engineering and Energy
sustainability Faculty of
Engineering

Assistant Vice-Chancellor
Industry-Community
Network and Sustainability
University of Malaysia
Sarawak (UNIMAS)



Mr. Johanes Anak Tenny

**Chartered Secretary/ Chartered
Governance
Professional**

PhD candidate
in Administrative
Science at
Universiti
Teknologi
MARA (UiTM)



**Assistant Professor
Dr. Hiew Lee Chea**

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of
Business and
Management
UCSI University
Sarawak Campus

