

LEVERAGING ON A UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPRAK INITIATIVE FOR PARTNERSHIP IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – A CASE STUDY OF SARAWAK DELTA GEOPARK

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ABSTRACT

A UNESCO Global Geopark is a single, unified geographical area where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. Developing a geopark area requires an interdisciplinary approach that would promote the development of outstanding geological, geomorphological, biological, and cultural features within it and integrated it with other considerations such land use and other built-up environment. A geopark designation is a development branding that facilitates stakeholders within it to consolidate the balance between nature-culture conservation, geotourism activities and local community well-being. It also encourages partnership and collaboration among various parties locally, nationally and internationally in the field of natural resources management and conservation and support local communities and indigenous people's participation in addressing sustainable development goals through sustainable and eco-friendly geotourism. Sarawak Delta Geopark (SDGp) is the first geopark in Sarawak and has been accorded with a national geopark status on 20 June 2022. With the size approximately 3,112 square kilometres of terrestrial and water areas, it encompasses various land uses such as stateland, forested areas under Totally Protected Areas and Permanent Forest Estates, alienated land, Native Customary Right and township in Kuching district, Bau District, Padawan sub-district and Siburan sub-district. SDGp aspires to be a UNESCO Global Geopark by 2026. Thus, it is the best platform for partnership and collaboration to implement the initiatives aligned to the sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Collaboration, geopark, geotourism, partnership, UNESCO, conservation, sustainable development