

Malaysia expands coral reef conservation to peninsula, Sarawak



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Malaysia launches NPOA 2.0 to expand coral reef conservation beyond Sabah, covering Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak with science-based governance.

KOTA KINABALU: In a major push to safeguard its rich marine heritage, Malaysia has officially launched the National Plan of Action (NPOA) 2.0, expanding coral reef conservation and sustainable management efforts beyond Sabah to include Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak.

The landmark expansion ensures that ecologically critical reefs, including those in major tourism hubs such as Pulau Redang and Pulau Tioman, are fully integrated into the nation’s unified biodiversity conservation and community livelihood frameworks.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES), in a statement today, said the updated framework introduces strict science-based governance alongside Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) benchmarks to build marine resilience against accelerating climate change impacts.

“NPOA 2.0 builds directly upon the foundational milestones achieved under the policy’s first iteration, driven by robust cross-sector partnerships,” the ministry said.

The launch was officiated by NRES secretary-general Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd Zainudin during an official dinner here last night, attended by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) vice-chancellor Prof Kasim Mansor and Sabah Parks director Dr Maklarin Lakim.

The event also marked the formalisation of a vital partnership between NRES and UMS, bridging academic expertise with proactive government policymaking.

Under the newly signed agreement, UMS will continue its role in hosting the CTI Sabah branch operations office (CTI-SAB), which will directly support the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) in executing programmes.

In tandem with regional marine management efforts, NRES said that Malaysia is taking a proactive approach to curb marine pollution by conducting a comprehensive mid-term review of three core national plastic policies.

These include the National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan (NMLPAP), the Malaysia Roadmap Towards Zero Single-Use Plastics, and the Malaysia Plastics Sustainability Roadmap (MPSR).

Meanwhile, as Malaysia prepares to chair the regional Marine Protected Areas Technical Working Group (MPA TWG) for the 2026-2027 term, the country is actively spearheading greater unity and cooperation among member countries.