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Evolution of Malaysia's Plans Policies, Initiatives and Strategies on Green Procurement Implementation: A Review

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Abstract: Malaysia's plans have evolved over the years, highlighting several goals to sustain economic growth and development in all constituent states of Malaysia. The five-year development plan comprises a comprehensive and integrated plan, policies, and strategies to lead the government in achieving the desired economic and socioeconomic goals. The first Malaysia plan was introduced in 1966-1970, and the development of Malaysia's plans has continued since then. In the Tenth Malaysia Plan, the government emphasised sustainable management, responding to global climate change, and focusing on strategies and mitigation adaptation to ensure sustainable growth. Keeping environmental sustainability is a global commitment, especially in the construction industry, which contributes the most to environmental issues. Green procurement has been introduced to the construction industry as a way forward and a strategy towards sustainability. The primary objective of this paper is to analyse the evolution of the five-year development plans policies, initiatives, and strategies that have been proposed by the government on green procurement practices in Malaysia's plans. The study employs integrative literature review to analyse the contents and features of Malaysia's plans and its related government policy documents on green procurement. The findings of this study will assist stakeholders in better understanding the significance of green policies, initiatives, and strategies on green procurement implementation in Malaysia's plans towards achieving inclusive, sustainable development in the construction industry.

Keywords: Malaysia's plans, green procurement, policies, strategies, initiatives, evolution, review

1. Introduction

'Sustainability development' is defined by the World Commission of Environment and Development as development that satisfies the current generation's demands without jeopardising the following generation's capacity to satisfy its demands. According to Zimmer et al. (2005), it is important to gather all efforts, including society and human activities,

to achieve sustainable development. Being introduced approximately 35 years ago, the term ‘sustainability’ indicates the ‘ability to sustain’ (Adams, 2006), where the concept of sustainable development is rooted in three main sustainability pillars, namely, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability. Moreover, according to Musa et al. (2013), sustainability is one of the most important concerns that is now being debated worldwide. The green trend of conserving the Earth’s resources and protecting the environment is overwhelming as global awareness of environmental conservation grows. Currently, most developing countries strive to achieve sustainable goals within the construction industry, especially in relation to the environment, health, society, as well as economy. Focusing on the construction industry, the robustness of the industry has persistently positioned itself as a prime contributor to economic and social priorities. Based on the World Economic Forum 2016, the construction sector is one of the catalysts to intensify the national economy, where it has contributed 6% of the global gross domestic product and is one of the largest consumers of raw materials, while the construction materials contribute to 25-40% of the world’s total carbon emissions. It is also highlighted in the National Construction Policy 2030 (2021) that the construction sectors contribute to 50% of climate change, 40% of global energy usage, 50% of landfill waste, water, air, noise pollution, and natural habitat destruction. Therefore, it is vital to solve and protect the environment before climate change and other environmental issues are worsen.

Global awareness regarding the contribution of the construction sector to the environment encourages countries in the world to strive to achieve sustainable development goals in the construction sector. Countries in the world contribute through implementing policies and regulations to achieve sustainable construction (Agnes and Koestoer, 2021; Darko et al., 2017). Northeast Asian countries are rated as leaders in green development performance across Asia, but the greatest progress in a green economy has been achieved by countries such as China (Shao, 2022). Countries in Southeast Asia also contribute through different approaches and priorities. According to Asia and the Pacific SDG progress report 2022, Southeast Asia has been made progress towards no poverty, industry, innovation, and infrastructure and also life on land. The process of implementing sustainable development in developing countries in Southeast Asia is largely influenced by social conditions and economic markets. However, studies that have been conducted show that countries in Southeast Asia have shown a commitment to sustainable construction through the implementation green building standards and certification systems (Bin, 2023). Strengthening the institutional framework is also a process they strive to achieve sustainable development goals.

The development of sustainable construction in Southeast Asian countries is still in progress and continues. Countries in Southeast Asia have different problems and challenges in achieving sustainable construction. This is influenced by cultural, economic, and even geographical differences from these countries. The challenges faced include social prosperity factors. Countries that still prioritize development on eradication of poverty programs, it is still difficult to establish environmental sustainability as a priority issue. The lack of progress according to the SDG Asia and Pacific 2022 progress report in Southeast Asian countries is quality education, decent work and economic growth and partnerships to achieve goals. The major barriers to achieve sustainable construction in these countries are the lack of awareness, training and education owned by construction players, and ineffective procurement systems (Shafii et al., 2006). It is necessary to have a strong commitment from all parties involved in construction to achieve sustainable development goals.

In line with the sustainability agenda, Malaysia is keenly partaking in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve an inclusive, sustainable future for the global environment. Since the construction industry is one of the major contributors to environmental problems, it is important to minimise the environmental impacts of construction activities (National Construction Policy, 2021). Therefore, moving towards a sustainable approach to handling environmental issues is vital. One of the strategies that has been introduced by the government to cater to this issue is the introduction of green procurement, which provides various benefits to the environment and society (Alqadami et al., 2020). The definition of green procurement can vary based on different authors. Green procurement (GP) can be defined as purchasing products and services that mitigate the potential threat to the environment and humans (Najmi et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Bohari and Xia (2015) defined green procurement as the “act of obtaining sustainable goods and services from the commencement to the end of the procurement process by recognising, integrating, and implementing environmental-friendly practices throughout the development process.” Moreover, green government procurement (GGP) is defined as the acquisition of products, services, and works that consider environmental criteria and standards to conserve the natural environment and resources, which minimises and reduces the negative impacts of human activities (KeTTHA, 2014).

Through various strategies that are introduced by the government to reduce the environmental impacts of construction, the industry players need to be more innovative and creative to mitigate the challenges in construction in order to stay competitive and significant with other countries. The Malaysia five-year development plan comprises a comprehensive, strategic, and integrated plan as a catalyst for sustainable green construction and development in the future. Malaysia plans to play an important role in promoting and shaping its sustainable construction industry through its strategic blueprint. Therefore, this study analyses the significance of the policies, initiatives, and strategies that are highlighted in the Malaysia Plan, focusing on related documents such as the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Malaysia Plans, which focus on green procurement implementation. Through these measures, Malaysia plans to promote adopting