

## **PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN IMBAK CANYON CONSERVATION AREA**

### **1. PREREQUISITE FOR APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN IMBAK CANYON CONSERVATION AREA (ICCA)**

#### **1.1 Approval from Sabah Government**

All researchers (foreign or Malaysian nationals domicile overseas) intending to conduct biological/biodiversity research in Sabah, Malaysia must obtain prior written approval from the Government of Sabah (Sabah Biodiversity Council).

#### **1.2 Access License**

Researchers must have an Access License from the **Sabah Biodiversity Council (SBC)**.

#### **1.3 Export License**

Researchers who wish to bring any biological resources out of the State of Sabah must inform and seek consent from the **Imbak Canyon Management Committee (ICMC)** before applying for Export License from SBC.

#### **1.3 Local Collaborator**

Researchers must secure a Local Collaborator. The Local Collaborator will be the key person responsible for overseeing the implementation of the research project and ensuring that all stipulated regulations/conditions are met (*See below for eligibility of local collaborator, their roles and responsibilities*).

### **2. APPLICATION PROCESS**

2.1 Prospective researchers may contact the Secretary, **Imbak Canyon Management Committee (ICMC)** for clarification on procedures and for guidance on the design and likely acceptability of the proposed research project.

2.2 Researchers must complete and return the **IMBAK CANYON RAINFOREST RESEARCH, TRAINING AND EDUCATION APPLICATION FORM** to the ICMC Secretary. (*Application form can be obtained from the ICMC Secretary. Refer address below*). All applications are received and processed by the ICMC Secretary, who is responsible to ensure that all requirements are met.

2.3 At the same time, researchers can apply for Access License from the Sabah Biodiversity Council. Application in writing must be made to the Sabah Biodiversity Council through **Sabah Biodiversity Centre (SaBC)**. Detailed information on the rules of application can be obtained from the Centre (*see address below*).

#### **2.4 Look See Visit**

Prospective researchers may visit **Imbak Canyon Conservation Area (ICCA)** for up to two weeks to conduct a look-see visit (research recce visit). The researcher can take this opportunity to develop personal contacts with prospective collaborative agencies. During this visit, the collection of specimen or subsequent publication is not allowed.

### 3. IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS

3.1 The researcher must complete and return the “**IMBAK CANYON RAINFOREST RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROGRAMME APPLICATION FORM**” with the following documents:

- The research proposal outlining objective(s) of the research, scope, research design, general techniques, overall budget and research schedule;
- An official letter from the financial sponsor, stating amount of financial assistance obtained, terms of contract (if applicable) or bank guarantee for those who are self-funded;
- A letter of consent from the Malaysian collaborator who must be in Malaysia for the duration of the research project;
- A letter of consent from research partnership (if any);
- A copy of Identity Card (Malaysians) or passport (foreigners);
- Digital copy of passport-sized photo;
- Prospective researchers must have a budget allocation for funding local collaborators for the duration of their research project; and
- Only applications from researchers who have obtained Access License and secured a local collaborator will be considered. The research proposals must be fully supported by the collaborators concerned.

### 3.2 IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) **New Application** - application for new research project to be conducted in DVCA, MBCA and/or ICCA.
- b) **Renewal Application** - Renewal application is to be done annually as the Letter of Consent issued is based on the Sabah Biodiversity Centre's Access License validity. No fee will be imposed.
- c) **Extension of Research Permit Validity Application** - overall research permit validity is based on the research duration filled in the application form. If the researcher wishes to extend their duration of research project, they will need to apply for extension of their research permit validity.
- d) **Collaborator/Supervisor/Research Partner** who is also involved in the research activity, collecting data and/or specimen in the field is also required to apply for a research permit in a separate form. He/She is required to show the ICCA research permit prior to conduct research in ICCA.

#### **4. RESEARCH ASSISTANTS (RA)**

- 4.1 Researchers who need research assistant(s) to assist in their research projects must liaise with their Local Collaborator to employ local research assistants.
- 4.2 The employment of foreign research assistants are not encouraged, but in the event that the research project requires research assistants with specialized skills not available in Sabah, Malaysia, the researcher may forward a formal application to ICMC to seek approval to bring in foreign research assistant(s).
- 4.3 Application to engage foreign Research Assistants must include the following information/documents:
  - Personal particulars of research assistant(s) to be engaged (name, gender, country of origin, passport number, etc.);
  - Educational background & Research Experience;
  - Letter to request permission to engage Research Assistant (s) (Please state the period of attachment/employment as research assistant and if the RA is a foreigner, please state the justification to engage foreign RA);
  - Letter of Recommendation from the Local Collaborator;
  - Copy Identification Card/Passport; and
  - Digital copy of passport-sized photo.

#### **5. PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS BY ICMC**

- 5.1 All research applications/proposals are processed by the ICMC Secretary who ensures that the necessary documents and information are in order.
- 5.2 The ICMC Secretary will then refer the applications/proposals to the relevant government departments/organisations/institutions for their comments/advice.
- 5.3 Research applicants will be informed of any changes/recommendations that may need to be made in relation to their research (if any).
- 5.4 For research applicants whose applications/proposals are deemed to be in order, ICMC Secretary will issue a Letter of Support.
- 5.5 The Sabah Biodiversity Council (SBC) requires the Letter of Support from ICMC in order to consider and decide on the application for Access and Export Licenses.
- 5.6 Only applicant who has obtained Access and Export Licenses from Sabah Biodiversity Council (SBC) will be allowed to commence their research at ICCA.

## **6. BEFORE ARRIVING IN SABAH, MALAYSIA**

Prospective researchers must:

- Obtain an Entry Visa from the nearest Malaysian Embassy/High Commission in country of origin; and
- Ensure that the Local Collaborator liaises with the Sabah Department of Immigration to ensure smooth immigration process.

## **7. ON ARRIVAL IN SABAH**

- Researchers must go to the Sabah Department of Immigration in Kota Kinabalu to apply for a special/professional visit pass. To expedite this process, researchers need to seek assistance from their local collaborator(s) and also obtain a letter of support from the ICMC Secretary.
- Researchers must report to the ICMC Secretary to collect their Research Identification Card before leaving for ICCA to commence their research.

## **8. RESEARCHERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **8.1 Before conducting research**

On arrival in ICCA, researchers must report to the Manager or Officer – in- Charge of ICCA to discuss and sort out logistics requirements such as local zoning, field assistants, transportation and accommodation etc.

### **8.2 Conducting research**

Researchers are subject to the Code of Conduct and Guidelines in the collection and distribution of specimens (*see below*) when conducting research in ICCA. They must also abide by all conditions set by ICMC and related agencies.

### **8.3 Responsibilities of Researchers**

#### **i. General responsibilities**

- Researchers are not allowed to change their research without prior approval from ICMC and the relevant authorities;
- Researchers must secure personal insurance coverage;
- Researchers will be entirely responsible for any accidents, thefts or other misfortunes suffered;
- Researchers shall fund local collaborator(s) where necessary;
- Researchers shall conduct seminars/workshops on their research findings (if required);
- Researchers must submit progress reports on a periodic basis;
- Researchers shall provide training and funds relevant to the research carried out; and

- Researchers must not raise or touch on controversial issues in their findings/reports (progress/preliminary/final) and/or in papers published on the basis of findings of the research.

ii. **Submission of Research Reports**

- Researchers are required to submit to ICMC a brief annual report during the field phase of the research project and an interim report at the end of each calendar year (for inclusion in the ICCA Annual Report);
- On completion of their research project, researchers must submit a final report to ICMC before they leave the state/country. The final report/thesis is to be submitted in the form of hard copy (7 copies) and digital (1 copy); and
- Researchers must also submit copy of all subsequent papers to ICMC.

iii. **Publication**

Researchers must obtain approval from ICMC before submitting manuscripts for publication in a named journal. This is to safeguard against avoidable factual error or unjustified general critical remarks, and to ensure that collaborators and the ICCA programmes are acknowledged.

iv. **Media Interview**

Researchers must not make press statements or release any information to the media, nor discuss policy matters with the media under any circumstances.

v. **Research Equipment**

Any equipment purchased through a specific grant/fund (tailored) provided under research involving ICCA is to be deposited in ICCA (Imbak Canyon Studies Centre), unless specified otherwise at the beginning of the project.

**9. EXTENSION OF DURATION OF RESEARCH**

9.1 Researchers who intend to extend the duration of their research must get written approval from ICMC and SaBC at least one month before the expiry date of their research permits.

9.2 A formal request must be made stating reasons for requiring the extension, and supported by the following documents:

- Progress report;
- Schedule of work for the period extension sought; and
- Letter of support from the local collaborator(s).

**10. ON COMPLETION OF RESEARCH**

10.1 Researchers must submit to ICMC the following:

- A preliminary report of their findings at least two weeks prior to the expiry date of the duration of the research; and
- A final report before they leave the country on completion of their research project.

10.2 If deemed necessary, researchers will be required to present and discuss their findings at a workshop/seminar upon completion of their research project.

### **ELIGIBILITY, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL COLLABORATORS**

1. A person who consents to be the local collaborator must be:
  - Malaysian citizen attached to a recognized institution/agency based in Sabah; and
  - Individual with identified expertise.
2. The overall collaboration should be based on individual expertise.
3. The local collaborator is responsible for the following:
  - Ensure he/she is fully briefed on the nature of the research proposal, and to make recommendations to the ICMC;
  - Provide assistance to check status of research application with relevant organizations/departments;
  - Be able to assess and be committed to ensure that the objectives of the research are achieved;
  - To assist researchers to acquire suitably qualified research assistants;
  - To evaluate request by researchers who wish to bring in foreign research assistants, and to make recommendations to ICMC;
  - Provide assistance to foreign researchers in applying for the Professional Visit Pass from the Sabah Immigration Department;
  - In the process of transferring research skills and technology, the local collaborator is expected to spend a minimum of two weeks in fieldwork with the researcher;
  - Monitor the research activities and to ensure that the researcher who he/she is responsible for abides by the "Researchers Code of Conduct";
  - Ensure that the researcher abide by the rules and regulations pertaining to the collection and distribution of specimens;
  - Be completely responsible for the research conducted by the researcher, and to ensure that the researcher does not deal with sensitive matters that can adversely affect the image of the nation;
  - Will not, under any circumstances, discuss or pass on information to the press about the research, unless with written approval from ICMC;
  - To furnish information and feedback on the progress of the research to ICMC and/or SaBC and other agencies/institutions, if requested;

- Ensure that the findings of the research are submitted to ICMC and/or other relevant organizations/departments; and
  - Ensure that the findings of the research are not published without prior approval from ICMC.
4. In the event that the local collaborator switches job or is transferred elsewhere, he/she may choose to continue as local collaborator subject to approval by the respective institution involved or hand over the responsibility to his/her successor and seek endorsement from ICMC.

## **GUIDELINES ON THE COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIMENS**

1. Collection of specimen must adhere to prevailing rules and regulations, and guidelines.
2. In addition to the research approval from ICMC and Access License from SaBC, prior written approval for collecting specimens by foreign researchers or institutions must be obtained from the Sabah Wildlife Department (in the case of vertebrates) and from the Sabah Forestry Department, Sepilok Forest Research Centre (in the case of invertebrates).
3. **Herbarium Specimens**
  - 3.1 All researchers collecting plants/herbarium specimens for research must work in collaboration with the collaborative institution.
  - 3.2 In collecting plants for herbarium purposes, the reproductive material should not be collected within 20m of the existing trail system in ICCA. This is to protect readily visible flowering and fruiting specimens for the benefit of visitors.
  - 3.3 Duplicate specimens of all plants must be first taken to Sepilok Forest Research Centre from where the herbarium will distribute numbered copies to all relevant institutions.
4. **Field Collecting Rules**
  - 4.1 Collection is permitted only for research purposes, and each project will be reviewed on its merits by the ICMC on a case by case basis.
  - 4.2 No collecting of vertebrates will be permitted within the conservation area. Exceptions require explicit approval by the ICMC. Where the existence of a new form/specimen is suspected, ICMC may consider an exception. This restriction, however, does not apply to invertebrates or to vertebrates live-trapped and subsequently released.
  - 4.3 Collection is permitted outside the conservation area and in the Imbak River, but vertebrate biologists wishing to collect more than 10 specimens of one species or 50 in total, are not allowed to do so within 2km of the Studies Centre.
5. **Specimen Deposits**
  - 5.1 The Sabah Forestry Department and Sabah Wildlife Department act as “lead agencies” and shall liaise with other interested parties in determining deposition requirements

for other local institutions such as National University Malaysia (UKM), State and National Museums. Requests will normally be entertained only from reputable overseas museums or other institutions.

- 5.2 A reasonable share of material collected, preferably identified as far as possible, and must be deposited with the agreed institutions at an agreed future date after completion of the fieldwork. The usual basis for negotiation will be an even share of material between the collector's and Malaysian institution. All such agreements must be reached before the commencement of the fieldwork.
- 5.3 In each case, the nominated "lead agency" in Sabah (e.g. Forestry Department) reserves the right to insist on the return of unique and major share of small series (i.e insects). Holotype material may be deposited in a recognized international institution, provided that it is freely available on loan to all *bona fide* scientists, and paratypes are deposited with the "lead agency". Such holotypes shall be regarded as the property of the nominated agency on indefinite loan. The agency will in its turn give ample notice (at least a year) of its intention to demand return of such material and will likewise ensure that after return, the types are made available in a similar manner to the international scientific community.

#### **RULES & REGULATIONS USING DRONE IN IMBAK CANYON CONSERVATION AREA**

1. Drone must be registered with the management committee when the operator applies for authorization from the management committee to use drone in his / her project and obtain permit from the Office of Internal Affairs & Research, Chief Minister's Department, Sabah.
2. Drone or any related fee must be paid in prior;
  - Drone registration fee (RM50.00 / unit) – Applied to all applicants.
  - Other additional charges:
    - a. Commercial (Overseas) Fee: - Applied to Overseas Companies (to be imposed if filming & Photography are using only drone as equipment)
      - i. Filming (RM12,500 + RM2,500 deposit) (Deposit is refundable upon receiving two copies of the edited film).
      - ii. Photography (RM500/unit)
    - b. Commercial (Local) Fee: - Applied to Local Companies(to be imposed if filming & Photography are using only drone as equipment)
      - i. Filming (RM500 + RM250 deposit) (Deposit is refundable upon receiving two copies of the edited film).
      - ii. Photography (RM100/unit)
    - c. Non- commercial (Overseas) Fee: -  
Applied to Overseas Tourists/Guests/Researchers

- i. Filming (RM100)
- ii. Photography (RM50/unit)

d. Non- commercial (Local) Fee: -  
Applied to Local Tourists/Guests/Researchers

- i. Filming (RM50)
- ii. Photography (RM25/unit)

3. Operating rules:

- Drone weight must be 20kg or less
- MUST keep drone in – lines of sight all times.
- MUST remain under 400 ft or 150 M.
- MUST fly at or below 100 KM/hr.
- MUST not fly over human or crowd.
- MUST not fly under influence.
- MUST not fly from a moving vehicle.
- MUST yield right of way to manned aircraft all the time.

**RESEARCH PERMIT FEE**

NO	FEE	FEE (RM)		
		LOCAL UNDERGRADUATE	LOCAL (POSTGRADUATE AND OTHER RESEARCH)	OVERSEAS
1.	Research Permit			
	...New Application	35.00	100.00	150.00
	...Extension of Permit Validity	35.00	100.00	150.00

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## RELEVANT CONTACTS ADDRESSES

1. **Group Manager**  
**Conservation Area Management Division (Maliau Basin and Imbak Canyon)**  
Yayasan Sabah Group  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor Menara Tun Mustapha  
P.O.Box 11622  
88817 Kota Kinabalu  
Sabah, Malaysia  
**Telephone No.** +60-88-326321  
**Fax No.** +60-88-326316  
**Email:** camd.reservations@gmail.com
  
2. **Secretary,**  
**Imbak Canyon Management Committee**  
c/o Conservation Area Management Division (Danum Valley/ Silam/Taliwas) &  
Forest Rehabilitation  
Yayasan Sabah Group  
Level 9, Menara Tun Mustapha, Likas Bay,  
P.O.Box 11622  
88817 KOTA KINABALU  
Sabah, Malaysia  
**Telephone No.:** +6088-326559  
**Fax No.:** +60-88-326315  
**Email:** damai.secretariat@gmail.com  
**Website:** <http://www.imbakcanyon-borneo.com.my>
  
3. **Officer – in - Charge**  
**Imbak Canyon Conservation Area**  
c/o Rakyat Berjaya Sdn Bhd  
Jln. Sekolah Cheng Ming  
P.O.Box 1437,  
90715 Sandakan  
Sabah, Malaysia  
**Telephone No.** +60-89-7225836, +60-87-745102  
**Fax No.** +60-89-210852, +60-87-745103  
**Email:** imbakcanyon@gmail.com  
**Website:** <http://www.imbakcanyon-borneo.com.my>
  
4. **Secretary**  
**Sabah Biodiversity Centre**  
Natural Resources Office, Chief Minister's Department  
19th Floor, Block A, Sabah State Administrative Building,  
88400 Kota Kinabalu  
Sabah, Malaysia  
**Telephone No.:** +60-88-369000/369099  
**Fax No.:** +60-88-250753  
**Email:** [sabc@sabah.gov.my](mailto:sabc@sabah.gov.my)  
**Website:** <https://sabc.sabah.gov.my/>

5. Secretary of Internal Affairs & Research  
Office of Internal Affairs & Research  
Chief Minister's Department  
21<sup>st</sup> Floor, Block A  
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