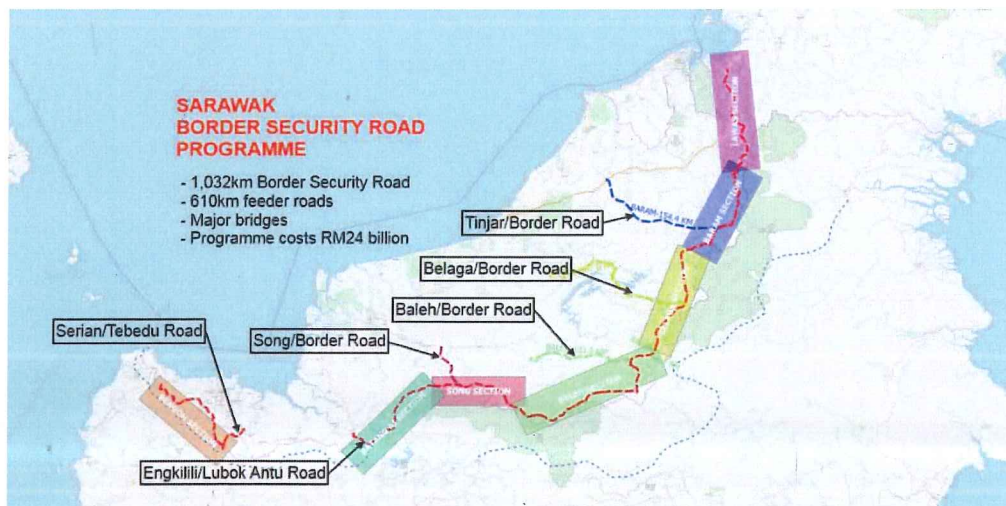


Masing: Timely to construct security road network along Sarawak-Kalimantan border

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A map of the proposed Sarawak Border Security Road Programme.

KUCHING: Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar James Jemut Masing said it is timely for Sarawak to construct the security road network along the Sarawak-Kalimantan border, following the announcement of the Indonesian capital relocation to East Kalimantan by 2024.

If implemented, the proposed security road network will start from Biawak to Serikin and Engkilili passing through Lubok Antu, Long Silat, Long Banga, Bario, Ba Kelalan, Long Semadoh, Long Sukang and end in Lawas town.

The scope of works of the proposal comprise of the upgrading of 518km of existing R1 gravel road to JKR R3 standard tar-sealed road, construction of 1,124km new JKR R3 standard tar-sealed road and other ancillary works which include earthworks consisting of filled embankment and cut slopes; construction of road pavement; ground treatment works; construction of R.C. bridges across existing streams; construction of culverts and drains; temporary diversion works; slope protection and erosion control measures and other miscellaneous works like road signages and markings.

"The border road network is vital in providing local connectivity and international access. Priority selection criteria for this programme is based on the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) strategic thrusts.

"It will also help safeguard our territory as well as protecting our multi-billion ringgit assets, especially the Sabah-Sarawak Gas Pipeline (SSGP) and the four hydro-electric power (HEP) dams, which are situated close to our international border," he said after being briefed on the Border Security Road Network Programme by Public Works Department (JKR) Sarawak Assistant Director (Corporate Planning Branch) Norman Jan today.

Masing, who is also Minister for Infrastructure and Port Development, said that an in-depth study on the proposed border road network shall be carried out with priority given to four sections namely, Baleh Section and Feeder Road, Engkilili/Lubok Antu and Batang Ai Section, Tebedu Access Road R5 Upgrading and Baram Section and Tinjar Feeder Road.

"The border security road network programme hopes to not only provide connectivity to the highland region along the border of Sarawak and Kalimantan but also aims to allow access for our rich national parks and wildlife sanctuaries to be experienced by nature enthusiasts," he added.

With a total border road length of an estimated 1,032 kilometres (km) and feeder road of 610km the grand total programme cost is estimated to be RM24 billion with implementation from 2020 to 2030 and beyond.

A mini lab was conducted on Oct 23 and matters related to developing the proposed border security road network was discussed.

The session was attended by members from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Port Development (MIPD), Economic Planning Unit (EPU) Sarawak, Majlis Keselamatan Negara, Immigration Department, Royal Customs Department, Resident and District Offices, Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB), Forest Department, JKR Engineers from Divisions and Headquarters.

The lab raised several input to formulate the way forward for the project such as the State Socio-Economic Transformation Plan (2016 – 2030), the 12Malaysia Plan Strategic Thrusts and connecting the rural communities, tourism assets, existing border entry points and border security areas.