
PRESS RELEASE
25 JUNE 2025

**From Recovery to Resilience:
ECoS CEO Charts Sabah's Energy Transformation on Niaga Spotlight**

KOTA KINABALU, 25 June 2025 – Appearing on Astro Awani's Niaga Spotlight, themed "Lighting Up Sabah – Energy Transformation, Equity and Opportunity", Datuk Ir. Abdul Nasser bin Abdul Wahid, Chief Executive Officer of the Energy Commission of Sabah (ECoS), spoke with anchor Tehmina Kaoosji to share Sabah's journey toward a greener, more resilient, and inclusive energy future.

Since ECoS took over regulatory control in January 2024, Sabah's priority has been grid stability. "We had to get our house in order," said Nasser. Through fast-tracked interim measures, including 200MW of diesel and gas rentals and a 100MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Sabah is on track to reach a 25% reserve margin by Q3 2025, with permanent gas plants due to replace those interim diesel plants by 2026–2027.

Rural electrification has reached 96%, with full access targeted by 2030. This is being driven by collaboration with the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKDW), the State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN), Sabah Electricity and through an intervention committee mandated by Sabah Energy Council which is the Jawatankuasa Elektrifikasi Luar Bandar Sabah (JELaS), alongside renewable off-grid solutions and community-based operations.

Sabah is also scaling up its renewable energy (RE) ambitions, 40% by 2030, 80% by 2050, guided by the Sabah Energy Roadmap and Master Plan 2040 (SE-RAMP 2040). Over 600MW of projects, mostly hydropower, have been approved, with a further 2,000MW targeted by 2040. These projects aim to bring socio-economic benefits to indigenous and rural communities through training, jobs, and local business opportunities.

On large-scale infrastructure like the Upper Padas Hydropower Project, he emphasised the importance of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA), early engagement with relevant stakeholders, environmental protection measures, and fair compensation.

Welcoming foreign investment, including from private firms, Nasser stressed the compulsory requirement for minimum value of local content and State Government-Linked Company (GLC) participation for energy projects in Sabah. He cited the success of LSS Sabah 2024 bid rounds conducted by ECoS last year, which attracted nearly 200 local bids and resulted in 15 awarded consortiums, as evidence of market confidence and strong governance.

About ECoS

The Energy Commission of Sabah (ECoS) is a statutory body established by the State Government of Sabah since 10th January 2023. It operates as the regulator for the energy sector within the Chief Minister's portfolio. The primary objectives of ECoS are to ensure secure, sustainable, affordable, and accessible energy for the State of Sabah. ECoS plays a pivotal role in shaping Sabah's energy landscape, promoting responsible energy practices, and safeguarding the interests of both consumers and the environment.

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He also highlighted bioenergy as a “hidden gem,” with over 800MW of untapped potential. Recent policy shifts, including biomass export restrictions and appointment of GLC aggregators, are helping unlock this sector, with more emphasis on methane reduction poised to attract premium green tariffs.

On reconciling fossil fuel investments with climate goals, the CEO said a balanced approach is important for a just transition with natural gas serving as a necessary transition fuel to maintain energy security while RE capacity grows, aligned with NETR and SE-RAMP 2040.

Human capital development is also a key lever to sustain all the development efforts which has been identified as being one of the enablers under the SE-RAMP 2040. Understanding its importance, ECoS has decided on another intervention approach through the TVET Angkat ECoS programme, whereby it is committed to upgrade vocational training skills and competencies including facilitating infrastructure needs, aligning skills with industry demand, and supporting local youth employability. With this effort, we are hoping more organisations and industry players will follow suit and do their part for the sustainable future of the Sabah energy industry.

In closing, Nasser affirmed Sabah’s potential to be a regional model for a just and sustainable energy transition through the integration into the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) starting with the soon to be completed Sabah-Sarawak grid interconnection by end-2025 ,and leveraging its central geographical advantages towards becoming the future key energy hub in this region.

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