

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT OPTIONS AND SITE SELECTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review the options available for the Project taking into consideration the existing and future economic, technical and environmental situations.

5.2 PROJECT OPTIONS

Two options are made available for selection, either to abandon it or to go ahead with development of the project which is:

- ‘No Project’ Option; and
- ‘With Project’ Option.

Several assessments need to be made in order to select the most suitable option (s) for the development for that area. The factors are:

- Compatibility with the surrounding landuse.
- Significance impact to the environment.
- Economic and social benefits in terms of employment, contribution to economy of the area and social impacts.
- Relevance to government policies and development strategies for the area.

The merits and demerits of the two competing options are discussed below.

5.2.1 ‘No Project’ Option

The ‘No Project’ Option where the development of the Project will not be undertaken. If no development, the project site will remain in its current state where existing vegetation will continue to grow.

5.2.2 'With Project' Option

The reasons are predicated as follow:

i. Site Selection Option

The proposed project site under study is located at Mukim Relai on region of Chiku District. Relai is considered as remote area and away from main stream development. Majority of the areas is still occupied by jungle and forest environment. Most population is living at Gua Musang town and some lives at Relai with limited source of income. Even there are few basic facilities available in the area, the conditions are considered still quite far behind compared to modern development.

ii. Social-economic Option

The Project, among other benefits, will definitely bring about positive social-economic impacts to the region. The operation of this Project would provide job and business opportunities for the local population. There would be a need to supply the project site with materials and services. The demand for labour can be fulfilled by sourcing workers and materials either locally or from other regions or countries. The best option would be to supply the Project with labour and materials locally as it will help the local economy and improve the social status of the local population.

iii. Environmental Option

At this moment, the proposed project is located on remote area totally covered by primary and secondary forest environment. Developing the areas after logging into agriculture (based on the existing environment) shall be a good option rather than leaving the site under present condition. With environmental friendly development and sustainable logging and agriculture practice, the proposed project shall have minimal adverse impact to surrounding.

The settlement areas are quite far from the proposed project boundary and buffered by forest and oil palm plantation environment, so issues of impact during proposed project implementation shall be minimized during the operation.

5.3 CRITERIA OF SITTING AND ROUTING

5.3.1 Sitting and routing to accommodate landscape diversity

Aesthetically, the present site condition is similar to forest environment. Logging operation and changes toward agriculture shall destroy the greenery environment on site temporarily. Once cover crops and agriculture develop, green environment shall return to the area. Issue of aesthetic is not a concern since it is at remote area away from the population settlements.

The biodiversity of existing environment is rich with flora and fauna and their unique habitats. Logging the area currently under forest cover and its subsequent development into plantation will impact on environment in a short term basis but not for a long term as the plantation is sort of what known as Planted Forest. The physical changes will create new biodiversity that would rehabilitate the impacted environment on a long term basis.

In term of social aspects, the development is expected to enhance socio-economy of the surrounding population by providing them better infrastructures, income and logistics.

5.3.2 Status of sitting and routing

Generally, sitting and routing is considered compatible if not on a holistic basis as there is impact of conversion of forestry into agriculture particularly oil palm on environment. However, the impact is localized and minimal.

5.4 SUMMARY

The 'No Project' Option, if adopted, will incur significant opportunity loss when compare to the 'With project' Option.

The justification in favour of the 'With Project' Option is based on the following:

- The project can raise the socio-economic status of the Jajahan Gua Musang and state by providing better job opportunities for the local community.

Based on the above, the 'With Project' Option is recommended for this Project.