DEVELOPMENT OF FRAMEWORK FOR GREEN HIGHWAY IMPLEMENTATION IN MALAYSIA

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Dedicated to my beloved; Azam, Ariff & Ameer..

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In the name of Allah s.w.t. the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability and green concepts are closely linked to environmental protection. Over the years, various green initiatives have been taken to support global efforts in maintaining the world's ecological balance. Looking at the local context, most green initiatives that have been implemented in this country are mainly related to buildings and roads. In the highway project development, efforts to implement green initiatives are relatively low even though full support has been provided by the government. Reviews of literature revealed that Malaysia is still lacking of a framework or model that can be used to successfully implement green highway project development. In view of the issue, this study is carried out with the aim to develop a Green Highway Framework for Malaysia that serves as a guide for the implementing agency, i.e. Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA), in order to realize the green highway development. The green highway implementation can be monitored and assessed with the established framework coupled with availability of a rating tool known as the Malaysia Green Highway Index (MyGHI). In this study, the existing green initiatives and barriers to green highway implementation have also been investigated. The methodologies employed in the study consisted of qualitative and quantitative data collections mainly through questionnaire survey and expert interviews. The survey and interview respondents were mainly officers from government agencies including the MHA and highway concessionaires. Analysis of the data collected indicates that the implementation of green initiatives in the existing highways is marginal and needs to be improved. The findings lead to the establishment of a Green Highway Framework, made up of three main processes which are Strategic Process, Tactical Process and Operational Process. The development of the Green Highway Framework enables implementation of green initiatives in highway project developments in Malaysia to be more structured and organised.

ABSTRAK

Konsep mampan dan hijau sering berkait rapat dalam pemeliharaan alam sekitar. Sejak sekian lama, pelbagai aspek pendekatan hijau dilaksanakan bagi menyokong usaha sejagat dalam mengekalkan keseimbangan ekologi dunia. Melihat konteks tempatan, kebanyakan inisiatif hijau yang diaplikasi adalah berkait rapat dengan bangunan dan jalan. Dalam pembangunan lebuhraya, usaha melaksanakan inisiatif hijau masih dianggap rendah walaupun sokongan penuh Kerajaan diberikan. Kajian literature menunjukkan Malaysia masih tidak mempunyai kerangka mahupun model yang boleh digunapakai bagi menjayakan pembangunan lebuhraya hijau. Berdasarkan isu yang dinyatakan, kajian ini dilaksanakan dengan tujuan untuk membangunkan Kerangka Lebuhraya Hijau di Malaysia sebagai panduan kepada agensi pelaksana iaitu Lembaga Lebuhraya Malaysia (LLM) bagi merealisasikan pembangunan lebuhraya hijau di Malaysia. Pelaksanaan lebuhraya hijau dapat dipantau dan dinilai dengan terbentuknya kerangka ini ditambah pula adanya alat penarafan yang dikenali sebagai Malaysia Green Highway Index (MyGHI). Di dalam kajian ini kewujudan inisiatif hijau dan halangan kepada pelaksanaan lebuhraya hijau diselidiki. Metodologi yang digunapakai merangkumi kaedah juga telah pengumpulan data secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif melalui kajian soalselidik dan temubual pakar. Responden kajian terdiri daripada kalangan pegawai agensi kerajaan serta syarikat konsesi lebuhraya. Analisis data menunjukkan pelaksanaan inisiatif hijau di lebuhraya sedia ada masih di tahap marginal dan perlu dipertingkatkan. Penemuan ini membawa kepada pembentukan Kerangka Lebuhraya Hijau, gabungan tiga proses utama iaitu Proses Strategik, Proses Taktikal dan Proses Operasi. Pembangunan Kerangka Lebuhraya Hijau ini membolehkan inisiatif hijau dalam pembangunan projek lebuhraya dapat dilaksanakan dengan jelas dan tersusun.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Act
EQA	Environmental Quality Act 1974
GBI	Green Building Index
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LLM	Lembaga Lebuhraya Malaysia
MHA	Malaysian Highway Authority
MOW	Ministry of Works
OECD	The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
pH JKR	Penarafan Hijau JKR
PWD /JKR	Public Works Department / Jabatan Kerja Raya
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It is undeniable that highway is among the major infrastructures contributing towards the enhancement of national economy. With the increasing number of highway developments over the last few years, it shows that the number of vehicles has also been increasing.

Concurrently, environmental crisis such as global warming, climate change, deforestation and other environmental problems are issues that have arisen from the lack of environmental awareness especially in the context of highway development. These environmental issues have become a subject of discussion across the world over the years. It needs to be solved at the global level in order to ensure environmental balance. Various execution methods have been taken to alleviate environmental impact such as establishing policies, enforcing laws, establishing index and rating tools, raising awareness among the public, among many others.

In Malaysia, the term "Green Technology" has only become popular in the last few years although it was introduced in the western countries in the early 1990's. In order to support the efforts towards green approach, the National Policy on the Environment has been introduced in 2002 as a guide for all Malaysian stakeholders to preserve a clean, safe, healthy and protective environment. Then, the Green Policy of National Green Technology was launched in July 2009 to strengthen the green implementation in Malaysia. The Policy states, "Green Technology shall be a driver to accelerate the national economy and promote sustainable development". The policy covers all agencies of infrastructure including highways.

1.2 Problem Statement

Highway projects are closely linked with people's everyday lives. They play an essential role in a nation's social and economic development (Huang, 2008). Based on data from the Malaysian Highway Authority, up to the December 2011, the total length of 26 tolled highways operating in Malaysia is 1,732.44 km, while the number of vehicles using the highway has been increasing from time to time.

The highway construction which involves major construction activity is a common source of environmental problem in the country. The development involves massive earthwork in construction. These earthworks such as cut and fill may bring negative impact to the surrounding environment. In the operation and maintenance perspective, traffic congestion on the highways is one of the issues that are causing environmental problems. Thus, the highway industry contributes to a major impact on the environment.

Data recorded by Fong (2008) shows that the total carbon emission (CO2) in Malaysia is the third highest compared to the other developing Southeast Asian countries after Indonesia and Thailand. The breakdown of CO2 emissions by sector shows that it is led by transportation (31%), followed by the energy industries (28%) and manufacturing industries (22%). Despite the importance of the national transportation network, there is a growing recognition that highway construction and maintenance have major environmental impacts (Hassan, 2008).

With a range of environmental issues that exist, the concept of green highways is introduced to overcome the various issues related to the environment. Green Highway is one element of sustainable transport. It is a new concept even though the implementation of a large number of technologies involved in green highway design has been encouraged for many years (Bryce, 2008). The implementation of green highway requires proper planning in every aspect of highway development. With the current level of public acceptance on the importance of preserving the environment, the need to create a sustainable highway development has become mandatory. One of the approaches in green highway concept is the implementation of rating tools. It is an important instrument to measure the effectiveness of green implementation in an objective approach. The existence of multiple rating tools both in and outside the country show the level of awareness towards green development is generally good.

Recognizing the importance of green development, several initiatives have been taken to support the government mandate. For building projects, the Green Building Index (GBI) has been introduced by Persatuan Arkitek Malaysia (PAM) as reference to measure the green building; Penarafan Hijau JKR (pH JKR) was developed by Public Works Department (PWD) to measure the green level of federal buildings and roads, and also GreenPASS, developed by CIDB to calculate the percentage of carbon emissions. All the rating tools were implemented by various government and private agencies as an effort to sustain green development.

However, most rating tools that exist in Malaysia only focus on buildings and roads. Initiatives that focus on green highway are still lacking especially in the context of development of rating tools, monitoring standards, guidelines and green framework. Therefore, the need to develop standard for the development of green highway has become a major challenge. As a regulatory agency for toll highways, Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA) is the entity that is responsible for developing and implementing the framework for green highway development in order to ensure the balance between the development of roads and highways construction industry in country.

According to the Malaysian Highway Authority (2010), the green highway concept and characteristics shall be applied throughout the highway development stages; comprising planning, designing, construction, operation and maintenance. With very limited research in highways, the implementation of green highway development is seen as having huge impact on sustainable highway development. Hence, in order to ensure that all highway developments and operations do not cause negative impact to the environment, tools or methods with standard criteria has to be developed in order to measure the standard of green implementation in all phases of highway construction.

1.3 Aim of Research

The aim of the research is to develop a framework of Green Highway to be implemented in Malaysia.

1.4 Objective of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

- i. To investigate the existing implementation of green highway in Malaysia.
- ii. To identify and evaluate barriers in developing green highway.
- iii. To establish critical elements for developing a conceptual framework for green highway.
- iv. To validate the green highway framework from the viewpoint of highway stakeholders.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The research focuses on tolled highways in Malaysia that are being monitored by the Malaysian Highway Authority. The perimeter of the study is limited to the Malaysia Peninsular which comprises the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central Regions (Klang Valley). In this research, the case studies were selected based on different phases of projects starting from planning, design, construction to operation and maintenance. It also covers main features of the highway such as mainline, interchanges, toll plaza, road furniture, landscape, and services provided such as layby, rest and service area and response team.

This research also involved the communities within highway development such as concession companies, consultants, contractors, any related Government agencies including the point of view of UTM academicians who have green highway related expertise.

1.6 Limitation of Study

There are several limitations encountered during the course of the study. They are:

- The participants involved in this study are limited to highway concessionaires; there is lack of involvement among the experts such as consultants and contractors who are knowledgeable in highway industry.
- Deeper explanation had to be done to provide details on some other new terms in sustainable and green development due to the lack of exposure and the fact that its implementation is still at an early stage.

1.7 Significance of the Research

In order to implement green highway in Malaysia, a proper system needs to be developed so that the implementation covered all aspects. As highlighted in Section 1.3, this research aims to develop green highway framework. Since this is the first green highway framework in Malaysia, it may serve as a master plan for the Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA) to implement green highway. At the same time, the framework will be used by highway stakeholders as medium to enhance the understanding of green highway concept. The outcome of the research may contribute directly to the highway industry especially to the related government agencies and concession companies. The involvement of concession companies in this green initiative sends the message that the company is well-run, responsible and committed to the future. Besides, the outcome of this research can be viewed in various related standpoints: economic, environmental and social aspects as indicated in Table 1.1.

Aspect	Outcome
Economic aspects	- improve Malaysia's ranking in world environment ratings
	- reduce resources consumption while sustaining national
	economic growth
	- reduce in project cost due to good project management
	- enhancement to the national economy with the development
	in green technology
Social aspects	- improve quality of life and public awareness especially to
	the highway user
Environmental	- conserve and minimize impact to the environment
aspect	- improve sustainable development and conserve the
	environment for future generation.

 Table 1.1: Research Outcomes

1.8 Brief Research Methodology

This research methodology covers detail processes involved in developing green framework so that the implementation will become more relevant to the highway industry. It began with the literature review on various areas related to sustainable and green development. The research employed triangulation method involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Details of the research methodology can be found in Chapter 3.

In general, the process of data collection consisted of qualitative method which involved interviews and focus group discussions and quantitative method which are indicated in survey questionnaire. The survey respondents were from government agencies and highway concessionaires. Several methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative data was processed using NVivo 10 application, while quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS v.17.0. Critical elements were derived from the analysis to develop the Malaysia Green Highway Framework. In order to ensure that the framework is relevant to the industry, the proposed framework was validated by the relevant agency before it can be fully implemented. The complete flow of this research investigation is visualized in Figure 1.1.

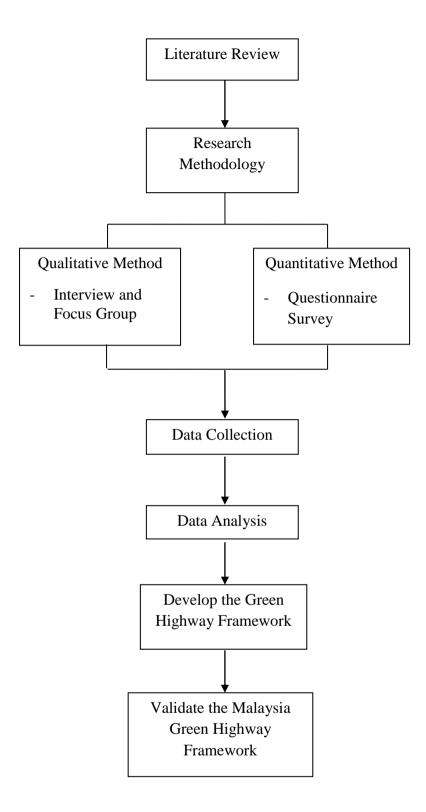


Figure 1.1: Research Methodology Chart

1.9 Summary

This chapter has provided the overall introduction to the research. The background of the study has led to the problem statements to be overcome in this study. Several initiatives have been taken to support the government mandate as a step to recognize the importance of green development. However, most of the rating tools in Malaysia only focus on buildings and roads. Initiatives on green highway are still lacking in the aspect of the development of rating tools, monitoring standards, guidelines and green framework. Thus, a proper system needs to be developed so that the implementation of green initiatives can cover all aspects of green development. This research aims to develop a green highway framework in Malaysia. It may serve as a master plan for the Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA) to implement green highway since this is the first green highway framework in Malaysia. The research focuses on tolled highways in Malaysia. The significance of research has impact on various aspects including economic, social and environmental impacts with some limitations. The research methodology processes have been outlined for an overall picture of the research. This study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches for triangulation. In the next chapter, a review of literature related to this research will be explored in detail.

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