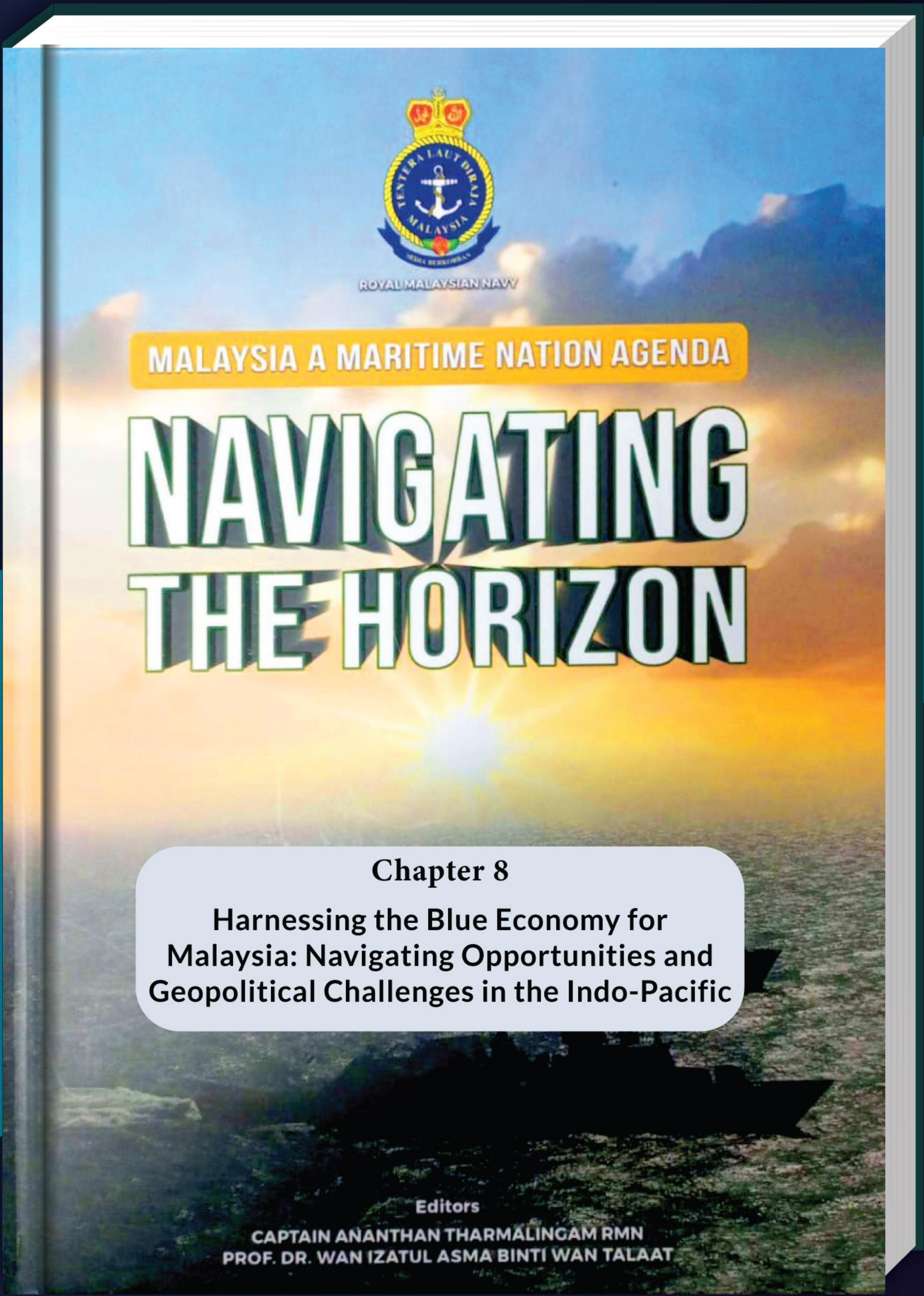

Chapter 8

Harnessing the Blue Economy for Malaysia: Navigating Opportunities and Geopolitical Challenges in the Indo-Pacific

HARNESSING THE BLUE ECONOMY FOR MALAYSIA: NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES AND GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

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1. Introduction

The concept of Blue Economy is one that recognizes the ocean as one of the most important sources for economic growth while preserving the environment (Maza, 2025). With the aim to split environmental degradation with economic growth, it promotes responsible resource management and the use of innovative technologies. With oceans taking up 70% of Earth's surface, the Blue Economy helps with not only sustaining livelihoods for more than 3 billion people but also provides options for dealing with issues such as climate change, food insecurity and energy shortages (Kamboyo, 2024). The concept of Blue Economy matches closely with several UN Sustainable Development Goals, like 14 (Life Below Water) as it promotes ocean stewardship and responsible marine resource management, however, it has horizontal linkage with all SDGs. The SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) is supported by sustainable fisheries management by improving nutrition and ensuring food security. The sector of coastal tourism can contribute to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by creating opportunities for livelihoods (Chaturvedi, 2023).

The Indo-Pacific is one of the important oceanic zones in the world, which contributes immensely to global trade, economic interconnectivity, and geopolitical interaction between states. The Indo-Pacific Region includes some of the most populous countries such as Pakistan, China, India, Japan, Australia and Malaysia and accounts for around two-thirds of economic output globally (*Drishti*, 2023). It is an important hub for trade, consisting of critical maritime routes, including the Strait of Malacca. This chokepoint is important for linking the economies of East Asia, Middle East, South Asia and Europe, making it a linchpin of international trade.

Malaysia plays a vital role in the Indo-Pacific Region because of its economic potential and strategic location. It navigates a delicate balance between major powers especially the United States and China by using the policy of ‘pulling sideways’, which means maintaining economic ties with China while engaging in security cooperation with the US (*Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*, 2024). The geopolitical location of Malaysia Is important as it seeks to preserve

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its maritime interests. Malaysia's long coastline and marine resources offer many opportunities for sustainable development. Sitting astride strait of Malacca is hallmark of their geostrategic location. The contribution of its Blue Economy are expected to increase from 21% to 31% (Akademi Sains, 2022).

2. Blue Economy VS Ocean Economy

The terms Blue Economy and Ocean Economy are used to describe economic activities related to the ocean. While both terms describe the same thing, there are distinctions that make them stand out from one another. The ocean economy deals with economic activities in the marine environment like fishing and shipping but does not prioritize sustainability. The Blue Economy, however, carries a more holistic approach; it focuses on all the economic activities related to oceans but most importantly it focuses on the sustainable use of marine resources for economic growth and conservation of biodiversity and preservation of environment.

The World Bank defines it as "the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem" (*World Bank Group*, 2017) The European Commission describes it as encompassing "all economic activities related to oceans, seas, and coasts," covering a wide range of interlinked established and emerging sectors (*European Commission*, 2021).

The Blue Economy serves as a framework and policy for sustainable marine economic activities. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projects that the ocean economy, which includes all industries with a direct or indirect connection to the ocean, such as marine energy, ports, shipping, coastal protection, and seafood production, could outperform global economic growth by 2030, which indicates the importance of marine sectors in economic development (*CMEMS*, 2017).

3. Strategic Importance of the Indo-Pacific Region

The strategic location of the Indo-Pacific Region has a vital importance for global trade which makes it a focal point for geopolitical competition. The presence of important sea routes is also a reason for competition between major states. An example is the dispute over maritime boundary in the South China Sea, involving a number of countries like Vietnam, China and Philippines, which highlights the possibility of conflict (Ziętek, 2018). Different countries competing for influence in the region led to the militarization of the Indo-Pacific. QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), which involves United States, India, Japan and Australia, is one of the examples (Smith, 2021). US has issued Indo-Pacific Strategy (replacing Asia-Pacific Strategy) in 2022, which recognizes India's dominant role in Indo Pacific region and termed as Net Security Provider and termed China as the aggressor. US Pacific Command and CENTCOM jurisdictions and areas of responsibilities have also been redefined.

The Indo-Pacific Region is also home to many territorial disputes and potential flashpoints which further complicate the security dynamic of the region. Hence the Indo-Pacific Region has become a theatre of security concerns in the 21st century which have implications for stability on a global level (Ziętek, 2018). The increasing militarization of the Indo-Pacific region implies the risk of a potential security dilemma which increases the possibility of conflict in the region.

Major chokepoints in the Indo-Pacific region include the Strait of Malacca. Since it connects the Indian with the Pacific Ocean, it plays a major role in energy security, as it carries oil and gas from the Middle East and enables trade to Asia. The strategic competition between great powers such as China and the US has a major influence on this region's maritime security paradigm. In the scenario of a conflict, the Strait of Malacca can be exploited by the US to stop trade for China which can have serious implications as major energy trade is done through this passageway.

Figure 1: Indo Pacific Region (Ahmad & Lockard, 2025-b)

4. Economic Importance of the Indo-Pacific Region

The Indo-Pacific Region is home to major economies like India, Australia and Japan, and is the driver of global economic trade. A significant portion of the world's energy supplies pass from the Strait of Malacca which highlight its importance for energy security (*Energy Information Administration*, 2024). Approximately 60% of global maritime trade passes through the Indo-Pacific Region (Anadi, 2024). The Indo-Pacific is also a hub for manufacturing; countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh play important roles in global supply chains and technological innovations.

The global fisheries production in the Indo-Pacific Region has been stabilized at 90 million tons per year since 1990s (Holt, 2024). The sector of aquaculture is also becoming important in its role in curbing the issue of food insecurity. Indonesia produces 6 million tons annually, with its aquaculture sector valued at 30 billion dollars (Holt, 2024). The shipping sector is also important for the countries of this region; around 90% of India's trade passes through these waters. Maritime trade volume reached 12.292 million tonnes in 2023, which was 2.4% more than the last year (*UNCTAD*, 2023).

5. Regional Organizations in the Indo-Pacific Region

A number of different regional organizations play important roles in promoting economic cooperation and development in the Indo-Pacific Region. Each organization has a certain focus and aim. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has Malaysia as a founding member, is focused on promoting regional integration with the help of initiatives like ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which aims to create a single market and production base. The AEC Blueprint 2025 created a framework of strategies for better economic integration, including trade facilitation and investment liberalization (*ASEAN*, 2023). The Blue Economy framework adopted in 2023, serves as a guide for the member states to integrate sustainable use of marine resources (*ASEAN*, 2023).

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) aims to promote sustainable economic development and collaboration within Indian Ocean rim countries which include maritime cooperation and facilitating trading goods. IORA's work on Blue Economy is focused on unlocking the potential of ocean resources for economic development (*IORA*, 2024). The IORA, to promote Blue Economy, focuses on areas like, Fisheries and Aquaculture, renewable ocean energy, tourism etc. It has established the Indian Ocean Blue Carbon Hub to protect and restore blue carbon ecosystems throughout Indian Ocean Region (*IORA*, 2024). Pakistan is not a member of IORA due to Indian influence. The absence of Pakistan from IORA leaves a void for an important member. With Pakistan, this organization can be more successful, as it will comprise of all the nations in the Indian Ocean Region.

6. Malaysia's Maritime Identity and Strategic Role In The Blue Economy

Malaysia's historical evolution as a maritime nation can be traced to its geographical location next to the Strait of Malacca. From the early Malay kingdoms, the region evolved as a vital center for trade, attracting people from all regions (Hanafiah et al., 2020). In today's world, Malaysia is involved in different regional and international collaborations focused on maritime security. It collaborates with neighboring countries to combat issues like piracy, illegal smuggling and transnational crimes (*Putrajaya*, 2023).

Recognizing its potential, Malaysia has embraced the Blue Economy as a cornerstone of its sustainable development agenda. Malaysia's focus on increasing the utilization of its ocean resources can be seen in its attempt to develop a comprehensive National Ocean Policy which promotes sustainable use of marine resources and is focused on enhancing maritime security. The National Ocean Policy of Malaysia has not been implemented, however the draft was completed in 2011 (*Reef Check Malaysia*, 2021).

Figure 2: Map of Malaysia (Ahmad & Lockard, 2025)

Malaysia's input to ASEAN's cooperation frameworks highlights its commitment to enhancing the utilization of ocean resources while also preserving marine biodiversity (Rahman, 2023). Fisheries, offshore energy, coastal tourism and aquaculture highlight Malaysia's approach to incorporating economic development and environmental sustainability. In this way, Malaysia not only promotes its national economy but also contributes to regional stability.

7. Malaysia's Position: Policies, Initiatives, And Governance

Malaysia recognizes the potential of Blue Economy as key area of development, as it contributes 23% to the nation's GDP. The Blue Economy has been incorporated into the 12th Malaysia Plan, which was developed by consulting with the relevant ministries and organizations (Azam et al., 2023).

Despite this, Malaysia faces several challenges in exploiting the Blue Economy to its full potential. These challenges include the consolidation of comprehensive national ocean policy and marine spatial plan, upgradation of integrated governance mechanisms and also an overlap of jurisdiction among the government agencies. Other than this, Malaysia's perilous maritime security challenges include the dispute over the maritime boundary, assertiveness from neighboring countries and non-traditional security threats which further complicate the maritime governance capacity (Yusof & Zaideen, 2024).

8. Key Sectors Contributing to Malaysia's Blue Economy

The Blue Economy of Malaysia possesses a few sectors that utilize the country's numerous marine resources that contribute majorly to its economic growth. These sectors include,

9. Fisheries and Aquaculture

Fisheries and aquaculture sector plays an important role in Malaysia's Blue Economy that contributes almost 0.8% to the national GDP of the country. Malaysia produced 1.3 million metric tons of fish in 2024 (*Malay Mail*, 2024). The Malaysian government started a number of policies to promote sustainable fishing practices to ensure food security and increased livelihoods (Azam, 2023).

10. Shipping and Ports

The sector of Shipping and ports is crucial for Malaysia's Blue Economy as it contributes around 39% of its total output in this sector. Malaysia's strategic geographical location next to the major shipping routes increased its role as a maritime logistics hub in the Southeast Asia. The government of Malaysia invested in the development of port infrastructure and in improving shipping services to facilitate trade and increased economic activities related to maritime (*MIDA,* 2023).

Malaysia has 8 federal administrated ports, which are Port Klang, Port of Tanjung Pelepas, Johor Port, Penang Port, Bintulu Port, Malacca Port, Kuantan Port and Kemaman Port. The Port Klang and Port of Tanjung Pelepas are the two main container ports of Malaysia, handling around 64% of the cargo (*Port Development In Malaysia*, 2022).

11. Offshore Energy

Offshore energy is another meaningful player for the Blue Economy. This sector contributes to the Blue Economy through substantial revenue generation, and it creates opportunity for livelihood in industries such as oil and gas, renewable energy, environmental management and others. Lately, considerably more attention has been directed toward renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and tidal power, adjusting substantially with Sustainable Development Goals. The Malaysian government is actively pursuing several important investments in renewable energy projects. This effort aims to expand its energy portfolio and substantially reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. (Johnstone & Vaghefi, 2019)

12. Coastal and Maritime Tourism

Coastal tourism is a major component of Malaysia's Blue Economy and maritime tourism. The nation boasts a meaningful amount of biodiversity and features many strikingly picturesque coastal landscapes. Around 38 million tourists visited Malaysia in 2024 (Mehboob, 2025). Ecotourism offers potential for conservation. The government now recognizes this potential for economic growth as well. These initiatives develop marine protected areas for tourism while lessening the effect of unsustainable tourism practices (Johnstone & Vaghefi, 2019). The contribution of coastal and maritime tourism to Malaysia's economy was predicted to increase up to 198.7BN Malaysian Ringgit, reaching 10.5% of national GDP (*Breaking Travel News*, 2024).

13. Regional Collaborations and Partnerships

Malaysia, for the promotion of Blue Economy, is involved in a number of different collaborations.

ASEAN: Malaysia actively participates in the ASEAN framework which is focused on promoting sustainable practices to other member states. It aims to encourage cooperation in areas like marine ecosystem protection and sustainable fisheries management (*ASEAN*, 2023).

Bilateral Agreements: Malaysia has signed bilateral agreements with its neighboring countries to increase maritime security, follow best practices in fisheries management and to collaborate on research initiatives related to marine biodiversity.

Public-Private Partnerships: The government of Malaysia is nurturing public-private partnerships to bring in investments in the Blue Economy sectors. This includes collaborations in renewable energy projects, marine biotechnology and sustainable aquaculture. One example of PPPs is the development of Port Klang, where the Malaysian government partnered with private companies to manage and operate container terminals (Verougstraete et al., 2015).

14. Policies For Sustainable Maritime Development

Malaysia has worked on a framework of policies and initiatives that are focused at sustainable maritime development. Twelfth Malaysia Plan, a key initiative that covers the Malaysian government's plan for Blue Economy, is key to economic growth while sustainably using ocean resources. There have been several initiatives and policies that make sustainability the center of their focus. The National Agrofood Policy 2021-2030 focuses on the improvement of Malaysia's food security. This policy is a continuation of the NAP 2011-2020, through which the GDP increased by 6.8% annually from 2011 (Azam, 2023).

National Blue Ocean Strategy was launched by the Malaysian government in 2009; it aims to promote and develop sustainable growth and use of fisheries and aquaculture industries. The National Eco Tourism Plan 2016-2025 is one of the strategies that is repositioning the marine protected areas in Malaysia as ecotourism destinations that promote the conservation and management of marine and terrestrial resources. This helps reduce the pressure on marine resources, especially on coral reefs, due to unsustainable tourism development and irresponsible tourist behaviour during activities like diving and snorkeling (Azam, 2023).

The Malaysian government initiated the National Plan of Action on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing to address the challenge posed by IUU fishing in its waters. This plan aligns with the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) International Plan of Action that was adopted in 2001, focused on establishing elaborate measures for sustainable fisheries management.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management is a comprehensive approach that is focused on managing coastal resources in a sustainable manner while keeping a balance in economic, ecological and social interests. This framework is important as it addresses the challenges that are faced by coastal areas of Malaysia due to human activities (Azam, 2023).

15. Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Malaysia's policies on maritime are closely linked with a number of United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstrating its commitment to the global efforts towards sustainable practices:

The Sustainable Development Goal 14, which is focused on Life Below Water, works to conserve and sustainably use ocean and marine resources. The SDG 14 highlights the importance of oceans in helping with food insecurity and regulating climate change. It is also focused on dealing with marine pollution, habitat destruction and overfishing (Tereza, 2022).

Malaysia recognizes the importance of incorporating SDG 14 into its policies, an example of this is the National Policy on Marine Fisheries. The policy is designed to guarantee the sustainable management of Malaysia's marine resources. It guarantees sustainable practices to avoid overfishing and protects the marine environment from the adverse effects of unplanned development. This policy is guided by the Fisheries Act 1985, which provides a legal map for regulating fishing activities in the country's waters.

Malaysia has designated Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) which conserve marine ecosystems and biodiversity. These areas play a key role in aiding the achievement of SDG 14 by protecting important habitats like mangroves and coral reefs. Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Pulau Redang Marine Park and Sipadan Island are a few examples of the MPAs in Malaysia. These MPAs directly contribute to achieving the SDG 14 by ensuring the protection of marine environments (Rahman et al., 2019)

16. Impact on Sustainable Maritime Practices

There is significant impact on Malaysia's overall economy due to aligning its policies with the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water). The implementation of these policies has led to advancements in promoting sustainable maritime practices and has contributed significantly in the economic growth of the country.

The development of a comprehensive framework that are aligned with the standards of the International Maritime Organization and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. These frameworks are designed to put stricter regulations on emissions and pollution control, which are a necessity for protecting marine ecosystems. The National Transportation Policy 2019-2030 is an example of such policy that focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from maritime activities, which aligns with SDGs 13 and 14 (Chong, 2023).

There has been an increase in job creation for the coastal communities due to promotion of sustainable practices in fisheries and eco-tourism sectors; the initiatives have been aligned with SDGs. Malaysia is addressing poverty, by fostering an inclusive Blue Economy, and ensuring that local communities can benefit from marine resource management (*Berniere*, 2024). Other than this the National Plan of Action on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing has helped observance of fishing regulations which has led to a healthier fish stock and more resilient ecosystem. Policies that have involved local communities in decision-making process have fostered a sense of ownership over marine resources which has led to better stewardship and sustainable practices (Azam, 2023).

17. Challenges Facing Malaysia's Blue Economy

Despite there being progress on sustainable practices, there are still challenges facing Malaysia's Blue Economy.

17.1 Geopolitical Tensions and Regional Competition

The strategic location of Malaysia in the South China Sea, makes it the center of attention of the geopolitical tensions around the maritime boundaries and claiming of resources. Concerns over the issue of fishing can complicate collaborative management efforts. An example of this is the dispute between Vietnam and Philippines regarding fishing zones have led to issues that complicate working on joint initiatives that are aimed at sustainable resource management (Azam, 2023). Tensions over resources have increased due to the presence of important shipping lanes and oil reserves. These disputes can lead to issues that hamper cooperation and collaboration in shared waters (Azam, 2023).

17.2 Environmental Degradation and Climate Change Impacts

Environmental degradation is a significant threat to Malaysia's marine ecosystems. Pollution from land-based sources, habitat destruction from development at coastal areas, and overfishing are issues that have led to the declining fish stocks and loss of biodiversity. Malaysia generates more than one million tonnes of plastic waste, a majority of which ends up in the oceans. This pollution effects marine life which leads to a declined fish stock and damages the ocean life. The Ellen McArthur Foundation has warned that if these practices are not changed, the ocean will end up having more plastic by weight than fish by 2050 (Yusof & Zaideen, 2024).

Development of the coastal areas for tourism purposes often ends up destroying the habitat. This makes mangroves and coral reefs particularly vulnerable to destruction caused by human interference. Approximately 50% of Malaysia's mangrove forests have been destroyed due to development in coastal areas (Azam, 2023).

The factor of climate change further increased these challenges because of rising sea levels, ocean acidification and increased frequency of extreme weather events. It threatens marine life but also the livelihoods of the coastal communities that are dependent on these resources. The effects of climate change can lead to reduced number of fish population and altered marine habitats which affects food security and the nation's economy (Azam, 2023).

17.3 Policy Gaps and Institutional Inefficiencies

There is an absence of a comprehensive national ocean policy in Malaysia that results in division in governance among different agencies that are responsible for maritime affairs. This division leads to an inefficient decision-making process and weak enforcement of regulations. An example is the lack of coordination between federal and state governments leads to uncertainty in implementing the marine environmental laws (Azam, 2023).

Australia, in 1998, introduced its National Ocean Policy which was aimed at managing and protecting Australia's marine resources. It emphasizes integrated eco-system-based planning, sustainable economic activities, i.e. fisheries and tourism and conservation of biological diversity. Malaysia can take this policy as a sample and adopt similar strategies according to its own interests. This includes strong conservation efforts through more MPAs, enhancing international cooperation on maritime issues, promoting sustainable economic activities like eco-tourism etc (*Australia's Oceans Policy*, 1999).

There is a shortage of labor and resources that are essential for effective enforcement of the existing regulations. This insufficiency of workforce hinders the efforts put in to conserve the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) which cover around 5.56% of Malaysia's marine territory (Yusof & Zaideen, 2024).

18. Opportunities for Malaysia's Blue Economy

While faced with multiple challenges, the Blue Economy of Malaysia has immense potential for growth through different avenues. By integrating emerging technologies to enhance sustainability in the maritime sectors.

By using GPS tracking system Malaysia can improve navigating the fishing routes and reduce bycatch. For example, the implementation of the Electronic Monitoring Systems can lead to real-time data collection on fishing activities and improve obedience to the fishing regulations to promote sustainable practices.

Advanced data analytics can help with better decision-making in the matter of resource allocation and management strategies. Department of Fisheries, Malaysia uses data analytics to assess different fish populations and the conditions of habitat, which enables targeted interventions to sustain marine biodiversity.

The development of public-private partnerships can play an important role in bringing in innovations in the Blue Economy. Collaborations between government agencies and the private companies can bring in significant investments in sustainable aquaculture practices or any project on renewable energy like offshore wind farms. The partnership between Malakoff Corporation Berhad and MMC Group is an example of a public-private partnership which is aimed at developing solar energy project to contribute to reducing carbon emissions while supporting Malaysia’s energy needs (*Bernier*, 2024).

Joint ventures that combine academicians, stakeholders and the government can bring forward innovative plans for the improvement of Blue Economy of Malaysia. The collaboration between **Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia** with the private sector will work on marine biotechnology research to develop sustainable products from marine resources (*Othman et al.*, 2023).

Other than this there are a number of opportunities for growth in different sectors of Blue Economy of Malaysia. As there is a rising global demand for seafood, there is potential for more development in the aquaculture sector through better practices that make sustainability a priority in its functioning while also meeting market needs. The National Aquaculture Policy promotes sustainable practices such as integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA), which also tries to maintain the ecological equilibrium whereby the waste of one species is used to feed the other (Bernier, 2024). These highlight Malaysia’s commitment towards using its resources in a sustainable manner. This commitment extends beyond aquaculture, Malaysia is looking to invest in its energy sector as well.

There is therefore immeasurable potential in Malaysia to develop its renewable energy resources like tidal energy or offshore wind farms. Thus, the government has pioneered several projects to promote investments in the renewable energy sector such as Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) initiatives.

19. Lessons for Pakistan

Pakistan, a country with a vast coastline, can learn from Malaysia on how to develop its Blue Economy, especially in development of industrial area and bringing in foreign investment. Malaysia’s Port Klang is an important example from which Pakistan can learn operations and management to improve Pakistan’s port facilities. Pakistan can also take points from Malaysia’s coastal management system to combat pollution and coastal erosion. Malaysia is working on preservation of coral reefs and other marine protected areas; Pakistan can learn how to establish and manage marine parks and sanctuaries. Pakistan can learn from Malaysia’s Fisheries and Aquaculture policies and increase its production to achieve $60 billion export by 2030.

Pakistan can export seafood to Malaysia adding to its aquaculture production. The two countries can also explore joint ventures in fishing and marine equipment manufacturing. Pakistan can also contribute to Malaysia by establishing partnerships between Pakistani and Malaysian distributors.

20. Recommendations and Way Forward

Malaysia has devoted itself to sustainable practice, reflected even in the alignment of its policies with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG-14 (Life Below Water). The establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is Malaysia's way towards conserving marine biodiversity while pursuing sustainability in the fisheries industry. The engagement of local communities in sustainable practices and resource management increases compliance with regulations and promotes stewardship over marine resources. Initiatives such as the coral reef restoration project, have the power to motivate local populations to take ownership of the marine environment.

21. Way Forward

a. A comprehensive national ocean policy needs to be formulated that focus on all the aspects ocean management, including fisheries and aquaculture, shipping, and environmental protection. Australia’s National Ocean Policy can be taken as a sample, as it effectively integrated various stakeholders to manage its vast marine resources.

b. Innovative ideas in emerging technologies that help promote sustainable practices should be promoted in all sectors of Blue Economy. Satellite monitoring systems to keep an eye on illegal fishing activities is a technology where investment would prove to be fruitful.

c. Furthermore, digitalization in the maritime industry can enhance efficiency within shipping logistics and fisheries management. The issue of Illegal Unregulated and Unreported Fishing can be addressed by bringing in block chain technology Kumar et al., 2020).

d. It is important to understand that maritime security and economic stability go hand in hand. Security issues in the maritime sector can impact economic growth, hence it is important to have policies that are aimed at balancing both sectors simultaneously.

22. Conclusion

Malaysia, a truly maritime nation which is driven by its rich marine resources and strategic location in the South China Sea, its Blue Economy has significant opportunities in the field of sustainable development and growth. National policies aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), establish Malaysia's commitment to responsible management of its marine resources and environmental conservation. Initiatives such as the National Plan of Action on IUU Fishing and setting up Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) indicate ways Malaysia is taking proactive measures for illegal fishing and marine biodiversity preservation.

However, issues like environmental degradation, geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea region and inefficiencies of governmental institutions threaten the sustainability of Blue Economy. These issues need to be addressed and for that purpose Malaysia may commit to engaging in regional cooperation with its neighboring countries and streamline government structures through formulation of national policies, invest in technologies and promote sustainable practices across maritime industries.

Engaging the communities in decision-making will ensure compliance and build a culture of stewardship over marine resources. By prioritizing these strategies, Malaysia will be in a position to reap full benefits of the Blue Economy towards enhancing long-term economic resilience while positively impacting regional stability and ecological health. On this path, collaboration among all stakeholders will lead to the creation of a sustainable maritime future for Malaysia, the region and the world as well.

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VISION. To be an internationally acclaimed Centre of Excellence contributing significantly towards Pakistan's Maritime Affairs.

MISSION. To function as a premier think tank of Pakistan in maritime policy research, carry out advocacy & capacity building and maintain repository of authentic data to provide input and solutions to relevant stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

- **Provide** policy input in maritime domain.
- **Develop** and Advocate national narrative on maritime issues.
- **Contribute** towards national / international processes and governing instruments for sustainable maritime economy (Blue Economy).
- **Facilitate** dialogue and collaborate with national and international partners.
- **Produce** quality research reports and publications on maritime subjects.
- **Enhance** public awareness and understanding of maritime issues.
- **Maintain** repository of authentic maritime database.
- **Provide** consultancy and expertise on maritime related projects.
- **Achieve** self sustenance and conducive infrastructure.
- **Promote** use of emerging technologies and AI in maritime domain.

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