

# RESEARCH SUMMARY



ARTS & PUBLIC SPACES

YAYASAN  
HASANAH

 A foundation of Khazanah Nasional



**Baseline Study of Traditional Handloom Textile  
Landscape in Malaysia and Roadmap Development  
of Textile-based Experiential Centres Network  
Collaboration and Creative Tourism**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Authors

Faisal Abd Rahman (lead researcher) • Kamilah Muhammad • Muhamad Jefri Shaari • Mohd Rashid Ahmad Jopri • Suraya Ahmad Emrus • Siti Roha Ramli • Mirawati Shahib • Kirstey Selva Kumar

### Organisations

Perbadanan Kemajuan Kraftangan Malaysia • Perbadanan Kemajuan Kraftangan Malaysia Cawangan Terengganu, Perak, and Sarawak • Jabatan Muzium Malaysia • Lembaga Muzium Negeri Terengganu • Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Pahang • Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan • Institut Kemahiran Kraftangan Negara • Institut Kemahiran Tenun Pahang Diraja Tunku Ampuan Mariam • Yayasan Tuanku Nur Zahirah

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T: +60 3 5870 4333

F: +60 3 5870 4355

Email: [connect@hasanah.org.my](mailto:connect@hasanah.org.my)

Website: [yayasanhasanah.org](https://yayasanhasanah.org)

YAYASAN  
HASANAH

 A foundation of Khazanah Nasional

Written by:

Faisal Abd Rahman, Muhamad Jefri Shaari, Intan Syaheeda Abu Bakar, Kamilah Muhammad and Lim Ee Lin, Apprenticeship Centre for Excellence (ACE)

Copy Editor:

Michelle Chun

With inputs from Yayasan Hasanah's Monitoring, Learning, Evaluation & Knowledge (MLEK), and Arts & Public Spaces Impact Area Teams

Illustrated by:

Zulhezan, INKA Creative

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# INTRODUCTION



An artisan from Seri Gedong Songket operating a weaving loom.

The research on the **Baseline Study of Traditional Handloom Textile Landscape in Malaysia and Roadmap Development of Textile-Based Experiential Centres Network Collaboration and Creative Tourism** commissioned by Yayasan Hasanah is aimed at providing a general overview on distribution of traditional textiles artisans in Malaysia; the issues and challenges they are facing in safeguarding textile-based intangible cultural heritage; to recommend initiatives that can optimise existing

resources in promoting awareness and appreciation; and new economic initiatives in exploring new markets for the traditional textile-based artisans/communities and tourism industry. An integrated understanding of the traditional textile landscape of Malaysia allows for more meaningful and contextual recommendations for Yayasan Hasanah, especially those aligned to Yayasan Hasanah's impact area of Arts and Public Spaces. Research was carried out over six months from December 2022 to May 2023.

## Research Objectives

**This research project conducted various initiatives to achieve two broad outcomes.**

The first outcome is a holistic baseline understanding of the traditional textile landscape in Malaysia, including its artisan and actors; and the second is to recommend catalytic programmes or initiatives that can bridge gaps in safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage related to these traditional textiles. For both outcomes, the research team took a qualitative research approach.

For the first outcome, the research output is a descriptive one. Here, the primary aim is to describe and map the geographical distribution of traditional textile art forms; the histo-geographical connection between artisans and the places where they live and work; and the various cultural institutions.

For this purpose, the research undertook a cultural mapping exercise, where data were obtained through document review, observation and one-to-one structured interviews.

For the second outcome, the research output is analytical. Here, the research team conducted in-depth interviews with selected artisans and cultural institutions to understand the issues and challenges they face in safeguarding textile-based intangible cultural heritage.

A documentation review was also carried out with local and international creative tourism stakeholders to look at best practices and opportunities in creative tourism. All these issues and challenges, and recommendations made by respondents are categorised and analysed using the Key Measure of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage approach.





An artisan demonstrating the art of tekat, a form of embroidery that employs the use of gold threads on a background of richly coloured velvet.

## Definition of Safeguarding and Craftsmanship

This research is mainly concerned with the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage relating to textile crafts. The research used the definition of the UNESCO Convention (2003) that states that safeguarding is “mainly concerned with the skills and knowledge involved in craftsmanship rather than the craft products themselves”.

For the definition of craft, the research team used the definition stated in the Malaysian Handicraft Development Act 1979, that states a handicraft product is “any artistic product which is graced with cultural or traditional appeal and is the outcome of any process which is dependent solely or partly on manual skill”.

This research utilised the key measures of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage model (F. Proschan, 2007) as the basis for data collection, data analysis and coming out with the relevant recommendations.

According to this model, there are five main measures which suit the content and context of this research. The descriptions are as follows:

- 1** **Measure of preservation and protection**, encompassing all efforts to maintain continuity in the practice of traditional textiles over time and deliberate measures to defend traditional textiles from threat;
- 2** **Measure of promotion, presentation and recognition**, which covers promoting awareness of artisan and traditional textile by increasing its visibility through various media;
- 3** **Measure of transmission and dissemination**, which means passing on knowledge and skills in traditional forms or spreading it outside of a community;
- 4** **Measure of research, documenting and inventorying** the history, artisans, communities, meanings, aesthetic features, social, cultural and economic functions, practice, and recording traditional textile in tangible forms as well as collecting documents that relate to it; and
- 5** **Measure of revitalization**, which means reactivating, restoring and strengthening of traditional textile practices that are vulnerable, threatened and in need of safeguarding.

Recommendations are made based on the impact and effectiveness of intervention programmes and initiative which can bridge gaps in safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage related to these traditional textiles, particularly relating to cultural institutions’ network collaboration and the introduction of creative tourism.



## Significance of Research

**The findings from this research will advance a more holistic and deeper understanding of the state and condition of various traditional textile art forms in Malaysia. This includes the artisans, stakeholders and the state of their craftsmanship.**

Supporters and organisations can then become a catalyst for the formulation and implementation of more informed and effective initiatives related to the safeguarding, transmission and promotion of traditional textiles.

In the long run, these programmes and initiatives aimed at increasing awareness on traditional textile can also strengthen the sense of identity and pride within the artisan community. At the same time, stronger social cohesion and inclusion between traditional textile-producing regions of Malaysia can be developed. This research can also promote wider citizens’ cultural participation in Malaysia’s urban and rural areas.

There is also potential economic impact with the generation of important spillovers to other intangible assets. Findings could be a driver of innovation and source of creative skills for the younger generation, as well as drive growth in other sectors such as tourism and the creative economy. As Malaysia strives to make culture an integral part of a wider policy agenda, research of this nature can bring beneficial economic and social investment.

Lastly, findings can be published as a map and book for beneficiaries and stakeholders of this research project, including museums, galleries and experiential centres, academia and the fashion industry. The findings can also be disseminated to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tourism Malaysia and their stakeholders, including tourism players, tourist guides and tour operators, who may benefit from the opening of a new tourism sector.



## SAFEGUARDING TEXTILE-BASED INTANGIBLE HERITAGE



**Cultural Heritage is a broad term encompassing both tangible heritage (places and physical objects); and intangible heritage (practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills) that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003).**

Intangible Cultural Heritage form the core of what defines a community and by extension a nation. They are the bridge that links the past to the future. They are also the way in which communities understand the world and how they shape the environment they live in. Intangible cultural heritage are precious assets for nations, communities, and individuals all over the world.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) divides the manifestation of intangible cultural heritage into 5 domains, namely oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and lastly traditional craftsmanship. Textile design and craftsmanship falls under the last manifestation.

In order to safeguard these intangible cultural heritage items, UNESCO developed a dedicated instrument, namely the **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** in 2003 which came into force in 2006. To date, the Convention has inscribed over 650 intangible cultural heritage elements from all around the world under List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Out of these, over 30 are related to textile design and craftsmanship. Songket Malaysia was inscribed in 2021 whilst Batik Indonesia was inscribed earlier in 2010. Recently, Kebaya was jointly proposed by Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Thailand to be inscribed in 2023.

The 2003 Convention is a useful instrument in defining what intangible cultural heritage is and what steps to take in order to safeguard its elements. Under traditional craftsmanship, the Convention is more concerned with the transmission of knowledge, skills and meaning involved in craftsmanship rather than the craft products themselves. According to the Convention, rather than focusing on preserving craft objects, safeguarding should focus on encouraging artisans to continue to produce craft and to pass their skills and knowledge onto others, particularly within their own communities. In other words, the cultural heritage of textiles does not end with the collection and preservation of costumes and textiles in museums. It should also include processes and conditions, and the living heritage that is performed by people and transmitted from generation to generation.

## Inventory through Cultural Mapping

Identifying and creating inventories are integral to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage because they can raise awareness about intangible cultural heritage and its importance for individual and collective identities (UNESCO Convention, 2013). For this research, a cultural mapping approach was used to ensure greater visibility, showcasing the diversity of traditional handloom textile landscape in Malaysia and linking them to the historical and geographical contexts of each textile. This helps communities identify with and have greater pride in their intangible cultural heritage, in order to motivate them to transmit the associated knowledge, skills and meaning to future generations and others outside their community.

The transmission of associated knowledge, skills and meaning is also an integral aspect of safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. There are many ways that this transmission can take place, including education (both formal and informal), awareness-raising programmes and capacity building. There are a number of entities or institutions such as educational/training institutions, government agencies and non-governmental organisations in Malaysia that are very active in transmitting knowledge, skills and meaning in various textile-based intangible cultural heritage.

## Increasing Visibility

Increasing visibility of intangible cultural heritage is another aspect of safeguarding it. Currently, Malaysia has a number of cultural institutions working to create awareness and appreciation of traditional textiles in Malaysia. This includes museums, galleries and experiential centres either under the Department of Museums Malaysia, State Governments or privately managed.

Apart from Muzium Tekstil Negara in Kuala Lumpur which is a dedicated museum on traditional textiles from all around Malaysia, other museums either have galleries dedicated to traditional textiles or other galleries with traditional textiles being displayed. The condition and situation of each of these museums differ from one another. Some are well-known and have large collections of traditional textiles, whilst others have impactful educational and outreach programmes dedicated to increasing awareness of traditional textiles.

## Creative Tourism

Awareness and appreciation should not be limited to local communities but can be extended to a wider audience outside the community including visitors and tourists. In recent years, one of the primary topics in tourist development and marketing has been the rising synergy of tourism and culture. The apparent success of cultural development initiatives has pushed more towns, regions, and nations to use the mix of culture and tourism, according to Greg Richards and Julie Wilson (2007) in *Tourism, Creativity, and Development*. As a result, destinations are beginning to use creative development to replace or supplement culture-led development strategies. Commercial tourism operators in countries as diverse as New Zealand, South Africa, and Spain are actively developing innovative and creative tourism initiatives especially in textile-based creative tourism. For the government, the creative industries and tourism are the two most important sectors of economic policy (Budget 2021).

The long-term competitiveness of Malaysia's tourism industry depends on removing some barriers to innovation in the industry and identifying new growth drivers, especially with respect to improving existing products and developing new tourism products. One of the potential undeveloped sources of innovation in Malaysian tourism products is the development of stronger links between tourism and the traditional textile practices and industries. Creative tourism is a new area of economic initiative in exploring new markets for the traditional textile-based artisans / communities and the tourism industry.



# TRADITIONAL TEXTILE LANDSCAPE OF MALAYSIA

There are various types of traditional textile art practised in Malaysia. However, they are limited to certain states and areas in Malaysia. Some of these traditional textile arts are thriving, whilst others may be endangered or vulnerable.

Based on the initial literature and document review, the research focused on 15 different traditional textiles art practised in 6 locations which have a significant number of traditional textile artisans. The data of registered artisans for each textile was obtained from Kraftangan Malaysia and various other relevant agencies. These 15 textiles are classified as handloomed or embroidered, as follows:

Research Location	Traditional Textile	Handloom	Embroidery
Pahang	Kain Tenun Pahang	✓	
	Kain Ikat Loseng	✓	
Terengganu	Songket Terengganu	✓	
	Kain Limar	✓	
Kelantan	Songket Kelantan	✓	
	Kelingkan		✓
Perak, Pulau Pinang & Johor	Tekat Benang Emas		✓
	Sulaman Nyonya		✓
	Kain Tenun Johor	✓	
Sarawak	Songket Sarawak	✓	
	Keringkam		✓
	Kain Tenun Pua	✓	
Sabah	Tenunan Rungus	✓	
	Linangkit		✓
	Sulaman Pis		✓

Batik and its various forms are not covered in this research. The weaving tradition of the Iranun community in Kota Belud is also not covered in this research.



## History and Geography of Malaysian Traditional Textile

Malaysia has 13 states, 11 states on the peninsula and 2 states in East Malaysia. Out of these 13 states, 9 have constitutional monarchs. The patronage of these monarchs, their royal families and other aristocratic families had greatly influenced the development of traditional textiles in their states.

Being in Southeast Asia, Malaysia sits on a crossroad in the east-west maritime route. It has had influences from China and the far east, as well as influences from the Indian sub-continent and also the middle eastern Islamic countries. Kingdoms around the Southeast Asia islands too left their influences on Malaysia.

Malaysia has its origins from the Malay kingdoms of the past, the most notable tradition coming from the 14th century Melaka empire. This empire with its seat in the current city of Melaka was a thriving international port bringing trade and various goods from all around Asia, including textiles. The Chinese brought in silk and brocades, the Indians brought cotton and various other cloths and the Arabs and Persians brought in their forms of textile products.

Then came the period of colonialization beginning with the Portuguese, the Dutch and finally the British. These European nations brought in new technologies and mass-produced textiles and raw materials which have also left some influence into the traditional textile landscape. Over the centuries, textiles in Malaysia and in Southeast Asia in general evolved into its numerous and diverse forms. Textile production and use in Malaysia reflect this regional diversity of cultures. Development of textile art in Malaysia is both from external stimuli and also internal expression of creativity. Local artisans studied the techniques from various places and created their own design and motifs that reflected Southeast Asia.

Based on historical documents, almost all states in Malaysia have had their traditional textile production tradition at one time or another. For example, the art of gold stamping on cloth called Telepuk was popular in Selangor, Perak and other states. Artifacts in museums show the variety and diversity of textiles being used in these states. However, today there are no more Telepuk artisans in Selangor. Historical documents also show that there was weaving being done in Perak and Johor. However, today none of them have any more textile communities or artisans left.

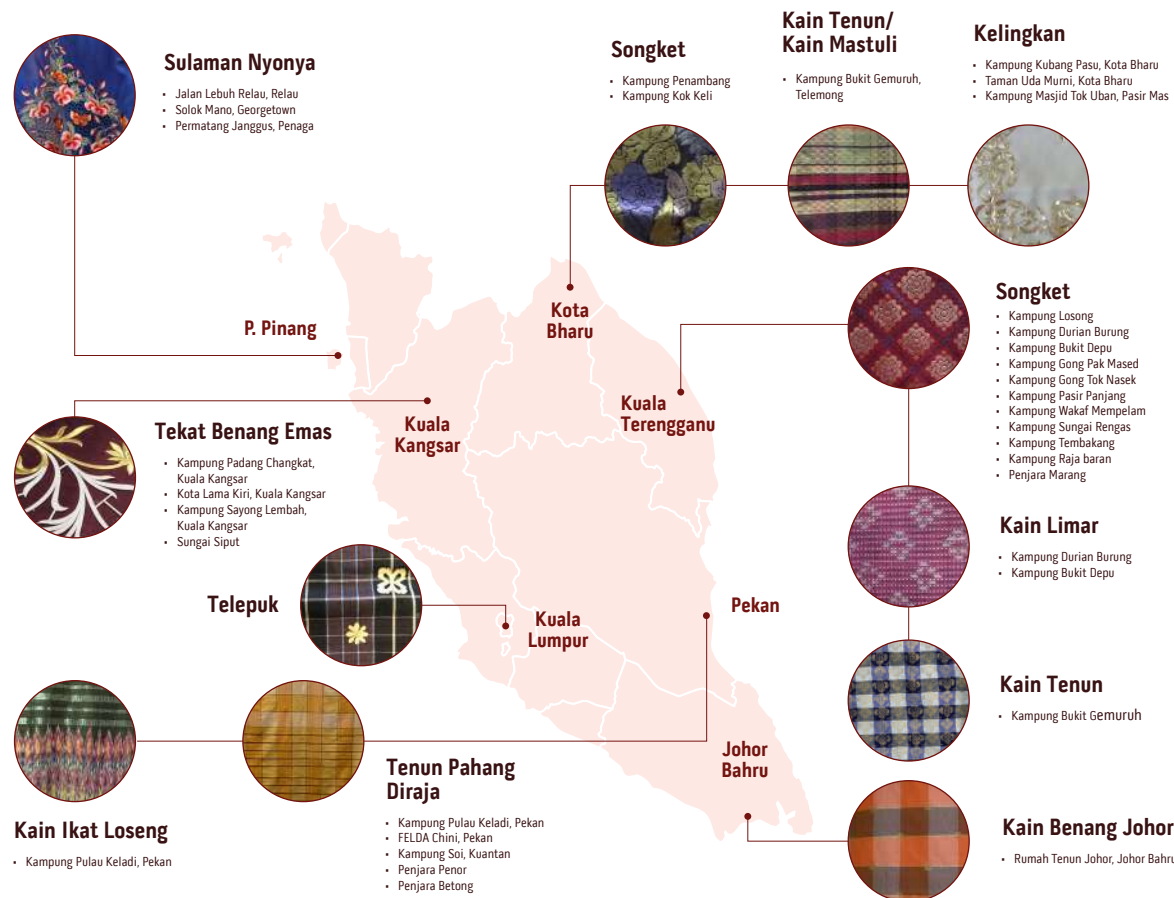


Figure 1 Distribution of Traditional Textile Artisans in Peninsular Malaysia

This is especially true for states on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia where development since the 19th century has been rapid. Mass production and consumption of production, in particular textiles have replaced traditional textile makers. Only in certain places on the west coast, such as in the royal town of Kuala Kangsar and Johor Bahru can one find traditional textile artisans. This is mainly due to some form of royal patronage to the art of textile making.

On the other hand, in states on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia where development isn't as rapid, traditional textile artisans and tradition still thrive. States like Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang still pride themselves as hubs for the production and trading of traditional textiles such as Batik, Songket, Limar and Kain Tenun.

In places like Pulau Pinang and Melaka, where there are significant populations of Chinese and Indian Peranakan, some form of traditional textile production is still in practice. **Figure 1** shows the distribution of traditional textile artisans in Peninsular Malaysia.

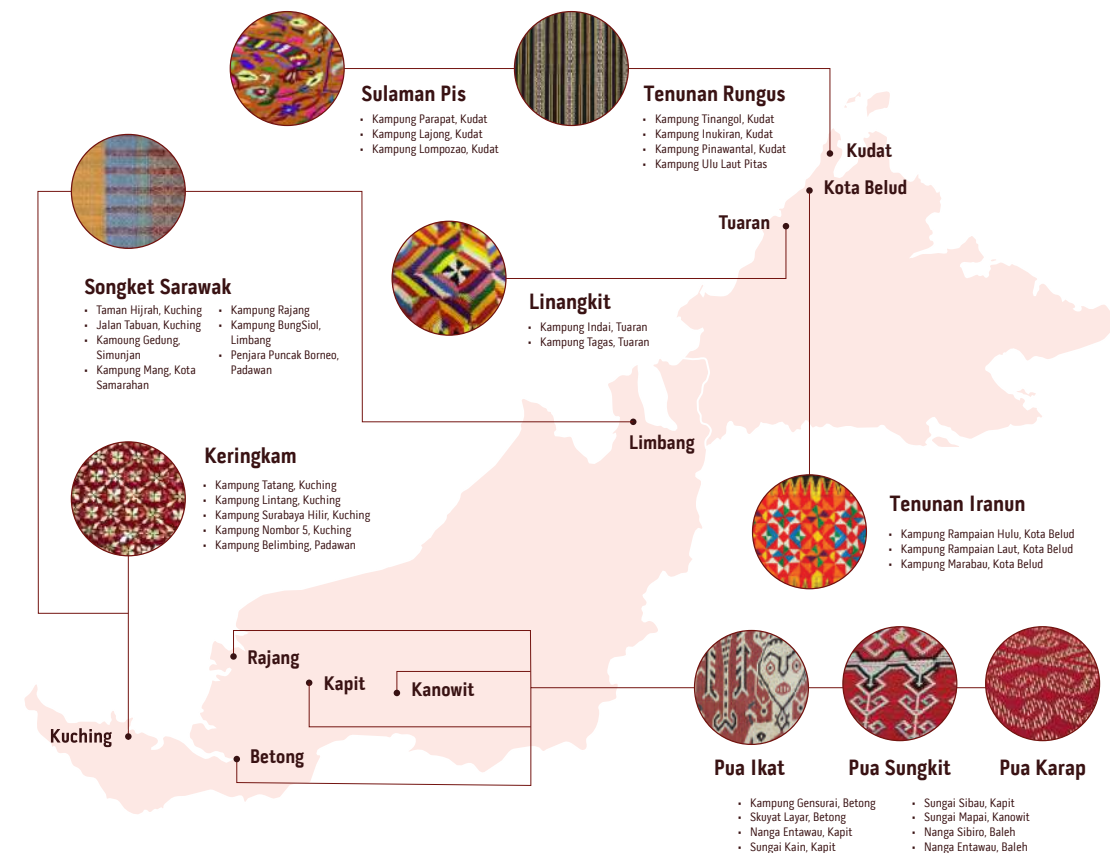


Figure 2 Distribution of Traditional Textile Artisans in Sabah and Sarawak

In the state of Sarawak, especially in the Kuching area there is still some traditional textile artisans, especially in the production of Songket and Keringkam. This is probably due to the influence of a century rule of the White Rajah of Sarawak. Most of the art of Songket and Keringkam making are situated in the coastal towns of Sarawak, where the population is predominantly Malay.

Apart from that, the large Iban community that used to inhabit the interior river valleys of Sarawak has maintained their tradition of weaving the warp-ikat textile famously known as the Pua Ikat. Other textiles produced by the Iban communities are the Pua Sungkit, Pua Karap and Pua Pilih. These textiles are produced not mainly for economic purposes, but more as cultural needs.

In the state of Sabah, most of the traditional textile production are concentrated on the western coast of Sabah from Tuaran all the way to Kota Belud and Kudat. These areas are populated by a number of ethnic communities; most notable for their practice of traditional textile production are the Dusun Lotud of Tuaran, the Iranuns of Kota Belud and the Rungus of Kudat. Most traditional textiles are produced using the back-strap looms which can only allow for narrow textile pieces. They are used as traditional costume items not only by the communities that produced them, but also by other ethnic groups in Sabah. **Figure 2** shows the distribution of traditional textile artisans in the states of Sabah and Sarawak.



Figure 3 Striped pattern is one of the distinctive features of Kain Tenun Pahang

**The Sultanate of Pahang came into existence during the Melaka Sultanate period in the 1400s. Between 1511 to 1881, Pahang was under the suzerainty of the Empire of Johor. In that period, it was the fief of the Bendahara of Johor.**

The modern Sultanate of Pahang began in the late 1881s, when Bendahara Wan Ahmad, the 6th Bendahara was proclaimed the Sultan of Pahang. His royal seat was at Pekan, a town at the mouth of the Pahang River. Subsequent Sultans have maintained Pekan as the royal capital of the state. Pahang has a long tradition of textile production. It is famous for various types of textiles, namely Kain Tenun Pahang, Kain Ikat Loseng and Batik. Most of the textile production is centred in the district of Pekan and coastal towns such as Kuantan and Cherating. Batik is mainly produced in Cherating, and the more exclusive Kain Tenun Pahang and Kain Ikat Loseng are prevalent in the vicinity of Royal Town of Pekan. This is due to the royal patronage and very strong government support accorded to this art form. Description of Tenun Pahang and Kain Loseng is provided in the Appendix and **Figures 3 and 4** show the process of producing both textiles.

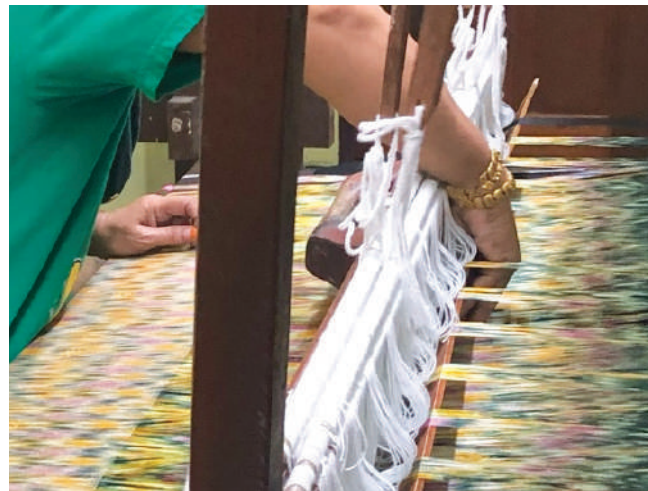


Figure 4 Colourful resist-dyed warp threads before weaving Kain Loseng



Figure 5 Distribution of Tenun Pahang and Kain Ikat Loseng Artisans

## Kain Tenun Pahang and Kain Ikat Loseng

Artisans working on the Kain Tenun Pahang and Kain Loseng are mainly concentrated in two main districts of Pahang, namely the Pekan district and Kuantan district. There are also some artisans in Bentong (mainly in-mates from the Bentong Prison) and Lipis (an initiative to train Orang Asli weavers) districts. There are currently 37 registered Kain Tenun Pahang artisans in Pahang and the research interviewed 31 of them. This does not include the 82 artisan who are inmates in the Penor Prison. The Adiguru of Kain Tenun Pahang is Puan Natipah @ Nortipah Abd. Kadir, appointed in 2008. She operates from her home at Kampung Pulau Keladi, Pekan. **Figure 5** shows the distribution of Tenun Pahang artisans in the state of Pahang.

The Pekan district is the historic place where Kain Tenun Pahang began. The royal town of Pekan is located in this district. The town is located on the banks of the Pahang river and has been the royal seat for the Pahang Sultanate. The Abu Bakar Palace and various royal palaces and residences are located here. At the centre of this town is the Muzium Sultan Abu Bakar or sometimes known as Muzium Pahang which was once a royal residence. It houses a large collection of textiles and traditional costumes.

Tenun Pahang and Kain Loseng artisans are mainly centred in Kampung Pulau Keladi, a small village located about 2 km to the east of Royal Town of Pekan. The village is by the south bank of the Pahang River.

It is a swampy area, and its name is said to be derived from a very large yam plant once found here. There were once 5 weaving enterprises that produce Kain Tenun Pahang in Kampung Pulau Keladi but only 3 are still operating to-date. They are Che Minah Sayang, Perusahaan Sutera Pulau Keladi and Warisan Legar. The other producers mainly produce from home or have stopped weaving. In this village is also the Kampung Budaya Pulau Keladi which houses a museum and a training centre known as Institut Kemahiran Tenun Pahang Diraja Tengku Ampuan Meriam.



Figure 6 Bamboo skewers are used to lift the base thread to insert gold thread in the making of Songket patterns

The Sultanate of Terengganu was established in 1725, when the younger brother of the Sultan of Johor, Sultan Zainal Abidin I was installed as the first Sultan of Terengganu. It has had political influence from Johor and also from neighbouring Kingdom of Siam.

The seat of the royal family is in Kuala Terengganu, a town at the mouth of the Terengganu river. In 1837, the 10th Sultan of Terengganu, Baginda Omar, brought in textiles artisans from Daik and Riau to Terengganu, thus encouraging a widespread production of traditional textile for export. In 1958, a textile centre was established in Terengganu, furthering its traditional textile production.

Today, Terengganu is well-known for beautiful types of textile production, namely Batik, Songket and Kain Limar. Most of the textile production is centred in the capital town, Kuala Terengganu, due to the royal patronage accorded to these art forms. Kuala Terengganu is home to the largest number of Songket artisans in Malaysia. Description of Songket Terengganu and Kain Limar is provided in the Appendix and Figures 6 and 7 show the making of both textiles.



Figure 7 Weft threads are tied before resist-dyed in various colour to create unique patterns of Kain Limar

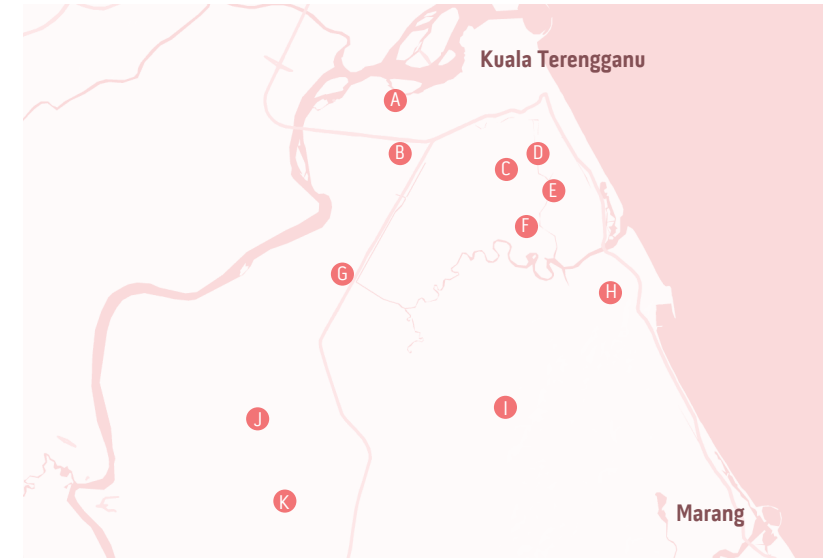


Figure 8 Songket Artisan Distribution in Terengganu

- A Kg Losong (3)
- B Kg Durian Burung (5)
- C Kg Pasir Panjang (18)
- D Kg Gong Pak Maseh (13)
- E Kg Gong Tok Nasek (49)
- F Kg Bukit Depu (13)
- G Kg Sg Rengas (4)
- H Kg Raja Baran (6)
- I Kg Tok Dir (7)
- J Kg Tebakang (40)
- K Kg Pak Madah (7)

## Songket Terengganu and Kain Limar

The Songket in Terengganu tradition started more than 200 years ago with royal patronage spurring many artistic works by local women. When Songket was first systematically researched in the 1970s, most of the weavers came from Kampung Losong Dato' Amar, an enclave near the residence of the then Menteri Besar of Terengganu. Now, the area is no longer home to any Songket weavers. Most of them have moved out of the area, Kampung Losong Dato' Amar towards the more interior parts of Kuala Terengganu, such as Kampung Sungai Rengas, Kampung Pulau Rusa, Kampung Gong Tok Nasek and Kampung Gong Pak Maseh. All these areas were once paddy fields. It was the pastime economic activities of the women folk to weave Songket.

Today, most of the weavers have moved further to the interior to places like Kampung Tembakang, Kampung Pak Madah and Kampung Tok Dir.

The Songket production value chain in Kuala Terengganu is very matured and systematic, where each village specialises in a particular step in the Songket making process. Some have successfully branded themselves, like Atikah Songket, Terengganu Songket and Wan Manang Songket. A 'mandor' or production leader supervises the production done by homebased weavers within her own community. Apart from Songket, a few Songket designers and artisans are reviving the extinct art of producing Kain Limar and Kain Ikat Loseng.

There are 2 entrepreneurs working on reviving Kain Limar. There are currently 234 registered Kain Songket artisans in Terengganu and the research interviewed 52 of them. There are 3 Adigurus of Kain Songket. They are Hajah Zainab @Ngah binti Mamat, appointed in 2012; Hajah Habibah binti Zikri, appointed in 2007; and Wan Manang bin Wan Awang, appointed in 2019. Figure 8 shows the distribution of Songket artisans in the state of Terengganu.



Figure 9 One of the very few artisans left weaving the Songket Kelantan



Figure 10 Embroidering flat gold ribbon thread in the making of Kelingkan

The Sultanate of Kelantan traces its history to the 13th century. However, the Sultanate for modern day Kelantan began in 1760 when Long Yunus succeeded to unite various territories under his rule. It was for some time a tributary state to the Kingdom of Siam.

The capital of the state moved from on site to another until 1844 when Kota Bharu, on the eastern banks of Kelantan river became the state capital and the seat of the Sultanate. Located a few kilometres from the river mouth, the town was also a port. The main palace is the fortified Istana Balai Besar and it is surrounded by many villages, some of which are homes to artisans and craftsman. Kelantan has a long history of traditional textile production.

Traditionally, Kelantan used to be famous for 3 categories of textiles, namely Batik; Songket and Kain Tenun and Kelingkan. Currently, the Batik industry is thriving with many artisans and entrepreneurs mostly centred in Kota Bharu and Tumpat areas. However, the production of hand-woven Songket and Tenun and the embroidery art of Kelingkan is dwindling. Figures 9 and 10 show the making of both textiles.

## Songket and Kain Tenun Kelantan

Hand-woven Songket and Kain Tenun were mainly centred in Kampung Penambang, about 4km to the north of Kota Bharu. It used to be the hub for boats crossing the Kelantan River to Tumpat. In the 1970s, there were many Songket and Kain Tenun artisans in the various villages lining both sides of the road from Kampung Penambang to Pantai Cinta Berahi. Artisans were also concentrated in Kampung Laut across the river all the way to Kampung Kok Keli. According to earlier research, there were 12 Songket entrepreneurs, assigning work to more than 200 home-based Songket weavers.

Today, there are only 3 Songket entrepreneurs centred in Kampung Penambang, namely Che Minah Songket, Che Bidah Songket and Idris Songket. They are all related to each other. When Grace Selvanayagam conducted research for her seminal book on Songket in the 1970s she spent 6 months in Che Minah Songket where she documented hundreds of Songket motifs and techniques. Che Minah Songket introduced many modernisations to its production to remain competitive, resulting in many traditional hand weavers halting production. Only a few of them still keep this tradition. There are currently only 9 registered Kain Songket artisans in Kelantan and the research interviewed 5 of them. The Adiguru of Kain Songket is Puan Hajiah Kelthom binti Hussin, appointed in 2008. Figure 11 shows the distribution of Songket artisans in the state of Kelantan.

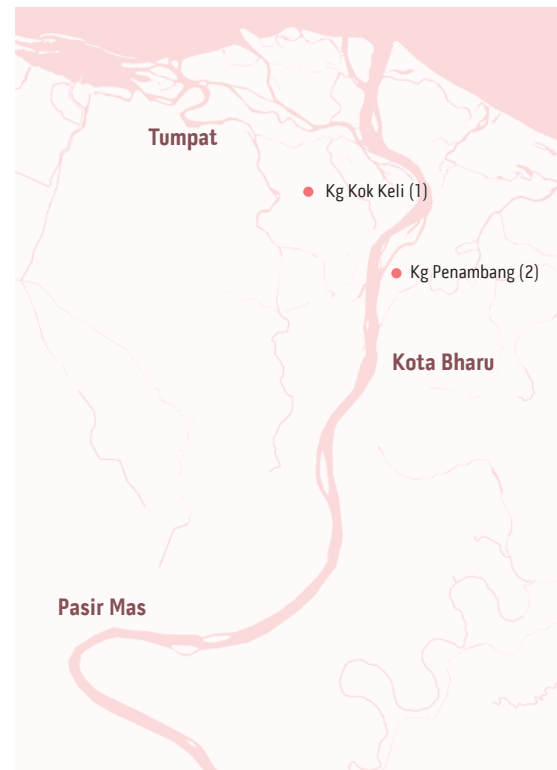


Figure 11 Distribution of Songket Artisans in Kelantan



Figure 12 Distribution of Kelingkan Artisans in Kelantan

## Kelingkan

Most of the Kelingkan embroiderers used to produce the intricate and luxurious Kelingkan shawl for the royal family and members of the aristocrat. The main area for the production of Kelingkan was in Kampung Kubang Pasu, a village close to the main royal palace complex of Kelantan, Istana Balai Besar and Istana Jahar. It is located just behind the Sultan Muhammad mosque, the state mosque of Kelantan.

Most of the people in this village practise various crafts and arts particularly for the royal family. However, the only surviving artisan of Kelingkan has moved out of this village. The research team covered the district of Kota Bharu to gather information about the ecosystem for Kelingkan in Kelantan. There is an Adiguru, Nik Rahimah Nik Idris, appointed in 2013, who keeps the knowledge and skills of Kelingkan embroidery. She had trained 6 apprentices but only 1 of them is still practicing now. The research team interviewed artisans at Taman Uda Murni, Kota Bharu. Figure 12 shows the distribution of Kelingkan artisans in the state of Kelantan.



Figure 13 Gold thread are couched over cardboard templates to create relief patterns of Tekat Benang Emas

**There are not very many traditional textile arts being practiced in the West Coast states of Peninsular Malaysia. Historically, some of the states with a monarchy have had some form of royal patronage to textile arts. However, due to rapid development, most of these traditional textile production have ceased to exist.**

Perak is one of the states where a form of traditional textile embroidery is still being practiced. It was one of the richest states in Malaysia and used to produce various crafts including Songket and Tekat Benang Emas. There used to be the Malay Art School in Kuala Kangsar, the royal capital of the state. Young people were taught various artforms in this school. Unfortunately, the school closed down in 1935. Today, the only textile-based artform surviving and still practiced in Kuala Kangsar is the gold thread embroidery called Tekat Benang Emas. This is mainly due to the demand for such craft from the royal and aristocratic family of Perak.

### Tekat Benang Emas

Tekat Benang Emas, or Tekat Sugi is mainly practiced in the royal town of Kuala Kangsar. Precisely, they are located in Kampung Padang Changkat, a small village near the Istana Iskandariah Palace in Bukit Chandan, Kuala Kangsar. Currently, there are only two Tekat Benang Emas entrepreneurs in this village, employing less than 15 embroiderers who work from home from that village and other smaller villages around Kuala Kangsar. The Adiguru of Tekat Benang Emas is Hajah Azizah binti Mohd Yusof, appointed in 1995.



Figure 14 Kain Benang Johor with its distinctive striped pattern being weaved

The Sultanate of current modern Johor began in 1885 and was one of the earliest Malay states to have modernised. The royal seat was moved from Teluk Belangah in Singapore to a place called Tanjung Putri, which was later renamed Johor Bahru. The history of weaving and traditional textile production in Johor is very vague, although historical documents point to the presence of weavers being sent to World Expos in the 1800s. Later on, Tunku Ampuan Besar Mariam, a Johor princess who married one of the Sultans of Pahang brought four weavers to Johor during the early 1900s after her husband passed away. This started the Rumah Tenun Johor in Kampung Mahmoodiah which operated until the 1980s.

### Kain Benang Johor

Kain Benang Johor is similar to other Tenun traditions. However, what differentiates Kain Benang Johor is the unique feature in design, motifs and production. Weaving tradition in Johor has died by 1980, however in 2012 Yayasan Warisan Johor commissioned a research to revive Kain Tenun Johor. Today, the Galeri Tenun Johor has a production workshop with six full time weavers. They produce Kain Benang Johor for the royal family and for sale to the public.



Figure 15 Embroidering Sulaman Nyonya

### Sulaman Nyonya

Pulau Pinang was once a territory in the Sultanate of Kedah. Modern Pulau Pinang began in 1786, when the island was leased for the British East India Company by Francis Light from the then Sultan of Kedah. Today, Pulau Pinang is one of the most urbanised states of Malaysia with the Chinese making up about half of George Town population and this includes the Straits Chinese or Peranakan community. This Straits Chinese community is not only prevalent in Penang but also in other parts of the British Straits Settlement, such as Melaka and Singapore. Chinese traders from China migrated to this region and intermarried with local women. This resulted in a fusion of traditions, customs and culture. Over time, this evolved into a very distinctive and unique hybrid ethnicity (called Baba-Nyonya).

The Nyonya ladies amused themselves with various crafts including needlework and beadwork. This gave form to the Sulaman Nyonya, an embroidery technique that decorate their Nyonya Kebaya. Pulau Pinang is the only state in Malaysia that still produces Sulaman Nyonya. The late Adiguru for Sulaman Nyonya, Lim Swee Kim, trained a number of women in the art of Sulaman Nyonya. Most of her students have stopped producing Sulaman Nyonya, except for a few.



**Figure 16** Detail counting of warp threads, a technique called Sifir Sarawak makes the end-product reversible.



**Figure 17** Embroidering flat gold ribbon thread in the making of Keringkam



**Figure 18** Warp threads are resist-dyed using natural dye to create patterns that tell folklore stories in Tenunan Pua



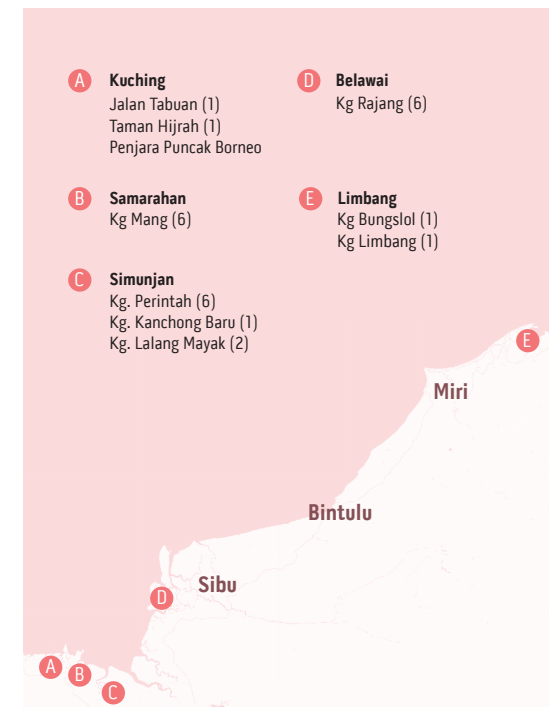
**Figure 19** Tenunan Pua Sungkit is one of the textiles of the Iban, mainly centred in Lubuk Antu

**Historically, Sarawak was once a territory under the Brunei Sultanate. A rebellion in the territory caused the Brunei representative to seek help from James Brooke, a British soldier and adventurer. As a reward, he was granted the title Rajah of Sarawak in 1842. During the century of the Brooke family rule over Sarawak, the seat of Government was in Kuching where it remains so until this day.**

In Kuching, the Brooke family built a majestic palace called the Astana on the northern bank of the Sarawak river. Villages around the Astana used to be homes to a number of artisans who produced Songket and Keringkam for the royal and aristocratic families. In the hinterland of Sarawak lived the Iban community, which today makes up one third of the state's population. The most distinctive feature of the Iban community is the longhouse. Each one is a social unit and also a political unit with a Longhouse elder, called the Tuai Rumah. For the Iban women, the art of weaving ikat textile is a way to achieve social honour. Ikat textiles, more popularly known as Tenunan Pua, remains a social identity for the Iban. **Figures 16 to 19** show the making of these textiles.

## Songket Sarawak

It is believed that the original location for Songket Sarawak production is the villages around the Astana in Kuching. However, since 1942 this area ceased to become a Songket production area. Only recently when Tanoti was formed alongside efforts made by Penjara Puncak Borneo was the art of Songket weaving revived. Gedong and Kg Mang are also new Songket weaving centres with a number of community-based workshops and enterprises. Whilst Songket Gedong and Kuching have influence from Songket Sambas, Songket Kg Mang has Iban influence in its motifs. Songket from Belawai, Mukah are produced by the Melanau community and have a very strong Melanau influence in its design. Songket in Limbang has strong Brunei influence. There are currently 56 registered Kain Songket artisans in Sarawak and the research team interviewed 44 of them. The Adiguru for Songket Sarawak is Dayang Norsalam binti Pengiran Parsih, appointed in 1995. **Figure 20** shows the distribution of Songket artisans in the state of Sarawak.



**Figure 20** Distribution of Songket Artisans in Sarawak

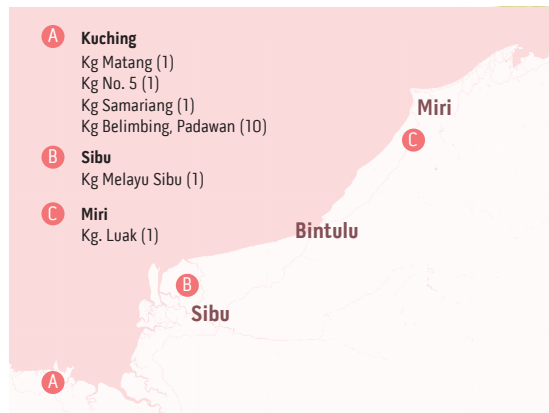


Figure 21 Distribution of Keringkam Artisans in Sarawak

## Keringkam

It is believed that the art of making Tudung Keringkam Sarawak started before the 19th century. Today, the active producers of this embroidery are located at Kampung Belimbing Islam (Padawan), Kampung Luak Bay (Miri), Kampung Hilir (Sri Mana), Kampung Sinjan, Kampung Surabaya, Kampung Lintang dan Kampung Nombor, Kuching. However, now only a few of the artisans are left practicing this art. There is also a group of Keringkam embroiderers in Kampung Belimbing in Padawan. They are mostly from the Bidayuh community who have converted to Islam. Recent efforts by Centre of Technical Excellence (CENTEX) and Kraftangan Malaysia Cawangan Sarawak have given new life to this dying art form. There are currently 22 registered Keringkam artisans in Sarawak and the research interviewed 11 of them. The Adiguru for Keringkam is Salbiah Mulhi appointed in 2022. **Figure 21** shows the distribution of Keringkam artisans in the state of Sarawak.

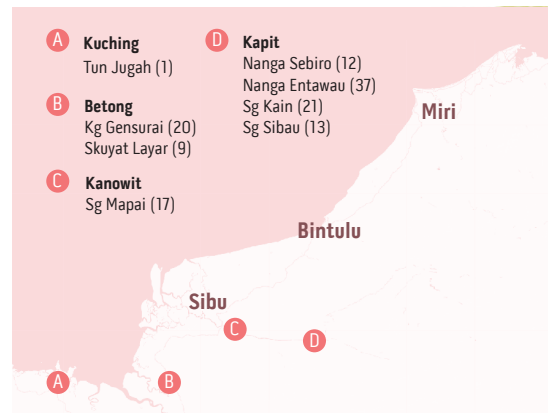


Figure 22 Distribution of Tenunan Iban Artisans in Sarawak

## Tenunan Iban (Pua)

Tenunan Iban is mainly a community and traditional social practice. However, these textiles have become a tourism product and signify the identity of the Iban people and also Sarawak. It is believed traditionally that the skills to weave the Tenunan Iban using the warp ikat technique marked the Iban women's womanhood and worth in the community. Normally, woven in cotton with a blanket-sized cloth, it is formed of two mirror image panels hand-stitched together which are primarily used in sacred ceremonies and in rites of passage and healing rituals. This is famously known as Pua Kumbu. Using the same technique, they also weave women's short tube skirts, men's loincloths, shaman's robes, and jackets/vests. The general layout and symbolic designs on these textiles are related to Iban beliefs and the supernatural world. It is essentially considered a sacred cloth that tell a weaver's personal story or a mythological tale or represent the purpose for which it has been woven.

The most skilful weavers come from the longhouse communities in the Kapit district in central Sarawak. The Adiguru for Tenunan Iban is Bangie Anak Embol who has won enumerable international awards, including the UNESCO-World Crafts Council Award of Excellence for Handicrafts. Society Atelier Sarawak, which promotes and markets the textiles internationally has since given support to the weavers. There are two other Tenunan Iban produced, namely Pua Karap and Pua Sungkit – all very distinct in their production technique. The main areas for Tenunan Iban production are in Lubuk Antu, Betong, Kanowit and Kapit. **Figure 22** shows the distribution of Tenunan Iban artisans in the state of Sarawak.



Figure 23 Distinctive needle-weaved technique of Linangkit



Figure 24 Embroidering Sulaman Pis using contrasting colour with very distinctive Rungus motifs



Figure 25 Weaving Tenunan Rungus using the backstrap loom

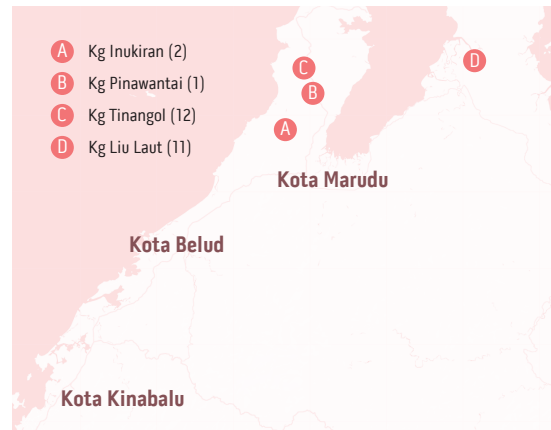


Figure 26 Distribution of Tenunan Rungus Artisans in Sabah

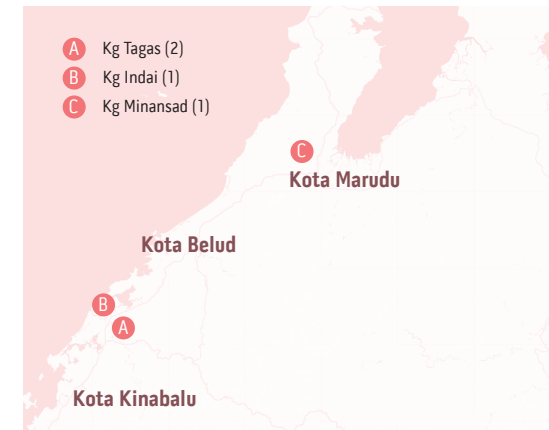


Figure 27 Distribution of Linangkit Artisans in Sabah

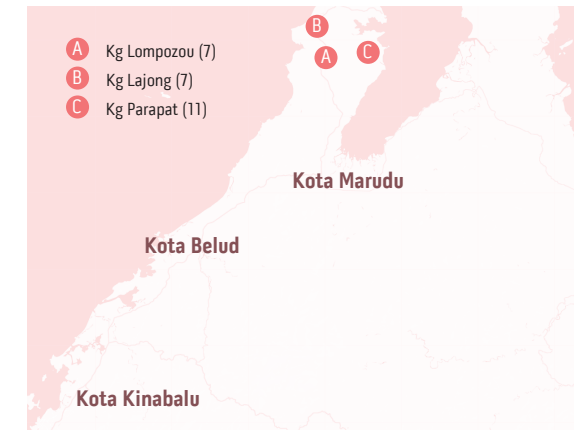


Figure 28 Distribution of Sulaman Pis Artisans in Sabah

Sabah was once a territory of the Sultanate of Brunei. Between 1865 to 1881, various parts of Sabah were leased to different individuals and parties from either the Sultan of Brunei or the Sultan of Sulu. These parts were then consolidated under the British North Borneo Company which obtained a Royal Charter from the British Government.

In August 1963, British North Borneo became self-governing and 16 days later joined Malaysia. Traditional textiles of Sabah have had a lot of influences from migration and trade between various ethnic groups in the region. Weaving and textile production tradition in Sabah is predominantly located on the western coast of Sabah, particularly by the Iranun and Rungus communities. Figures 23 to 25 show the making of these textiles.

### Tenunan Rungus

As its name implies, Tenunan Rungus is produced by the Rungus community. Considered as one of many dusunic groups in Sabah, the Rungus primarily live around the areas of the Kudat Peninsula, Kota Marudu and Pitas. Traditionally they live in longhouses and still practise many of the traditional crafts. For the women, they weave the Tenunan Rungus and Inavols, the Sulaman Pis embroidery and also beadwork.

Most of their weaving is carried out as social practices producing textiles for their own ceremonial use. Tenunan Rungus are mainly produced in Kampung Tinangol, Kampung Inukiran and Kampung Liu Laut. There are currently 27 registered Tenunan Rungus artisans in Sabah and the research interviewed 7 of them. There is no Adiguru for Tenunan Rungus. Figure 26 shows the distribution of Tenunan Rungus artisans in the state of Sabah.

### Linangkit

Linangkit is a type of traditional embroidery where the knotting technique is used to alternate with different coloured thread according to desired patterns on two pieces of black clothes. Various ethnic groups would use this embroidery for different purposes, for wedding costumes, ritual and dance performance costumes. Other uses include decorations for sarong, shawl, blouse, trousers. Linangkit is mainly produced by the Dusun Lotud community. However, other communities also produce their variation of Linangkit. They may differ in terms of design and colour used. Linangkit are mainly produced in Tuaran district, particularly in Kampung Indai and Kampung Tagas. There are currently 6 registered Linangkit artisans in Sabah and the research interviewed 3 of them. The Adiguru for Sulaman Linangkit is Emis @ Emmilianah Dahun, appointed in 2022. Figure 27 shows the distribution of Linangkit artisans in the state of Sabah.

### Sulaman Pis

Sulaman Pis is an intricate embroidery technique on a reversible cloth which is a metre square of two facing pieces of cotton cloth gorgeously embroidered with colourful motifs. Sulaman Pis is also known as Tinohian, an embroidery created by the women of Bindan ethnic (Sulu and Bajau group of ethnic) from Kudat district, Sabah as part time work. Sulaman Pis are produced using cotton clothes in Kampung Lompozou, Kampung Parapat and Kampung Lajong in the district of Kudat. There are currently 31 registered Sulaman Pis artisans in Sabah and the research interviewed 14 of them. The Adiguru for Sulaman Pis is Crisna Mojupi, appointed in 2022. Figure 28 shows the distribution of Sulaman Pis artisans in the state of Sabah.

## MASTER CRAFTSPERSON (ADIGURU) OF TRADITIONAL TEXTILES



One of the initiatives to recognise and appreciate local artisans with outstanding contribution to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is the Master Craftsperson or Adiguru Kraf appointment.

This appointment and title of Adiguru Kraf was introduced by the Malaysian Government in 1987, conferred to an accomplished artisans, in recognition for high achievements in their respective fields. Apart from possessing knowledge and skill in their field, Adiguru Kraf also plays a significant role in safeguarding heritage crafts through transmission of skills and knowledge to and through being creative and innovative to ensure advancement of the craft.

Since its introduction, 50 individuals has been appointed Adiguru in various crafts, out of which 22 are in the field of traditional textiles. At the time of publication, four have passed away, leaving 18 practising Adiguru still transmitting their skills and knowledge in various traditional textile art forms. This research interviewed 13 of them where they shared their philosophy and what makes working with their hands can be very meaningful. The 13 Adiguru interviewed in this research are as follows:

Traditional Textile	Master Craftsperson	Appointed
Kain Tenun Pahang & Kain Ikat Loseng	Nortipah Abd. Kadir (79)	2015
Songket Terengganu & Kain Limar	Hajah Zainab @Ngah binti Mamat (81) Hajah Habibah binti Zikri (75) Wan Manang bin Wan Awang (69)	2002 2007 2019
Songket Kelantan	Kelthom Hussin (77)	2014
Kelingkan	Nik Rahimah Nik Idris (82)	2013
Tekat Benang Emas	Hajah Azizah binti Mohd Yusof (85)	1995
Sulaman Nyonya	-	-
Kain Tenun Johor	-	-
Songket Sarawak	Dayang Norsalam Pengiran Parsih (80)	1995
Keringkam	Salbiah Mulhi (72)	2022
Kain Tenun Pua	Bangie anak Embol (78)	2000
Tenunan Rungus	Rubangki binti Mabok (81)	1990
Linangkit	Emis @ Emmilianah Dahun (47)	2022
Sulaman Pis	Crisna Mojupi (54)	2022

( ) Ages at time of publication

## MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES WITH TRADITIONAL TEXTILE COLLECTIONS

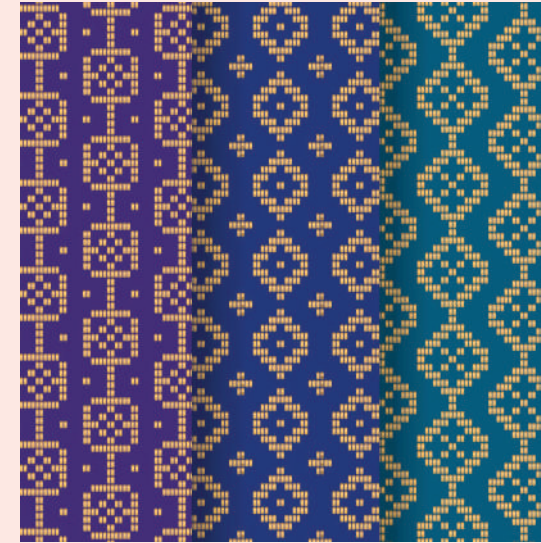


Ramtiwairi Ramlee, founder of Seri Gedong Songket and winner of Hasanah Gold Thread Awards 2023, demonstrating the intricate process behind songket weaving.

Currently, out of approximately 203 federal, state and private museums and galleries in Malaysia, 22 are actively involved in creating awareness and appreciation of traditional textiles.

Some of these are totally dedicated to textiles (eg. Muzium Tekstil Negara, Galeri Songket dan Keringkam Sarawak, Galeri Tun Jugah), some have one or two galleries on textiles (eg. Muzium Terengganu, Muzium Kraftangan Kelantan, Muzium Sabah, Borneo Cultural Museum) and others have textiles being displayed in non-textile galleries. There are also museums with large collections of traditional textiles primarily in storage, only taken out for display at certain times.

## KEY FINDINGS ON STATUS OF SAFEGUARDING TRADITIONAL TEXTILES IN MALAYSIA



Key findings of this research came from analysis of data collected from observation of the ecosystem through visits and interviews; statistical analysis provided from informants; and recommendations from artisans and cultural institutions.

### Varied Circumstances of Traditional Textiles

Generally, the number of traditional textile artisans and practitioners as a whole is dwindling. This is based on the number of registered artisans with Kraftangan and the research field work conducted. However, looking at individual traditional textiles artform in each location, the situation may differ.

**1** Based on the **age breakdown** analysis, Tenun Pahang, Songket, Kain Limar, Tenun Johor Keringkam and Songket Sarawak has a healthy percentage of younger generation; which may show that these textiles artform are more sustainable in the long run. All the other textiles do not have any significant number of young generations. Therefore, any training initiatives should focus of these textiles, namely, Songket Kelantan, Kelingkan Kelantan, Linangkit, Tekat Benang Emas, Tenunan Rungus, Sulaman Nyonya and Sulaman Pis.

**2** A breakdown on the **motivation** of involving in a particular artform, the research found that generating income is the main motivation for involvement in Tenun Pahang, Songket Terengganu, Kain Limar, Sulaman Nyonya, Tekat Benang Emas and Keringkam Sarawak. However, most of the Sabah and Sarawak artisans are less motivated with income but more to continuing family/ community traditions.

**3** A breakdown by **artisan generation** shows that almost all textile artisan are first generation. This means they did not learn from their family or generation before them but from training institutions. However for Kelingkan Kelantan, Songket Kelantan and Pua Kumbu a large majority learned their skills from previous generations. This shows that the traditional textile arts on Malaysia does not depend much on intergenerational transmission, and that there are always renewed interests from new generations to continue textile art forms.

**4** A breakdown on who the **artisan produces** for shows that artisans for Tenun Pahang, Songket, Kain Limar and Tenun Johor produce for their employers. However, for Kelingkan Kelantan, Songket Kelantan, Sulaman Nyonya, Tekat Benang Emas, Keringkam, Linangkit and Sulaman Pis, the artisans produce them directly for their respective customers.



An artisan demonstrating the art of tekat, a form of embroidery that employs the use of gold threads on a background of richly coloured velvet.

## Artisan Income Models within Traditional Textile Ecosystem

There are many models on how artisans work and practice their artform. They are not similar even within the same traditional textile type. Some work in (1) workshops with fixed salary; some are (2) paid by their pieces while working in entrepreneurs' workshop, in community workshops or from home; some (3) produce their own products to be sold directly to customers; and (4) others work in community workshops and share the proceeds of the sales. For textiles where there are intervention either from royal patronage or government programmes (Kain Tenun Pahang, Kain Benang Johor) most of the artisans work in employers' workshop and are paid regular salary and commission. However, for Kelingkan, Keringkam, Sulaman Nyonya, Tekat Benang Emas, Tenunan Pua most of them are entrepreneur-artisans that sell their product directly to customers or to middlemen-entrepreneurs.

## Incentives and Recognition for Artisans in the Value Chain

The income disparity between the consumers and the actual artisans working on the textile can be very great. Artisans are mostly paid for their time and very rarely for their creativity. On the whole, textile artisans usually lack proper respect and recognition in society, as compared to sportsmen or performing artists. The Adiguru The profession needs to offer a healthy income, attractive job prospects and pride for existing artisans to hold onto their profession and to attract younger generations. The conferment of Adiguru status has been mainly confined to very senior and experienced artisans who have contributed towards the transmission of skills. Other forms and categories of recognition could develop pride in this profession.



## Challenges in the Traditional Textile Supply Chain

For most of the traditional textiles, difficulty in sourcing and the rising costs of raw material are crucial challenges which has led to higher production costs. This is mostly cited by artisans practicing Tenun Rungus, Linangkit, Keringkam Sarawak, Songket Sarawak and Tenunan Pua. However, competition from mass produced alternatives and imports, although cited as a challenge, is not significant. This is most probably due to the niche market that artisans produce for. But changing consumer tastes is a challenge cited by Tenun Pahang, Songket Terengganu, Kain Limar, Tenun Johor and Songket Sarawak. It is very important to contemporise traditional textiles without losing the traditional touch. Lack of design innovation capability may make growth stationary and make it hard to penetrate new markets.

## Socio-Demographic Change and Transmission of Skills

Generally, except for a few entrepreneurs, generational transmission of traditional textiles craftsmanship is being discouraged by families as it is seen as to be lacking career prospects. Having other job opportunities is a drawback cited by artisans in the Songket Terengganu, Songket Kelantan, Tenun Rungus and Linangkit. While economic factors seem to be the main motivation for the new generation, there are some who are motivated by creative work. Continuous effort to transmit knowledge and skills through formal institutions, such as Institut Kraftangan Negara and CENTEX Sarawak, has been going on for many years. However, intake is very low. Long duration of training programme which are mostly not conducted on-site is cited as the main drawback cited by artisans of Tenun Pahang, Songket Terengganu, Tenunan Rungus, Tekat Benang Emas, Linangkit, Sulaman Pis, dan Songket Sarawak. Traditional method of transmission through apprenticeship and community learning should be encouraged.



An artisan (left) operating a traditional weaving loom to create songket, a traditional Malay textile that is handwoven from silk or cotton and features patterns made with supplementary weft metallic yarns. Two artisans (right) using a stretching frame to adorn fabrics with kelingkan, a traditional Malay embroidery technique that employs a flat metallic ribbon or plate coated in gold or silver.

## Promoting Traditional Textile Outside Traditional Users

There needs to be a robust market for traditional textiles being produced, moving beyond the traditional user to local and international users. Even within traditional user, fluctuating demand (such as during festive seasons, big events) and changing tastes are big challenges. For non-traditional users, the awareness of the textiles exists and the high cost is seen by many to be off-putting. A lack of awareness of the differences between 'hand-made' and 'mass-produced' is also a challenge. A multi-tiered labelling system may provide a solution to this. There is also a need to strengthen artisans' and entrepreneurs' knowledge on branding and communication, especially focusing of the textile traditions, the human touch, the physical quality and the storytelling behind each traditional textile.

## Cultural Institutions as Collaborative Platforms to Promote Artisans

Museum and galleries are important cultural institutions that can play a bigger role to safeguard textile-based intangible heritage. Apart from collecting textile-based artifacts, the 22 museums and galleries that have textile-based collection and activities can be a platform create awareness and appreciation of traditional handloom textile. Individually, resources of each museum may be limited but collectively they may more effective to collaborate with textile artisans to research, document and build awareness to a wider audience. However, there are challenges in the form of funding, collaboration with outside organisations and lack of internal knowledge on traditional textiles and their artisans.



A sampin woven using the Sarawak songket technique, crafted with gold threads and produced by Seri Gedong Songket, a group of accomplished weavers, and one of the winners of the inaugural Hasanah Gold Threads Awards in 2023.

## Shift from Selling Product to Selling Product Services and Experience

A lot of emphasis has been given towards producing and selling traditional textile products. Traditional textile carries many cultural meaning with each design and motif telling stories. This has great value that has not been captured or monetized. Research found that many artisans lack storytelling skills. Traditional textile community and entrepreneurs should explore and expand from just merely selling products to selling product services (teaching, crafts for different audience, demonstrations) and product experience (events, performance, exhibitions, content production, creative tourism). Artisans may lack sophistication in these areas, but proper awareness and capacity building programmes coupled with the right strategy can enhance their value proposition in the long run.

## Opening-up a New Market – Creative Tourism

The introduction and promotion of the textile-based creative tourism segment in Malaysia would provide local artisans with new avenues / markets to generate economic and social benefits, and at the same time benefit the tourism sector. Creative Tourism is yet to be implemented in Malaysia. Currently the only form of tourism to textile-based centres are mainly cultural in nature, usually involving demonstration without actually having a hands-on experience or without meeting with any of the artisans. Some textile centres have already received tourists in a small ad-hoc manner, including Tanoti Crafts, Pusat Tenun Pahang Pulau Keladi, Linangkit Cultural Village, Rumah Tenun Johor and Kampung Inukiran Kudat. This shows that textile centres have the capacity to welcome visitors and tourists. However, to penetrate into the higher yield segment of textile-based creative tourism there is a need for a proper strategy, support from government agencies such as Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, promotion by Tourism Malaysia, and capacity building programmes, including training for storytelling and increasing tourism hospitality capabilities.

## RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS AND POTENTIAL INITIATIVES

All recommended interventions and potential initiatives are aimed at safeguarding textile-based intangible cultural heritage of Malaysia. It covers interventions to improve the preservation and protection of traditional textile ecosystem; promotion and recognition of artisans and traditional textiles; transmission of knowledge and skills; research and documentation of artisans, artifacts, and processes; and revitalisation of traditional textiles.

### Preservation and Protection of the Traditional Textile Ecosystem

Recommendations and proposed initiatives in preserving and protecting traditional textile craftsmanship encompass efforts to maintain continuity in the practice of traditional textile and deliberate measures to defend them from elements of threat. These include:

#### 1 Improve traditional textiles ecosystem

- Enhance attractiveness of job prospect by providing **salary subsidy** to artisans through entrepreneurs in collaboration Jabatan Tenaga Manusia and State Governments;
- Protect intellectual property of artisans by organising artisans / entrepreneurs **training on protection** of intellectual property (IP) rights for textile artisans and entrepreneurs in collaboration MyIPO, Kraftangan and other relevant government agencies; and
- Conduct **research** on the entire value chain (from raw materials to finished products) for textile artisans and entrepreneurs in collaboration with Kraftangan.

#### 2 Support development of a robust market (local and international) for traditional textiles

- Create **opportunities and business platform** for inter-state and international promotion for textile entrepreneurs in collaboration with related NGOs and government agencies such as Kraftangan and MATRADE;
- Train **branding skills**: which focuses on tradition, human touch, physical quality, and story behind product for textile artisans and entrepreneurs in collaboration branding experts;
- Provide platform to **display and sell** traditional textile products in partnership with museum and galleries for textile artisans and entrepreneurs in collaboration Jabatan Muzium Malaysia, Kraftangan and State museums; and
- Establish systematic and multilevel **labelling scheme** for textile entrepreneurs and artisans in collaboration with Kraftangan and SIRIM.

#### 3 Encourage and promote the development of textile-based community weaving villages or centres

- Identify, develop and/or improve **infrastructures** of community-based weaving centres and villages for knowledge exchange, raw material sourcing, product development in collaboration local authorities and state handicraft agencies; and
- Provide **capacity development** programme for product innovation, marketing and finances with guidance from Adiguru and retired IKN trainers.

#### 4 Develop artisans and entrepreneurs' capabilities to offer Creative Tourism experiences

- Identify and organise **tourism awareness programme** on the potential of creative tourism for textile artisans and entrepreneur interested to introduce creative tourism in collaboration with Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture (MOTAC), Tourism Malaysia (TM), State Tourism Agencies, Tour Operators and Tourist Guides;
- Train and mentor current textile community centres to provide creative tourism services (storytelling training, international collaboration, familiarisation trips) for textile centres already accepting tourists in collaboration MOTAC, TM, State Tourism Agencies, Tour Operators and Tourist Guides;
- Develop **living museum** concept with textile artisans' community for traditional villages with history and community of artisans in collaboration with MOTAC, TM, State Tourism Agencies, Tour Operators and Tourist Guides; and
- Conduct **Continuous Tourism Related Education** programme for tourism guides and tour operators in collaboration Licensed Tourism Training Institute, MOTAC.



Nik Marhamah (right), a Kelantanese Kelingkan artisan, and her apprentice, Siti Nurul Liyana (left), demonstrating the intricate process of creating Kelingkan textiles using gold threads.

## Promotion and Recognition of Artisans and Traditional Textiles

Recommendations and proposed initiatives in promotion and recognition encompass enhancing awareness of traditional textiles, and increasing its visibility through presentation in media, events and cultural institutions and art-based NGOs.

### 1 Promote traditional textile awareness to people outside traditional users and enthusiasts

- Integrate traditional-textile **awareness programmes** in schools' programmes targeted to school children and teachers in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education; and
- Organise **community art educational** programmes using textile as base. (eg. community weaving project, cultural mapping using textile) targeted to local communities in collaboration with local authorities and art-based NGOs.

### 2 Spearhead network collaboration amongst cultural institutions to promote traditional textiles

- Conduct regular **seminars about history, meanings and motifs** of traditional textile in collaboration with cultural institutions for history and heritage NGOs in collaboration with Jabatan Muzium Malaysia, ICOMOS and State Museums;
- Curate **textile-based exhibitions and hands-on workshops** with textile artisans for visitors to gain an appreciation for the intricacy and expertise involved in collaboration with museums and galleries for museum visitors in collaboration with Jabatan Muzium Malaysia and State museums;
- Establish nationwide **festival/events** that incorporate presentations, cultural performances, exhibitions, and marketplaces to stimulating interest in and demand for traditional textiles for event organisers, general public in collaboration with Jabatan Muzium and State Museums; and
- Train local artisans to **conserve traditional textiles** in collaboration with Jabatan Muzium Malaysia and other museum with such capabilities.

### 3 Appreciate and recognise local artisans

- Organise **awards to appreciate** local artisans for textile artisans and entrepreneurs.



## Improving Transmission of Skills and Knowledge

Recommendation and proposed initiatives to improve transmission of skills and knowledge in traditional textiles include various forms of awareness and training programmes. These include:

### 1 Encourage more traditional methods of skills transmission

- Introduce more **short, modular and in-situ** textile skills training courses for youth for general public, textile enthusiasts in collaboration with training institution, NGOs and entrepreneurs; and
- Encourage **apprenticeship programmes** using the National Dual Training System (NDTS) programmes for local youths in collaboration with Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran.

### 2 Develop artisans' storytelling skills

- Conduct **storytelling training** for curators, volunteers, artisans, textile community village for textile artisans and entrepreneurs, curators, general public in collaboration with licensed Tourism Training Institutes, MOTAC and other tourism stakeholders.

### 3 Offer opportunities to disabled communities

- Offer **skills training programme for disabled communities** to learn weaving or embroidery for people with disabilities in collaboration with Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat.

# Research and Documenting of Traditional Textiles and Artisans

Recommendations and proposed initiatives of research and documenting of traditional textiles and artisan encompass investigating, gathering and compiling information regarding artisans, history of crafts and surrounding villages, features and other information relating to the traditional textiles. These include:

## 1 Search and interpret traditional textiles heirlooms kept within local communities

- Collaborate with experts and volunteers to carry community outreach programmes for local community to **share the traditional textile heirloom** to be interpreted and documented for textile experts, local community, volunteers in collaboration with Jabatan Muzium Malaysia, state museums and local authorities.

## 2 Create cultural inventory of textile artisan villages

- Organise **cultural mapping** with communities to identify and document cultural assets surrounding the community textile production centre in collaboration with local communities, local authorities, and tourism stakeholders.

## 3 Document and publish easy to read, inspirational and informative material on traditional textiles

- Publish a thematic **stories and memories book on Adiguru** for general public in collaboration Kraftangan;
- Publish a **joint catalogue highlighting all the traditional textiles** kept in museums and galleries in Malaysia for textile interest groups, expertise, artisans and textile enthusiasts in collaboration with Jabatan Muzium Malaysia and state museums;
- Publish a joint publication on **specific traditional textiles** (Tekat, Sabah textiles, etc) for textile interest groups, expertise and artisans; and
- Publish **tourism book highlighting traditional textiles** for tourist guides, tour operators in collaboration with MOTAC and TM.



An exhibit displaying Tekat Timbul embroidery with kelingkan thread detailing on velvet.

# Revitalisation of Traditional Textiles

Recommendations and proposed initiatives for revitalisation of traditional textiles means reactivating, restoring and strengthening traditional craft practices that are vulnerable and threatened.

## 1 Revitalisation of endangered textiles

- Organise **hands-on workshops on textiles which are vulnerable or require revival** (Telepuk, Limar) for textile entrepreneurs and artisans in collaboration textile experts and academic institutions;

## 2 Improve and contemporise traditional textiles

- Organise short term **design courses** for artisans for textile entrepreneurs and artisans in collaboration with international designers and NGOs.



An artisan demonstrates Nyonya (Peranakan) beadwork, using stringing and threading techniques. Beads are stitched onto velvet or canvas for slippers, purses, and hangings, while translucent beads are strung on open threads to create decorative fringes or curtains.

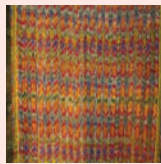
# APPENDIX: TYPES OF TRADITIONAL TEXTILES

The 15 traditional textiles art covered in this research are as follows:



## TENUN PAHANG Pahang

Tenun Pahang is a hand-woven textile made of silk with distinctive stripped or chequered patterns. This fabric has a long history and is unique to the state of Pahang. Royal patronage has ensured this textile art form has thrived.



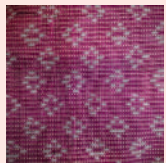
## IKAT LOSENG Pahang & Terengganu

Ikat Loseng is a warp ikat-patterned woven textile. In this ikat technique, the warp threads are resist-dyed in various areas and colours to create unique patterns. This technique is sometimes used for the base cloth of Songket and Kain Tenun.



## SONGKET Terengganu & Kelantan

Songket is a woven textile of cotton or silk with supplementary gold or coloured weft threads which create decorative patterns on the main textile base. It is considered as luxurious textile used for formal or festive occasions.



## KAIN LIMAR Terengganu

Kain Limar is a weft ikat-patterned woven textile of either cotton or silk. With this ikat technique, weft threads are resist-dyed in various areas and colours which will create unique patterns when they are weaved. This artform has died but efforts are being made to revive it.



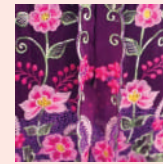
## KELINGKAN Kelantan

Kelingkan is an embroidered textile of silk threaded with gold- or silver-plated ribbons using specially made flat needles. It was mainly used by the royalties of various states, and now only practiced in Kelantan. This textile art form is endangered and efforts to revive it is being made in Kelantan and Selangor.



## TEKAT BENANG EMAS Perak

Tekat Benang Emas or Tekat Timbul is an embroidered textile usually of velvet, where threads of gold or silver are couched over cardboard templates to create a relief pattern. This textile is mainly used for decorative items such as cushion covers, wedding accessories and the wedding dais.



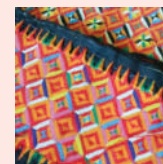
## SULAMAN NYONYA Pulau Pinang

Sulaman Nyonya is embroidery using sewing machine on sheer, lightweight textile for the Kebaya Nyonya. Popular motifs such as dragons, flora and fauna are sewn using a combination of stitches, including cutwork, running, satin and buttonhole stitches.



## KERINGKAM SARAWAK Sarawak

Keringkam is an embroidered textile usually of voile or silk organza, threaded with gold- or silver-plated ribbons using a specially made flat needle to create distinctive motifs and patterns. They are used as shawl and head covering for women during formal occasions.



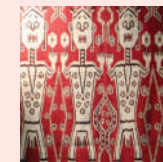
## LINANGKIT Sabah

Linangkit are distinctive needle-weaved decorative panels that uses a technique called tapestry weave. This dense panels has brightly coloured motifs and are used to decorate seams of costumes or join 2 pieces of cloth.



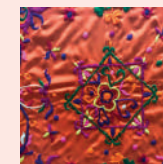
## KAIN BENANG JOHOR Johor

Kain Tenun Johor or traditionally known as Kain Benang Johor, this textile is a hand-woven textile of cotton or silk with unique stripped or chequered patterns. This art form has died in Johor but with royal patronage, efforts are being made to revive them.



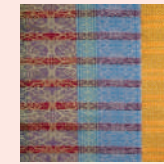
## TENUNAN IBAN (PUA) Sarawak

Tenunan Iban or more popularly known as Tenunan Pua is warp ikat-patterned woven textile of cotton. The warp threads are resist-dyed with natural dye to create motifs and patterns that tell folklore stories. Other Iban traditional textiles include the Pua Sungkit, Pua Karap and Pua Pilih.



## SULAMAN PIS Sabah

Sulaman Pis is a reversible embroidered textile which is usually square shape. It is embroidered using contrasting colour threads on a yellow or orange base cloth with very distinctive Rungus motifs. It is mainly used as traditional men's headwear for festive and ritual events.



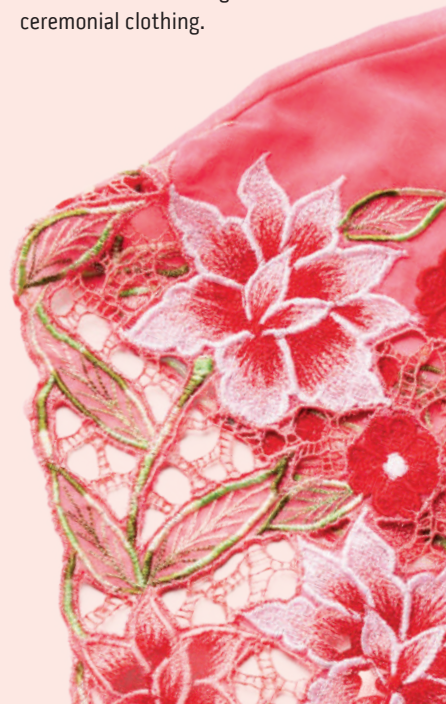
## SONGKET SARAWAK Sarawak

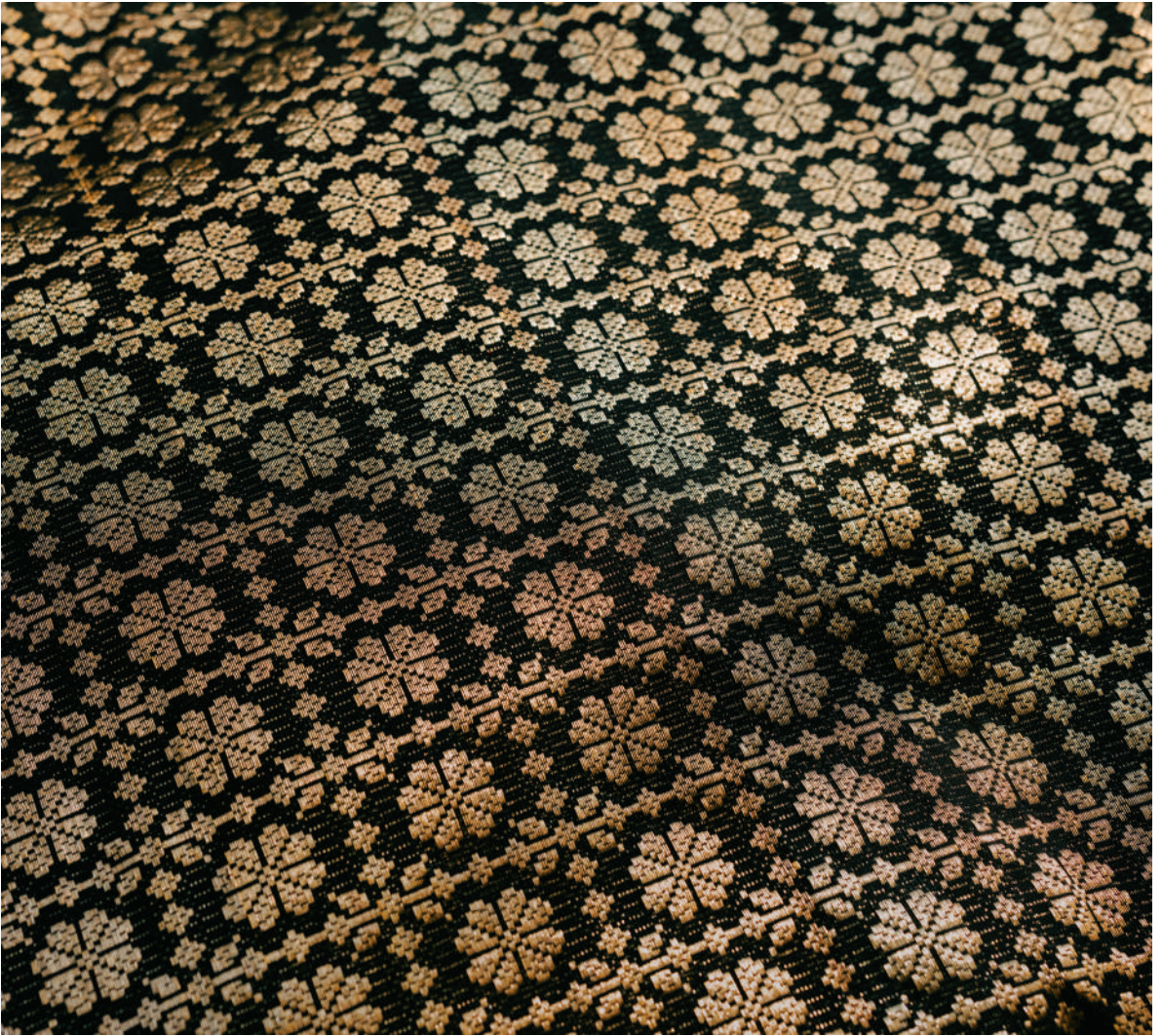
Songket Sarawak is a woven textile of cotton with supplementary gold or coloured weft threads which create decorative patterns on the main textile base. In Sarawak, a technique called Sifir Sarawak enables the Songket to be used on both sides.



## TENUNAN RUNGUS Sabah

Tenunan Rungus or Magavol is a hand-woven textile made of cotton and produced using the back-strap loom by the Rungus tribe of Sabah. It is predominantly black with various motifs inspired by nature. It is used as for making various ceremonial clothing.





# YAYASAN HASANAH

 A foundation of Khazanah Nasional

[connect@hasanah.org.my](mailto:connect@hasanah.org.my)

+60 3 5870 4333

+60 3 5870 4355

Yayasan Hasanah (1075550-P)

Level 2, Block A, Dataran PHB Saujana Resort, Seksyen U2 40250 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

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