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UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA



BULETIN APB

EDISI 16

Jun 2026

AKADEMI PENGAJIAN BAHASA
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
CAWANGAN NEGERI SEMBILAN
KAMPUS SEREMBAN

Bridging Efficiency and Sustainability in Local Public Services: Insights from Malaysia

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Sustainable service delivery in Malaysian local government refers to the provision of public services that are efficient, equitable, and environmentally responsible, while ensuring long-term societal well-being (PLANMalaysia, 2021; Ministry of Economy Malaysia, 2025). However, rapid urbanisation and increasing public expectations have intensified pressures on local authorities to enhance service delivery systems (Khairin Nazry Karim, 2021). This study examines how selected Malaysian local governments implement sustainable service delivery practices through digitalisation, environmental initiatives, and a smart governance system.

Sustainable Service Delivery in Malaysia

Despite sustainability commitments, several operational challenges continue to affect the delivery systems. In Putrajaya, manual administrative processes have led to delays and inefficiencies, particularly in licensing and enforcement, resulting in long queues and public dissatisfaction (see Figure 1). According to Zaini (2023), illegal waste disposal and low recycling participation in Melaka contribute to environmental degradation (see Figure 2). While in Shah Alam, recurring floods are linked to delayed drainage maintenance and reactive service systems (see Figure 3)

Figure 1: Delayed action. Figure 2: Illegal Waste Sites. Figure 3: Floods.



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Case Study Initiative

Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah (MBMB): Trash to Cash Program

The Trash to Cash initiative encourages recycling by allowing residents to exchange recyclable materials for rewards, thereby incentivising the public to recycle. This initiative helps reduce waste sent to landfills, promotes recycling practices, and increases environmental awareness among residents. The Trash to Cash program supports SDG 11 by improving urban waste management and SDG 13 by reducing pollution and environmental impact.

Figure 4: Trash to Cash Program Implemented by MBMB



(Note: Reprinted from BERNAMA)

Perbadanan Putrajaya (PPJ): Smart and Digital Service Delivery

Perbadanan Putrajaya emphasises smart and digital service delivery as part of its vision to develop Putrajaya into a smart and sustainable city. The use of digital platforms for public services, information dissemination, and administrative processes improves efficiency and transparency. Digital service delivery reduces dependency on paper-based systems and physical visits, contributing to environmental goals and promoting economic growth through innovation and sustainability. These initiatives align with SDG 11 by improving urban service efficiency by implementing smart waste management and green mobility, such as electric buses and e-scooters, and they also align with SDG 13 by supporting low-carbon governance by providing energy-efficient buildings and renewable energy integration in public facilities

Figure 5: Smart licensing system and Smart Street LED Lighting



(Note: Reprinted from Perbadanan Putrajaya website.)

Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam (MBSA): SmartQ Digital System

Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam (MBSA) has developed a digital queue management system that is developed to improve the efficiency and quality of public service delivery as part of its sustainable service delivery strategy. This management system is to make the city council better at monitoring, maintaining the schedule, and collecting resident reports. This is to make sure the maintenance of the neglected infrastructure, drainage system, and drains is in good condition. This can enhance public safety by reducing the risk of accidents. The management system supports SDG 11 by ensuring the city grows, promoting equality, and improving the quality of life for all residents.

Figure 6: Digitalisation using SmartQ System



(Note: Reprinted from The Star)

The study shows that Malaysian local governments are improving sustainable services through digital systems and waste management programs. Although they face challenges related to finance, institutions, and technical skills, these efforts continue to improve public services, support SDG goals, and enhance the quality of life.

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