



# Undocumented Children: KRI Tawau's Strategy in Facilitating Early Identity for Indonesian Migrant Workers' Children

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## ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: August 31, 2025  
Revised: November 27, 2025  
Available online: Desember 31, 2025

## KEYWORDS

Birth documents, consular strategy, migrant workers

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## A B S T R A C T

This study examines the strategies employed by the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia (KRI) in Tawau to assist the children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in Sabah's palm oil plantations in obtaining birth identity documents—a crucial requirement for citizenship status and access to basic social services. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through a literature review and in-depth interviews with consular officers and PMI families. The findings show that KRI Tawau has established a vision, mission, and objectives consistent with its mandate to protect Indonesian citizens abroad, particularly in securing the identity rights of migrant children. The Consulate implements outreach strategies, including public awareness campaigns on the importance of the Surat Bukti Pencatatan Kelahiran (SBPK), mobile consular services, and community-based cooperation, to reach families in remote plantation areas. These efforts have improved public awareness and expanded service coverage, although challenges persist, especially the incomplete administrative documents often held by migrant workers. Despite these constraints, KRI Tawau's strengthened consular functions play a vital role in enhancing children's access to identity documentation and improving their opportunities to obtain education, which remain limited under Malaysia's migration and education policies. The study highlights the need for innovative and sustained consular services to protect the rights of migrant children.

## INTRODUCTION

The movement of Indonesian workers to various destination countries has evolved into a structural process that shapes economic trajectories, social configurations, and the orientation of public policy. For more than two decades, Malaysia has consistently served as a primary destination for Indonesian migrant workers (PMI), driven by geographic proximity, integration within regional production networks, and the high demand for labor in low-skilled sectors (BP2MI, 2024; World Bank, 2020; Hugo, 2017; Migration Data Portal, 2022). This mobility is not merely a matter of job relocation; it also transforms long-term residential patterns, social reproduction dynamics, and administrative requirements for Indonesian citizens living abroad (Kaur, 2021). These developments underscore the need for research that examines labor migration not only as an economic phenomenon but also as a civil rights issue and an issue of access to public services that must be fulfilled across national borders (UNICEF, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

The State of Sabah in Malaysia has consistently emerged as the region with the highest concentration of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI), particularly in the palm oil plantation sector, which relies heavily on labour-intensive work. Sectoral studies and official government reports indicate that plantation industries in this region absorb a substantial proportion of migrant labour, forming dense and long-settled communities that reside for years around plantation areas (ILO, 2019; UNICEF Malaysia, 2020; Rahman, 2019; World Bank, 2021). The prevailing work arrangements—ranging from long-term contracts and remote living quarters to limited access to public services—shape a pattern of family life that is more permanent

and distinct from that of seasonal migrant workers. These conditions give rise to a range of administrative challenges, particularly concerning birth registration and the issuance of identity documents for children born and raised within these plantation environments (Kaur, 2021; Nurhasanah, 2021).

One of the most critical consequences of long-term migrant labour placement is the emergence of a generation of children without legal documentation. Numerous reports by international organisations and academic studies estimate that tens of thousands of children in Sabah live without birth certificates or proof of citizenship—a condition widely referred to as undocumented children or a State of vulnerability to statelessness (UNICEF Malaysia, 2019; UNHCR, 2020; Rahman, 2019; Kaur, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021). Migrant families' inability to access birth registration services in Malaysia—whether due to restrictive immigration policies, financial barriers, or the absence of parental identity documents—directly undermines children's civil rights, including their access to education and adequate legal protection (Suhadi, 2022; IOM, 2022).

Birth documentation serves as a critical gateway to securing a range of fundamental rights, including confirmation of citizenship status, enrollment in formal education, access to healthcare, and social protection programs. In the context of Indonesian migrant worker (PMI) families, this document serves an additional and highly significant role: it acts as an administrative instrument that affirms a child's identity as an Indonesian citizen in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 56 of 1996, while simultaneously enabling access to services offered by both the Indonesian government and the host-country authorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic

of Indonesia, 2023; Ministry of Education—DAPODIK, 2024; UNICEF, 2023; World Bank, 2020; Rahman, 2019). When children of migrant workers are unable to obtain a birth certificate, they become vulnerable to prolonged social exclusion—a condition that not only diminishes their overall well-being but also constrains their prospects for future social mobility (Jones, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

The Malaysian government has implemented a range of restrictive policies concerning the presence of migrant families in various sectors, while also entering reservations to several international commitments related to child protection. These regulations indirectly reduce the opportunities available to non-citizen children to access formal public services, including education (Malaysian Education Act 1996/Act 550; Amnesty International, 2020; UNICEF Malaysia, 2019; Suhadi, 2022).

At the same time, bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia has generated several educational initiatives, such as the establishment of Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu (SIKK) and the expansion of Community Learning Centers (CLC), which serve as pragmatic solutions to meet the educational needs of migrant children. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these initiatives remains contingent upon the availability of identity documents required for official registration and reporting processes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs, 2023; UNICEF, 2023; Nurhasanah, 2021; DAPODIK, 2024)

Recent empirical evidence highlights a significant disparity between the bilateral policy framework and the administrative realities encountered on the ground. According to DAPODIK data for the 2024/2025 academic year, only approximately 24,257 children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in Sabah were successfully registered in Indonesia's national education system. In contrast, population estimates indicate that around 25,743 Indonesian children in the region remain unregistered (Kemdikbudristek/DAPODIK, 2024; UNICEF Malaysia, 2023; BP2MI, 2024; Rahman, 2019; World Bank, 2021). This gap highlights structural barriers within the registration process, including incomplete parental identity documents and geographical remoteness that limit access to consular services, as well as low levels of administrative literacy among migrant communities (Nurhasanah, 2021; Suhadi, 2022).

Previous studies have indeed examined several key dimensions—ranging from issues surrounding undocumented children and their consequences (Rahman, 2019; UNICEF Malaysia, 2019; Jones, 2020), to the various administrative barriers faced by PATI groups in meeting legal requirements (Nurhasanah, 2021; IOM, 2022), as well as their limited access to formal education (Suhadi, 2022). However, research that explicitly analyses the role of the country of origin—particularly official representatives such as the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia (KRI) in Tawau—in addressing documentation challenges for migrant children remains scarce (Kemenlu RI, 2022; BP2MI, 2023; Rahman, 2019; UNHCR, 2020). In other words, a clear research gap persists. There is a lack of empirical studies that detail consular strategies, the mechanisms for issuing supporting documents such as the Surat Bukti Pencatatan Kelahiran (SBPK), and the extent to which home-country interventions are effectively implemented within Sabah's unique geographical and institutional context.

The challenges faced by KRI Tawau in carrying out its consular protection functions stem from a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, limitations in human resources, operational capacity, and the scope of consular services constitute major obstacles. Externally, the complexity of the issue is heightened by difficulties in obtaining parental identity documents, low levels of administrative literacy and language barriers among migrant workers, the remote and hard-to-reach geographical conditions of plantation areas, and the intricate Malaysian immigration regulations that frequently place migrant families in vulnerable positions (Kemenlu RI, 2023; IOM, 2022; Asian Development Bank, 2018).

The literature on public service management and consular protection demonstrates that the success of an intervention is closely tied to an organisation's capacity to align its strategic direction, design and implement appropriate programs, allocate resources effectively, and cultivate strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders. However, this integrative framework has not been applied extensively in analyses of KRI Tawau. As a result, the interaction between organisational strategy, program design, resource deployment, and institutional networks in addressing documentation issues among migrant children remains insufficiently mapped and inadequately understood (Kotten, 1997; Bryson, 2018; Oates, 1999; Bienen & Gershman, 2014; World Bank, 2020). To address these empirical and conceptual gaps, the present study adopts Kotten's (1997) strategic framework, which differentiates four key components: organisational strategy, program strategy, resource strategy, and institutional strategy, as an analytical foundation for evaluating how KRI Tawau designs and implements the issuance of the SBPK.

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of how the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau formulates and implements strategies to facilitate early identity documentation for the children of Indonesian migrant workers through the issuance of the SBPK, while also assessing the effectiveness of these interventions and identifying the key factors that support or impede their implementation. Theoretically, this discussion aims to enrich the field of Public Administration by advancing scholarship on consular protection and State service delivery beyond national territorial jurisdictions, particularly by incorporating insights on operational strategy and the governance of cross-border public services.

Practically, the findings are intended to inform policy recommendations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, BP2MI, KRI Tawau, and other bilateral stakeholders in designing more inclusive registration procedures, strengthening consular institutional capacities, and integrating administrative and educational solutions for migrant children so they are no longer trapped in cycles of administrative exclusion (Kemenlu RI, 2023; UNICEF, 2023; World Bank, 2021; IOM, 2022).

## Literature Review

Research on identity rights and access to education for the children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in Malaysia consistently shows that documentation issues and the fulfilment of fundamental rights remain enduring and critical concerns. Marzuqoh Aulia and Nur Azizah (2024) outline the protection strategies adopted by the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur for undocumented Indonesian nationals, while Aliffya Sabina

Putri Hidayat (2025) highlights the Indonesian government's efforts to provide alternative educational services for non-procedural migrant children through community-based approaches. These findings align with reports by UNICEF Malaysia (2019), Human Rights Watch (2021), and Rahman (2019), all of which reveal that thousands of Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia face significant barriers in obtaining birth certificates and accessing formal education. Collectively, these studies illustrate the structural pressures confronting migrant children, driven primarily by restrictive Malaysian immigration policies and limited access to public services in plantation areas. Furthermore, Ibnu Mardiyanto (2024) examines identity and citizenship rights among children of migrant workers born out of wedlock, emphasising the importance of upholding the principle of non-discrimination.

Legal and educational governance studies also highlight the regulatory and administrative complexities surrounding identity issues faced by the children of Indonesian migrant workers. Nugi Wilasandy (2024) employs a normative juridical approach, demonstrating that the absence of identity documents creates multiple layers of barriers to PMI children's access to healthcare, education, and legal protection. C

omplementing this, research by Suci Widiawati et al. (2023) shows that although collaborative governance initiatives in Selangor—through partnerships among communities, informal schools, and civil society organisations—have been established, policy implementation remains far from optimal. These findings are reinforced by analyses from IOM (2022), Kaur (2021), and Jones (2020), which underscore the limited involvement of the country-of-origin actors in addressing statelessness and educational access for migrant children. Taken together, previous studies reveal a persistent gap between the urgent need to fulfil PMI children's identity rights and the institutional capacity available to address these challenges effectively.

Although these studies offer important contributions, a significant gap remains—namely, how the country-of-origin actors, particularly the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia (KRI) in Tawau, develop and operationalise strategies for issuing the Surat Bukti Pencatatan Kelahiran (SBPK) as a supporting instrument for the identity rights of PMI children. Unlike previous research, this study employs J. Koteen's (1997) organizational strategy framework to examine how the Consulate's vision, mission, strategic objectives, and resource utilization are translated into concrete practices in the context of protecting vulnerable children in Sabah.

This analytical mapping is essential given the high concentration of Indonesian migrant workers in KRI Tawau's jurisdiction and the administrative complexities inherent to plantation areas (Kemenlu RI, 2023; BP2MI, 2024; UNICEF, 2023; World Bank, 2021; Asian Development Bank, 2018). Consequently, this study is expected not only to enrich the public administration literature on consular diplomacy and cross-border service provision but also to offer practical recommendations for strengthening policies to protect PMI children within the bilateral cooperation framework between Indonesia and Malaysia.

## METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies employed by the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia (KRI) in Tawau, Sabah,

in facilitating early identity documentation for the children of Indonesian migrant workers through the issuance of the Surat Bukti Pencatatan Kelahiran (SBPK). This approach was selected because it enables a detailed and holistic examination of institutional processes, implementation practices, and the broader social context surrounding consular strategies (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research draws on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants selected using purposive sampling, including consular officers responsible for service delivery, field staff, and PMI families who have processed identity documents for their children. Secondary data were obtained from official documents, institutional reports, administrative records, and relevant regulatory frameworks.

Data were collected through three techniques: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Observations were conducted at the KRI Tawau office and at one of the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) within its jurisdiction to examine service practices, public awareness campaigns, and the responses of PMI communities to information regarding the fulfillment of children's identity documentation. Field presence allowed the researcher to capture interaction dynamics, service patterns, and implementation challenges that are not always visible in formal records. All data collection procedures adhered to principles of traceability and rigor as recommended in qualitative research (Yin, 2014).

The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework, comprising three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These stages were carried out simultaneously throughout the research process to maintain a coherent and focused interpretation. The credibility of the findings was reinforced through source triangulation, comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence to ensure validity and reliability (Patton, 2015). This methodological approach provides a solid analytical foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of KRI Tawau's strategies in issuing SBPK documents and for identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors that shape their implementation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A government organisation needs an effective strategy to address the various issues it faces. In addition, a strategy is needed to ensure the plans implemented are carried out effectively and efficiently. This study identifies the strategies implemented by KRI Tawau-Sabah, Malaysia, using J. Kooten's strategy theory, which divides strategies into four types: organisational, program, resource, and institutional.

### Organizational strategy

The organizational strategy at KRI Tawau is obvious and systematic. KRI Tawau's vision aligns with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' vision of active, effective diplomacy to realise a sovereign, independent, and distinctive Indonesia. KRI Tawau's mission is also concrete: to provide excellent protection for Indonesian citizens/BHI, especially the children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI), through birth certificate services (SBPK). One operational innovation implemented is the "one day, one server" concept for the SBPK process, designed to reduce time and costs, especially for Indonesian citizens living

far from representative centres. In addition, KRI Tawau has included this strategic objective in its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan (Renstra), in which the target of "Protection of Indonesian Citizens/BHI and Excellent Public Service" (scale 4) has been consistently achieved. Beyond direct services, KRI also proactively conducts awareness and education campaigns on birth documents to the Indonesian citizen/migrant worker community as a preventive measure.

According to J. Kooten, one type of strategy is Corporate Strategy, based on research by Mudiono, M., Suwardi, S., & Sardjono, H. S. (2023), which includes the formulation of a mission, vision, values, and new strategic initiatives, with a clear scope: what will be done and for whom. The "one day, one server" initiative is a concrete strategic initiative designed to produce specific results (service efficiency), and the structure of the KRI Renstra reflects an awareness of operational limitations (e.g., depending on the completeness of the applicant's documents).

This shows that the KRI Tawau organisational strategy is not only formal but also translated into concrete actions aligned with the principles of strategy efficiency and effectiveness, as Kooten notes. The public management literature reinforces this interpretation. According to Budiono, P., & Mukhlis, M. (2024), public organisation strategy management differs from the private sector because the measure of success is not solely financial profit but rather the quality of public services and community satisfaction. This aligns with the results of an internal survey showing high satisfaction among the PMI community with the speed and clarity of this service.

**Program Strategy**

The KRI Tawau program strategy for issuing SBPK for children of Indonesian migrant workers was developed through several field approaches, namely greeting before service, direct SBPK services, and, in particular, the Consular Warung with a proactive approach. The outreach program has proven to be the most effective strategy because it is carried out through direct coordination with Community Learning Center (CLC) teachers and with the management of migrant workers' workplaces, enabling faster, more affordable data collection and verification. The following table shows the outreach activities: Year, Total Applicants.

Table 1. SBPK Creation through Outreach Activities

Field	Year	Applicant
ladang Pahang 2	2021	700
syarikat KL Kepong	2021	588
KL Kepong ladang rimmer	2021	371
ladang KL Kepong Semporna.	2021	450
Ladang Tamaco	2021	931
-	2022	400
Perusahaan Perkebunan kelapa sawit Kretam Silimpompon Sdn. Bhd.	2022	540
Ladang Madai Sawit Kinabalu,	2024	56
ladang Pahang 2	2021	700
Syarikat Sabah Softwood	2025	70
KL Kepong	2025	38
Lahad Datu	2025	28
Ladang Tamaco	2025	233

Source: Researcher's findings based on documentation from the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia, 2025

Table 1 shows the dynamics of the implementation of the KRI Tawau outreach service for issuing SBPKs across various oil palm plantations from 2021 to 2025, illustrating how service volume and intervention locations change in response to field needs. The data shows that 2021 was the year with the highest coverage, as many large companies were visited and the number of applicants was very high, reflecting efforts to accelerate post-pandemic identity fulfilment.

In subsequent years, the emerging pattern shows a shift in strategy from mass outreach to more specific needs assessment, as seen in the decline in the number of applicants in several locations and the inclusion of new plantations that had not been previously reached. Variations in the number of applicants across locations also indicate that the program's effectiveness is strongly influenced by the readiness of company management and the involvement of CLC teachers in the initial data collection, making local collaboration a key determinant of the proactive strategy's success.

Furthermore, the study's results show that this strategy has increased the number of SBPK issuances and public trust in KRI services. However, discrepancies between the collected documents and the field data led to some SBPKs being reissued after the data was corrected. The impact of implementing this strategy is not only seen in the increased awareness of PMI regarding the importance of children's identity documents, but also in broader aspects, such as the opening of access to education through DAPODIK, the requirements for taking exams and obtaining PKBM certificates, and the opportunity to continue education in Indonesia through passport issuance.

When analysed through Kooten's organisational strategy theory, the KRI Tawau strategy reflects a program-impact-based approach that assesses the extent to which activities contribute to organisational goals. The proactive approach demonstrates a strategic adjustment responsive to the nature of PMI distribution in remote areas of Sabah, which requires community-based service mechanisms. This strategy also demonstrates the alignment between policy direction and stakeholder characteristics (strategic alignment). Constraints related to document inconsistencies indicate that, although the strategy is running well, aspects of control, data digitisation, and document verification still need strengthening to sustainably improve service effectiveness.

These findings align with Deborah M. Weissman's 2018 research, which shows that mobile consulates significantly expand service coverage by reaching migrant communities living far from consulates or in rural areas difficult to access. Groups such as plantation workers often lack transportation, driver's licenses, or access to public transportation, leaving them practically isolated at their work sites and unable to access consular services independently.

Thus, outreach services not only expand the geographical reach but also reduce the structural, social, and security barriers faced by vulnerable groups, thereby improving their tangible access to State services. In addition, according to Putro, Larasati, Wijayanto, and Yuwanto (2024), collaboration with local communities is a key element in improving the effectiveness of data collection and the accuracy of administrative services in migration areas. Research on collaborative governance in

protecting Indonesian migrant workers shows that the dominance of the government's role and the lack of involvement by non-governmental actors hinder the comprehensive protection and management of migrant data.

This reinforces the understanding that consular service strategies abroad cannot only be analyzed from an administrative perspective but must also be viewed as an adaptive process that takes into account the social and geographical context of the target community. These findings expand the application of Kooten's strategy theory in the context of protecting Indonesian citizens, particularly in the provision of basic documents for migrant workers' children. In practical terms, this study shows that outreach programs have proven effective and should be maintained and expanded, as they directly impact the fulfilment of migrant workers' children's fundamental rights, especially access to education.

**Resource Strategy**

The organisational resource optimisation strategy aims to maximise the utilisation of human, financial, and infrastructure resources to improve organisational performance quality. Field findings show that the Indonesian Consulate General in Tawau has 56 personnel, with a diverse composition, including diplomats and technical staff, local staff, and daily contract workers (THL) who handle consular services, including the issuance of SBPK. However, some THL-based personnel have non-bachelor's degrees and face a considerable workload, so there is a need to increase capacity and possibly add personnel. The following is the composition of human resources at the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia.

Table 2. Human Resources of the Indonesian Consulate General in Tawau

No	Keterangan	Jumlah
1	Consul	1
2	Minister Counsellor	2
3	Counselor	1
4	Second Secretary	2
5	Jabatan Fungsional Pranata Informasi Diplomatik	1
6	Jabatan Fungsi Penata Kanselera	1
7	Staff Non Diplomatik	2
8	Staff Teknis (Imigrasi, Polri dan TNI)	3
9	ILO TNI	1
10	Local Staff	10
Total		56

Source: Researcher's findings based on documentation from the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia, 2025

Table 2 shows the structure and distribution of human resources at the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau, which reflects a relatively complete organizational composition but still faces capacity challenges in supporting consular services, including the issuance of SBPK. The composition of personnel, including diplomats, technical staff from various agencies, and local staff, underscores the need for cross-functional coordination in delivering public services in the border region.

The dominance of local staff and non-diplomatic personnel illustrates the KRI's dependence on daily operational personnel, which, on the one hand, speeds up field services but, on the

other hand, requires increased capacity because some of them have limited educational backgrounds and handle high workloads. The relatively small total number of personnel also indicates that a strategy of resource optimization—through training, more adaptive task distribution, and the potential addition of personnel—is a crucial aspect in ensuring the effectiveness of the KRI Tawau's consular services.

Theoretical analysis shows that, according to Kooten's concept, the utilization of human resources requires continuous training, a structured division of labor, and the provision of sufficient personnel commensurate with the service load to improve the quality of human resources. According to J. Kooten, human resources include the needs of an organisation to support the implementation of good performance, including the realisation of programs and the running of the organisation. The Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia, itself has human resources in running the organization, especially in issuing SBPK for the children of Indonesian migrant workers.

However, concerns include the composition of the human resources team, with many holding non-bachelor's degrees, as well as the need to increase creativity to support the organisation better. In addition, some feel that the number of human resources needs to be increased due to the workload in reviewing the number of Indonesian citizens/migrant workers in the working area of the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia.

From a financial perspective, financial resources are an important factor in the effectiveness of SBPK services for Indonesian citizens/migrant workers in the working area of the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau. The budget received under the DIPA is allocated to various functions, including economic diplomacy, protection of Indonesian citizens, and consular activities. The most significant portion is allocated to internal management and infrastructure, while SBPK services, including the Indonesian Citizen Service and Protection program, receive the second-largest allocation (Utomo, 2025; Jaya, 2025).

Although the average budget realisation during 2021–2024 was above 90%, there were fluctuations, including a significant decline in the Indonesian citizen service program in 2023 (79.4%), which affected the limited scope of services in the field. The following is the KRI Tawau Budget Realization for 2021–2024

Table 3. Realization of the KRI Tawau Budget for 2021-2024

Program	Realization (%)	Target
<b>2021</b>		
Implementation of Diplomacy and International Cooperation at Indonesian Representative Offices	90.01%5	90%
Services and Protection for Indonesian Citizens at Indonesian Representative Offices	96.98%	
Financial, BMN, and General Management	94.60%	
<b>2022</b>		
Implementation of Diplomacy and International Cooperation at Indonesian Representative Offices	97.78%	90%
Services and Protection for Indonesian Citizens at Indonesian	98.04%	

Representative Offices		
Financial, BMN, and General Management	98.00%	
2023		
Implementation of Diplomacy and International Cooperation at Indonesian Representative Offices	94.54%	90%
Services and Protection for Indonesian Citizens at Indonesian Representative Offices	79.40%	
Financial, BMN, and General Management	101.08%	
2024		
Implementation of Diplomacy and International Cooperation at Indonesian Representative Offices	84.02	90%
Services and Protection for Indonesian Citizens at Indonesian Representative Offices	85.11	
Financial, BMN, and General Management	96.28	

Source: Researcher's findings based on documentation from the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia, 2025

Table 3 shows the budget realization pattern for KRI Tawau from 2021 to 2024, reflecting how financial capacity affects stability and service quality, including the issuance of SBPK for Indonesian children/PMI. In general, the realisation rate is above 90% across most programs, indicating effective budget management and strong absorption capacity. However, the variations that have emerged—particularly the sharp decline in the implementation of the Indonesian Citizen Service and Protection budget in 2023—indicate operational pressures that directly affect the scope of field services.

This change illustrates that the success of SBPK services depends not only on institutional commitment but also on the stability of financial allocations from year to year and across functions, particularly because the Indonesian citizen protection program is an essential component that determines the KRI's ability to mobilize officers, conduct outreach activities, and maintain operational facilities. Based on an interview with one of the KRI Tawau staff, the program has limitations that force staff to combine verification and field visits to achieve cost efficiency, resulting in some SBPK standard procedures not always being met (Jumisa, 2025). This shows that the current budget allocation is sufficient for basic operations, but not yet optimal for expanding the scope of services comprehensively.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, KRI Tawau has shown significant improvements, including relocating its office to a more representative building, providing more comfortable service rooms, and installing facilities such as waiting rooms, clean toilets, elevators for shelter access, and digitising services through the I-Protkons application. These field findings show that facilities and infrastructure have supported improvements in service quality and comfort for service recipients. However, increased staff creativity and the optimisation of facility use, including vehicles and technology, are still needed to overcome high workloads and expand the reach of SBPK services. Overall, the KRI Tawau's facilities and infrastructure resource strategy has been adequate, but there is still room for improvement in accessibility and operational efficiency.

Overall, the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia has sufficient staff to run the organization. However, there is a need to improve quality

through specialized training, especially in SBPK services, as well as to increase creativity and increase the number of human resources to overcome the high workload. In terms of financial resources, the budget allocation has been well-regulated in accordance with the DIPA. However, the effectiveness of several programs has been hampered by budget constraints, especially in the Indonesian citizen service and protection program. Meanwhile, the facilities and infrastructure of the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia, are adequate and support the implementation of tasks and public services, with a new representative building and good supporting facilities.

### Institutional strategy

The institutional strategy at the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau aims to optimise the organisational structure, administrative authority, and work procedures for the issuance of Birth Certificates (SBPK) for the children of Indonesian migrant workers. The organizational structure follows Permenlu No. 07 of 2010, which divides tasks hierarchically and places the consular function as the primary executor of SBPK services. In practice, the authority of the Indonesian Consulate General in Tawau is limited to administrative registration and the issuance of SBPK. At the same time, other population documents, such as birth certificates or identity cards, remain under the authority of the Indonesian Population and Civil Registration Office. The following are the authorities of the SBPK Service Authority.

Table 4. Consular Services Authority of the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau

Document	Authority of the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau	Authority of Institutions in Indonesia	of in
SBPK	Can issue		
A Birth Certificate	Cannot issue	Issued by DUKCAPIL	
Identity Card (KTP)			
Identity Card (KTP)	Data Collection	Issued by DUKCAPIL	
Marriage Certificate	Facilities	Issuing marriage certificates	

Source: Researcher's findings based on documentation from the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia, 2025.

Table 4 illustrates the institutional boundaries between the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau and population agencies in Indonesia in the management of identity documents, showing that SBPK services fall within the administrative domain of the Indonesian representative office. In contrast, substantive population documents such as birth certificates, KTPs, and marriage certificates remain under the full authority of Dukcapil.

This division of authority explains why the KRI's institutional strategy must focus on basic registration and facilitation, rather than on the issuance of legal-formal population documents. The table also confirms that the effectiveness of SBPK services is highly dependent on inter-agency coordination, in which the KRI serves as the initial point of contact for the identity of migrant workers' children. At the same time, the issuance of additional documents requires follow-up by the national population administration system.

Officers understand these limitations and incorporate them into service procedures. In addition, service SOPs are compiled

based on Ministry of Foreign Affairs guidelines and then adapted to the conditions of the migrant worker community, for example, the use of SPTJM and witnesses if parents do not have a marriage certificate.

Several obstacles in the field are primarily related to document verification and limited access for migrant children living far from the field, underscoring the importance of outreach services as an operational strategy. These findings align with Koteen's (2022) concept of institutional strategy, which emphasises that it is a form of strategy used to implement strategic initiatives. Institutional strategy concerns rules, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), responsibilities, and organizational authority. In the case of KRI Tawau, clear task division, a hierarchical chain of command, and flexible SOPs indicate that the Consulate has implemented an institutional strategy that is adaptable to the operational environment.

The flexibility in using SPTJM documents to replace formal legal evidence—when parents do not have a marriage certificate—demonstrates that the institutional strategy does not rigidly adhere to central regulations but allows adaptation to the needs of public services in the field. Thus, field findings show that the Consulate's institutional strategy is not merely routine administration but a strategic management process responsive to the local context and character of the migrant worker community.

These findings align with the results of interviews with Prah Utomo (2025) and Sakinah (2025), which show that Indonesian representative offices abroad need adaptive, context-specific SOPs to address challenges related to population documents in migrant communities. These findings clarify that institutional strategies in overseas public services are not only a matter of organizational structure, but also the ability to adapt procedures to the context of the service user community. This study reinforces Koteen's (2022) theory with empirical evidence that the alignment between formal regulations and field implementation determines the success of organizational strategies.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the organizational, program, resource, and institutional strategies of the Indonesian Consulate General in Tawau have been effective in improving Birth Certificate (SBPK) services for the children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). Organisational strategies aligned with the vision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been successfully translated into concrete operational steps, such as the one-day, one-service innovation and the population document education campaign. Program strategies, particularly the proactive approach through Consular Warungs, have proven most effective in expanding service coverage to remote areas and increasing PMI communities' awareness and access to children's identity documents.

The optimization of human resources, finances, and facilities and infrastructure shows that the Indonesian Consulate General in Tawau has made efforts to maximize its organizational capacity. However, the workload and quality of specific human resources still need improvement. From an institutional perspective, the Consulate has implemented adaptive structures, standard operating procedures, and authorities, including the flexible use of SPTJM to overcome the limitations of formal documents for the PMI community. Overall, the findings show

that SBPK services at the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau are not merely an administrative process but a responsive public strategy aimed at fulfilling the fundamental rights of children and protecting Indonesian citizens abroad.

This study has several limitations. First, the field data largely depend on internal documents from the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau and limited interviews, so external perspectives have not been fully explored. Second, the findings regarding document mismatch constraints have not been analyzed in depth in relation to structural root causes, such as educational factors, parental legality, or socio-cultural barriers faced by migrant workers. Third, quantitative data on the program, such as year-to-year effectiveness, have not been analyzed using a more systematic evaluation method. For future research, a more in-depth study is needed on the design of data digitization systems and document verification mechanisms to reduce errors and improve service efficiency. Longitudinal evaluation is also important to assess the long-term impact of the SBPK strategy on access to education and the residency status of migrant workers' children. Such follow-up studies will strengthen the relevance of policies and help formulate a more inclusive and sustainable consular service model.

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