

## **Potential of seaweed cultivation as a community-based rural tourism product: A stakeholders' perspectives**

### **Abstract**

Community-based tourism (CBT) in developing countries has been given a serious attention by the government because it has great potential to enhance the socioeconomic well-being of the community who participate in it. This paper explores the views and perceptions of stakeholders who are in charge of the development of community based tourism that is based on seaweed farming in the District of Semporna, Sabah, East Malaysia. This study was carried out between 2013 until June 2014. Interviews were conducted with local stakeholders in the tourism industry and were analysed using qualitative analysis techniques. The results indicate that there were positive views and perceptions among the stakeholders where they sincerely welcomed the initiatives of making seaweed farming as a tourism product. Stakeholders also agreed that tourism activities which are based on seaweed farming could be used to enhance the socioeconomic status of the community who engage in them. The paper suggests that parties who have authority should play a role in the development of CBT and seaweed farming. The study is significant to the tourism industry in Malaysia, because seaweed farming is growing on a large scale in selected places and has a great potential for becoming a unique tourism product.