

CoBT: Target to achieve 80pc compliance in standards by 2030

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THE Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment is targeting Sabah's Community Based Tourism (CoBT) to achieve 80 per cent compliance with Asean standards by 2030.

Its Minister Datuk Christina Liew said this accreditation would place Sabah's CoBT on the international stage and attract more tourists to enjoy the natural environment and support local products.

"In addition, in terms of promotion, the Sabah Tourism Board is in the process of producing digital brochures for each district. So far, nine 'Guide' brochures have been published for Kiulu, Tenom, Kudat, Kinabatangan, Membakut, Telupid, Sipitang, Kuala Penyu and Kota Belud.

"The publication of these digital brochures not only promotes the tourism products of these areas but also directly adds value to help entrepreneurs market their products," she said when responding to a question from nominated Assemblyman Datuk Raime Unggi.

Raime asked apart from bringing tourists from both within and outside the country, what steps the ministry is taking to help local entrepreneurs promote visitor attractions to boost the industry even in remote areas of Sabah.

Christina said rural tourism is a valuable asset to the state's tourism sector. Almost all tourist products and attractions in the state are located in rural areas.

"Therefore, my ministry through the Sabah Tourism Board is committed to promoting and marketing rural tourism products and locations, whether through social media platforms or through participation in local and international tourism events. Various tourism segments have been promoted and packaged to allow tourists to experience and make the state a premium eco-tourism destination."

She added that one of the priorities for rural tourism development for the State Government is to support and promote community-based tourism activities.

"Various efforts and initiatives have been implemented by the Sabah Tourism Board since this activity was introduced to assist local entrepreneurs/communities in terms of infrastructure and facilities needs, as well as training. This effort is also to ensure the safety and comfort of visitors and provide quality and competitive tourism services."

According to Christina, the participation of entrepreneurs in domestic and international tourism events is also one way to ensure the visibility of the products and tourism packages offered.

The Sabah Community Based Tourism Fair, which began in 2017, aims to enhance rural tourism and promote diverse cultural experiences. For this year, Christina said this exhibition will be held in Putrajaya on a larger scale and will take place at IOI Mall Putrajaya from Oct 18 - 20.

Christina said a business-to-business (B2B) session would also be held among CoBT operators under the auspices of the Federation of Rural Tourism Association Sabah (FeRTAS) and Sabah tourism agents.

"It is an opportunity for CoBT operators to interact with tourism agents to package and effectively market their products. This session allows tourism agents to have a comprehensive understanding of the variety of activities offered by each rural community tourism operator," she said.

"Therefore, the ministry suggests that each district activate its District Tourism Action Council and District Tourism Association so that this platform becomes a bridge between the Government and district tourism entrepreneurs to build close cooperation to ensure sustainable and holistic tourism development."

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