

Community Participation in Planning Whale Shark Tourism in Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara-Indonesia

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Abstract : Whale shark tourism offer potential benefits to support economic alternative livelihood. Since 2017, Conservation International Indonesia worked in Sumbawa to monitor whale shark distribution and identified species aggregation in Teluk Saleh. We conducted a survey on May 23th-27th, 2018 and involved 86 local community from five hamlets in Labuan Jambu village. Furthermore, forum group discussion (FGD) held with 20 village representative on July 30th, 2018. The result of frequency distribution demonstrated 95% of respondents show positive perceptions towards sustainable development of whale shark tourism with 40% willing to participate in boat rental services. The community also proposes to participate in providing other tourism services including the local guide (12%), food and beverage or F&B (8%), local transport (8%), and homestay (6%). 34% of respondents agreed to establish a new institution (under village officials) to coordinate tourism services provided by the local community. We also conducted participatory mapping with 15 key informants where the result confirmed 13 areas of whale shark aggregation with all-year-round sightings. The FGD results in 20 participants ready to start the pilot project of community-based whale shark tourism in August 2018, including 4 boat rental (3 speedboats and 1 floating cage boat), 6 homestays, 4 car rentals, 1 F&B, 1 gear rental, 2 guides, and 2 local products. In addition, we facilitate village official in establishing policy and regulations for whale shark conservation and sustainable community-based tourism through village regulation, code of conduct, best practices, and capacity building program.

Keywords : marine wildlife tourism, elasmobranch, conservation, sustainable tourism, co-management

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