

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE AND SUCCESS OF NGOS IN  
COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM AT ULU GEROH, GOPENG,  
MALAYSIA**

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## **Abstract**

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have become influential development agents in the developing world in recent decades through their so-called “sustainable” activities. Many NGOs have been participating in ecotourism development with their own agenda, especially where tourism is linked with local communities and the environment. Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) is distinguished from other forms of tourism as it considers not only economic but also social and environmental goals. The hypothesis of this study is that NGOs involved in CBET projects concentrate more on environmental conservation rather than local community empowerment. As such the aim of the study is to evaluate the performance of NGOs in implementing CBET projects in the Orang Asli community at Ulu Geroh, Gopeng. The focus of this research is to address this gap in the development literature and also in practice by conducting a comprehensive study of the success and shortcomings of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) at Ulu Geroh using the triangulation method. The best way to discern and implement CBET, is to consider all aspects of this venture hence, it is necessary to identify the variables which form CBET. Based on literature review, 63 tentative CBET variables under 6 main criteria were established. The Delphi technique was then employed to solicit expert opinion on the most essential variables for CBET to succeed. The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was subsequently applied to rank the 6 main CBET criteria. Finally the 63 original variables were narrowed down to 42 variables. The findings from the field work validate the basic hypothesis of the study and show that local community’s economic and social empowerment have been restricted while environmental conservation have been given greater emphasis.

## Abstrak

Badan Bukan Kerajaan (BBK/NGO) menjadi agensi yang berpengaruh dalam dunia pembangunan di abad ini melalui pendekatan yang dipanggil “kemampanan”. Banyak BBK telah melibatkan diri dalam pembangunan ecopelancongan dengan agenda tersendiri, khususnya kepada pelancongan yang melibatkan komuniti tempatan dan persekitaran. Pembangunan Ecopelancongan Berasaskan Komuniti (EBK/CBET) lebih terkenal berbanding dengan bentuk tourism yang lain kerana ianya bukan sahaja mempertimbangkan aspek ekonomi, malah turut menekankan matlamat aspek sosial dan alam sekitar. Hipotesis kajian ini adalah BBK yang terlibat dalam projek EBK lebih menumpukan kepada pemeliharaan alam sekitar daripada memperkasakan komuniti tempatan. Oleh hal demikian, matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk menilai usaha BBK dalam melaksanakan projek EBK di perkampungan Orang Asli di Ulu Geroh, Gopeng, Perak. Fokus kajian ini adalah untuk menghuraikan jurang yang berlaku dalam literatur dan juga keadaan sebenar pembangunan dengan menjalankan satu penyelidikan secara mendalam terhadap kejayaan dan kelemahan *Malaysian Nature Society* (MNS) di Ulu Geroh menggunakan kaedah triangulasi. Cara terbaik untuk menentukan dan melaksanakan EBK adalah dengan menimbangkan semua aspek serta mengenalpasti ciri-ciri atau pembolehubah untuk membentuk EBK. Berdasarkan kajian literatur, terdapat 63 pembolehubah awal telah dikenalpasti di bawah 6 kriteria utama. Teknik *Delphi* telah digunapakai untuk memperoleh pendapat dan pandangan daripada pakar ke atas pembolehubah yang paling penting bagi mengukur kejayaan EBK. Teknik tersebut disusuli oleh kaedah *Analytical Hierarchy Process* (AHP) untuk mengelaskan 6 kriteria EBK. Akhirnya, 63 pembolehubah awal telah dapat di rumuskan kepada 42 pembolehubah. Penemuan daripada kerja lapangan mengesahkan asas hipotesis kajian, dan menunjukkan ekonomi komuniti serta pemerksaan komuniti tempatan tidak diutamakan sebaliknya pemeliharaan alam sekitar yang lebih diberi penekanan.