

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 JANUARY 2026

TM. 37/2026

MALAYSIA HIGHLIGHTS SABAH IN VIETNAM: EXPANDING NEW COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE VIETNAMESE TOURISM MARKET

HO CHI MINH CITY — In an effort to strengthen the promotion of Sabah in the Vietnamese market, **Sabah Tourism Destination & B2B Forum** was hosted in Ho Chi Minh City on **12 January 2026**. The event was jointly organised by the Sabah Tourism Board (STB), Tourism Malaysia Ho Chi Minh City office and the Sabah Enhanced Travel Innovation Association (SETIA), creating a direct networking platform for Sabah-based tourism businesses and Vietnamese travel partners.

The forum brought together **21 delegates representing 18 tourism companies from Sabah**, participating in table-top B2B sessions with partners in Ho Chi Minh City that open doors for new travel packages, joint promotions, and stronger partnerships to boost visitor arrivals from Vietnam to Sabah.

Delivering the opening remarks, **Ms. Amirah Nadiah Mazlan, Director of Tourism Malaysia in Vietnam**, stated: “Through today’s networking session, Malaysia aims to expand collaboration with the Vietnamese market and position Sabah as an increasingly familiar destination for Vietnamese travellers. With its strength in nature, authentic local experiences, and a strong commitment to sustainable tourism development, Sabah is ready to work closely with Vietnamese partners to develop strategic, long-term tourism products that meet the needs of modern travellers.”

Enhanced air connectivity remains vital for tourism growth between Malaysia and Vietnam. With AirAsia operating direct flights from Ho Chi Minh City to Kota Kinabalu within just over two hours, this seamless link not only makes Sabah more accessible to Vietnamese travellers but also empowers tourism businesses on both sides to create short-haul, flexible, and attractive travel products.

Sharing insights on Sabah’s approach to the Vietnamese market, **Mr. Julinus Jeffry Jimit, Chief Executive Officer of the Sabah Tourism Board** remarked: “Vietnam is recognised as one of Sabah’s most promising emerging markets. By fostering direct connections among industry players, we aim to expand our partnership network and build sustainable, long-term collaborations with Vietnamese tourism partners.”

Through the event, the Sabah Tourism Board also shared updates on its preparations for the upcoming strategic milestone **Visit Sabah Year 2027**. Under the new positioning,

“Explore Sabah – Naturally Inspiring, Beyond Ordinary”, Sabah seeks to strengthen its role as one of Malaysia’s leading destinations for nature-based tourism, adventure travel, and indigenous cultural experiences, while complementing the broader objectives of Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026). Sabah is also expected to become a strategic destination partner for Vietnamese travel businesses, offering fresh and distinctive travel experiences for Vietnamese visitors in the coming years.

The Sabah Tourism Board also reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable tourism development, ensuring a balanced approach between economic growth, environmental conservation and community well-being. Community-based tourism (CoBT) remains a key pillar of this strategy. Recently, five CoBT operators in Sabah received national-level recognition under the ASEAN Tourism Standard, setting benchmarks for community-based tourism models across the region.

As Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) officially commences, promotional and trade engagement activities in the Vietnamese market are viewed not only as destination marketing efforts, but also as meaningful contributions to further strengthening bilateral relations between Malaysia and Vietnam. Through this national campaign, Malaysia targets 43 million international visitor arrivals, reaffirming tourism’s role as one of the country’s key economic drivers. By enhancing tourism cooperation and generating positive spillover effects in related sectors such as aviation, trade, services and investment, Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) is expected to drive two-way growth, deliver tangible socio-economic benefits for both countries, and reinforce the foundation for long-term, sustainable cooperation.

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About Tourism Malaysia

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, also known as Tourism Malaysia, is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC). It focuses on promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination and has, since its establishment, played a significant role in strengthening the country’s presence and competitiveness in the global tourism landscape.

Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) underscores Malaysia’s commitment to sustainable tourism development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The campaign aims to showcase the nation’s diverse natural attractions, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant tourism offerings, while driving inclusive growth and long-term value for local communities and industry stakeholders.

For more information, visit Tourism Malaysia’s website www.tourism.gov.my and social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [TikTok](#).

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