

# Damaged seaweed can recover

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Seaweed, which is vital for marine life, is disappearing throughout the world at an alarming rate. Different currents and wave patterns can bring about recovery, but more research is needed. This is the conclusion of Achmad Adhitya. His PhD defence has a political edge because of his proposition and the presence of his father-in-law, Habibie, former president of Indonesia.

## Seaweed crucial for healthy marine environment

Adhitya's study shows that seaweed can recover in a controlled environment. As a maritime engineer, he examined how vegetation can grow again under the influence of different currents and [wave patterns](#). This is important because the amount of seaweed worldwide is reducing, partly as a result of the activities of dredgers and ships' propellers. In Indonesia alone the area covered by seaweed had reduced by 30 per cent in the last ten years. This reduction is worrying because seaweed has a number of important functions: it provides a creche for marine animals, it smooths waves and currents and makes water less muddy.

## More research needed

Adhitya, who carried out his research in a watercourse at the Royal Netherlands Institute for Marine Research (NIOZ) in Yerseke, believes that more work is needed to chart all the factors that play a role in why [seaweed](#) is disappearing. His PhD supervisor, Professor Peter Herman, said in his address that he hoped Adhitya would carry on with his work. With your background and abilities, you can play an important role for

society and nature.'

## **Striking proposition**

In his dissertation Adhitya put forward a striking proposition: 'Policymakers take better decisions when their reasoning is based on scientific evidence. Integrating science and politics is a crucial factor for progress.' Professor Arnold Tukker mentioned politicians such as Wilders, who say that 'science is just an opinion', and asked Adhitya to explain his proposition. Adhitya pointed directly to the highest guest in the Senate Chamber.' Some politicians, such as my wife's grandfather, believe that technology and science work well for society'. The former president studied aerospace engineering in Germany, where he also obtained his PhD.

## **Importance of science not universally recognised**

But the importance of science is far from universally recognised, Adhitya commented briefly prior to his PhD defence. He conducts research with a number of different agencies that work for the Indonesian government. 'I have often found that decisions are by no means always based on [scientific evidence](#), which means they are less effective or may even have a negative impact. The national government must understand that science is a powerful and objective instrument for determining policy.'

Provided by Leiden University

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