

# NEWSLETTER

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## Sustainable Tourism Observatory (STO)

a program for sustainable tourism destination development

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The SUSTOUR project is part of the Sustainable Tourism Development Program in Indonesia (STDI), which is funded by SECO (Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of the Swiss Confederation) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia. The SUSTOUR project aims to increase employment and income opportunities for local residents through the development of sustainable and inclusive tourism in the two destinations of Labuan Bajo (Flores) and Wakatobi.

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## Sustainable Tourism Observatory (STO) Program

The Sustainable Tourism Observatory (STO) Program was introduced by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in Indonesia in 2016. The main objective of the STO program is to support the continuous improvement of sustainability in the tourism sector through systematic and regular monitoring of tourism performance and impacts. This program has brought about many positive impacts, given



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its accordance with the goal of increasing destination and public awareness of the concept of Sustainable Tourism Development. This STO Program is adopted from the United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Its implementation in Indonesia is supported by the criteria and standards of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which were adapted through the Ministry of Tourism Regulation No. 14 of 2016, concerning Guidelines for Development of Sustainable Tourism Destinations, recently revised to become Ministry of Tourism Regulation No. 9 of 2021.

There are 31 STOs listed under the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO), spread all over the world. 5 Indonesian universities have become

members of INSTO, namely the University of North Sumatra, the Bandung Institute of Technology, Yogyakarta Gajah Mada University, Udayana University, and Mataram University.



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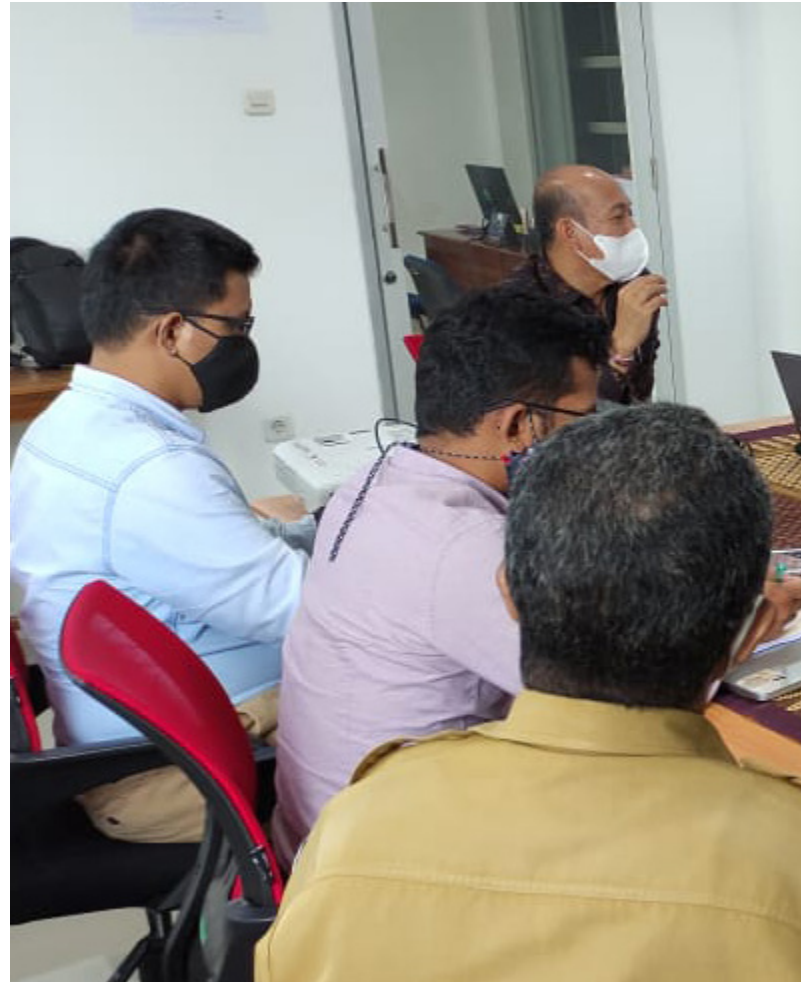
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## STO Mechanism

**S**TO is a program that aims to measure the impacts or current performance of Sustainable Tourism Development through valid and accountable scientific data. In general, through the STO program observations or measurement activities are conducted based on different issue areas, in their structure and focus tailored towards the specific context of a destination. The observations/ measurement activities also take into account the point of view of policy makers, business owners, local communities and tourists regarding the sustainable tourism development in a destination. The result of these observations/ measurement activities become data that aim to determine the direction of sustainable tourism development in a destination. Two main parties are involved in the STO program, namely the party conducting the observations/ measurement activities represented by universities/ academics, and the destination manager represented by the destination management entity. Both parties need to agree on the coverage area of the observation/ measurement activities and the context of the observations to be carried out.



## Strengthening of STOs by SUSTOUR

**T**he SUSTOUR Project is funded by SECO (Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs) of the Swiss Confederation in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia. The SUSTOUR project aims to increase employment and income opportunities for local residents through the development of



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sustainable and inclusive tourism in the two destinations of Labuan Bajo (Flores), East Nusa Tenggara and Wakatobi, Southeast Sulawesi. One of the initiatives of SUSTOUR is to strengthen the two national STOs, namely STO Wakatobi (Southeast Sulawesi) involving Halu Oleo University in Kendari and STO Labuan Bajo (East Nusa Tenggara) involving Flores University in Ende. The initiative is in line with SUSTOUR's goal of increasing competitiveness and strengthening the foundations of sustainable destination development through participatory and inclusive mechanisms. The scope of the initiatives references the observation issues

in line with the national standards for sustainable tourism destinations, and according to the context of the area being observed, namely:

- 1 Sustainable Management,
- 2 Cultural Sustainability,
- 3 Social and Economic Sustainability, and
- 4 Environmental Sustainability.

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The implementation of the STO program in both destinations adapts several stages of the framework suggested by UNWTO, focussing on the involvement of the destination management entities and universities, the use of the observation results (measurement data), and development of follow-up agreements on how the measurement data is applied, including the commitment of the concerned parties in terms of financing and regular continuation of such observations.

**In general, the main challenge faced in the implementation of the STO Program is the integration of measurement data results into destination policies.**



This is being addressed by STO Wakatobi which drives the dissemination of the results of each observation to be followed-up by the relevant authorities from the District Government.

In 2020, STO Wakatobi carried out observations/ measurement activities on Sombu Waha, a touristic area agreed to be observed (assessed) in the main topics of cultural, social and economic, and environmental sustainability. The results of the observations and its dissemination have encouraged Sombu Waha to maintain annual data on tourist profiles, up-to-date data on the availability of public facilities and infrastructure, data on employment and tourism industry, annual data inventories on natural and cultural sites, and ensuring availability of data on solid and liquid waste production in Sombu Waha. One of the outcomes of these observations triggered the drafting and enactment of a Regent's Regulation concerning the restriction of plastic waste through controlling the use of





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plastic containers and packaging in Wakatobi District.

Meanwhile, the University of Flores has also carried out observations mandated by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in Labuan Bajo. The implementation of observations carried out in 2019 included measurements of environmental criteria and local community satisfaction, in areas where SUSTOUR strengthened the University of Flores through the use of relevant monitoring instrument.

In addition, SUSTOUR also strengthened a Polytechnic University in Labuan Bajo (Polytechnic El Bajo Commodus), which is motivated by the function of tourism observations. Polytechnic El Bajo Commodus has gradually carried out local observations in collaboration with the District Government, including measurements of tourist satisfaction

in Labuan Bajo, as well as the commodity supply chains to the accommodation industry in Labuan Bajo.





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## STO Guideline

SUSTOUR has provided input on the management and measuring tools used in the STO Program in Wakatobi and Flores by compiling STO Implementation Guidelines for the STOs in Wakatobi and Flores. The guidelines provide an overview of the stages for implementation of observations, note measurement tools used, and discuss how the schemes used to obtain measurement data can become foundational in Sustainable Tourism Development on the local level.

The efforts made by SUSTOUR in supporting the STOs in the two target destinations of Labuan Bajo and Wakatobi, aim to support an evidence-based decision making at the destination level, contributing to fostering sustainable tourism practices locally.





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