

NEWSLETTER

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**A Local Tourism
Platform for An
Approach Towards
Coordinated,
Sustainable Tourism
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.



Tourism Platform

Sustainability and tourism are two big concepts that are increasingly difficult to separate from each other. However, the development of sustainable tourism destinations still often faces various challenges. One of the challenges lies in the consensus of understanding the parties concerned on how sustainable tourism can be managed and applied to a destination. More precisely, who are the actors, who should play an active role and what is a proper management system for a sustainable tourism destination?

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Sustainable Tourism Ecosystem

The tourism industry is one of the largest foreign exchange contributors in Indonesia. Through the development of sustainable tourism destinations a more inclusive and equitable tourism ecosystem can be created.

To support a more sustainable growth of the tourism industry in Indonesia, the SUSTOUR project aims to support the facilitation of a sustainable tourism ecosystem. The mapping of relations and connecting actors, authorities and interests in this system is often still a challenge when implementing the concept of sustainable tourism destinations in Indonesia. As such, one of SUSTOUR's main objectives is to persuade the local governments of the importance of a sustainable tourism ecosystem and the realization of inclusive policies to support the growth of sustainability-oriented tourism sectors.

The term 'sustainable' is a fairly familiar and popular keyword to label tourism development programs, both by the government, the private sector and development actors. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. The concept became a tool able to accelerate development applied throughout the world, including Indonesia. The basic idea of sustainable tourism development is considered to be a significant step to bridge the gap between economic, social development and environmental conservation. However, there are still some improvements needed to further enhance its implementation. Among them is how to maintain a balance in the governance system which includes the three pillars of sustainability as described above.

In Wakatobi district, the local government's positive response is shown through a scheme of establishing a local platform on sustainable tourism. At the very least, this scheme is able



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to answer questions about the authorities and actors that should take on an active role and about how the sustainable tourism destination governance network can be implemented.

This scheme was developed based on a reflection of the current local tourism destination management mechanism against the guidelines and standards of sustainable tourism development as regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia.

The Local Platform

The local platform, named the Wakatobi Sustainable Tourism Task Force, is an innovative product which is able to demonstrate the importance of a mutual agreement between the authorities and related actors on issues of sustainable tourism destinations. The local platform aims to create a local ecosystem consisting of regulators and actors related to sustainable tourism destination development such as local government authorities, local tourism industry, academics, and also the community to jointly have an open discussion forum. The goal is that the development of sustainable tourism destinations (i.e. providing economic benefits to local communities, preserving culture for the benefit of local communities and tourists, and conserving the environment) can be achieved through the creation of proper destination governance.

One of the major achievements of the Wakatobi local platform includes triggering the Wakatobi Regency Environmental Agency to issue a Regent Regulation

concerning restrictions on the generations of plastic waste that is often produced by the tourism industry. This process was highly appreciated by the Environmental Agency, which is aware that such regulation may not have been developed without the catalytic function of the local platform. In addition, the platform led the coordination of the private sector, communities and public authorities to collectively engage and manage the development of local handicraft products in Kahiyanga Tourism Village in Wakatobi. As part of this process, the local platform was able to bridge the needs of different sectors and authorities in order to collectively contribute to the development of sustainable handicrafts. Such coordination process does not automatically happen in the existing tourism governance system.

The local platform also actively bridges the flow of information from and to the central government.



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An advantage obtained from such a platform is the focus of attention resulting from a targeted and structured framework for managing tourism programs with the aim to improve the welfare of the community, culture and environment and strengthen destination governance to enhance tourist satisfaction in the destination. Without a structured and directed governance system, the development of sustainable tourism destinations may potentially trigger a paradox of challenges.

The local platform can be a solution that allows for a good flow of communication and coordination between all parties regarding the implementation of criteria for sustainable tourism destinations, as such contributing to the interests of local communities that respect the culture and the surrounding environment.

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SUSTOUR has provided benefits for the government and society through innovations in formulating strategies and approaches in developing sustainable tourism. SUSTOUR has supported the local platform to integrate tourism planning of various local authorities. This is a new learning model and a major investment into the future for us. Thank you, SUSTOUR!

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Mr Saorudin,
Head of the Local Sustainable Tourism Platform, Wakatobi



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