

Political Will and Sustainable Tourism in Coastal Areas: Realizing Government Commitments through Infrastructure Development

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Abstract. Sustainable tourism is a major focus in the development agenda in Indonesia, including Rupert Utara District, Bengkalis Regency, which is a coastal area. Adequate infrastructure, such as road access, public facilities, and efficient transportation systems can improve the quality of tourism services and attract more tourists. Realizing this requires strong political will from the government to ensure thorough planning and consistent policy implementation. This study aims to analyze the government's political will in realizing sustainable tourism in coastal areas through infrastructure development. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Primary and secondary data sources were obtained through in-depth interviews and document reviews. Based on the results of the analysis, the commitment of the Bengkalis Regency government to infrastructure development in Rupert Utara District has existed and has grown from year to year, but an increase in commitment is still needed by involving various other stakeholders. This includes the preparation of Detail Engineering Design (DED) and a master plan to realize sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Political Will, Tourism, Coastal Area, Infrastructure

1 Introduction

Sustainable tourism development does not only focus on economic benefits but also on environmental and cultural preservation and community welfare (1) Thus, sustainable tourism development can be considered in three aspects: environmental, economic and social (2). Tourism accessibility includes all types of transportation facilities and infrastructure that support the movement of tourists from the tourist's area of origin to the tourist destination as well as movement within the tourist destination area (3). Public infrastructure and public facilities are important to support the daily life activities of the community, while tourism facilities are designed to support the convenience, comfort and safety of tourists. According to Inskeep in Fredy Noitolo Zebua (4) Tourism facilities and services include: accommodation, places to eat and drink, shopping places, public tourism facilities, tourism service facilities.

Tourism is described in various Strategic Plans (RENSTRA) and the National Tourism Master Plan (RIPARNAS) as one of the main pillars in driving Indonesia's economic growth (5). The Indonesian economy has grown significantly through the development of infrastructure that supports tourism. The government prioritizes the tourism sector in the Nawa Cita program. According to PP Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan for 2010–2025, there are 88 National Tourism Strategic Areas

Kadur-Tanjung Medang main road has only been paved for 10,190 km out of 15,190 km, with 7,200 km still being gravel roads and 3,675 km still being dirt roads.



Source: GentaOnline.com

Figure 2. The road on Rupert Island is still dirt

In addition, there are also other main roads, namely the Tanjung Medang-Titi Akar road, only 8,200 km of 19,075 km of the 19,075 km until 2021, but 7,200 km are still gravel roads. Meanwhile, bridge infrastructure such as the Simpur River bridge, Pasir Putih River, Genting River, and the Titi Akar-Hutan Samak connecting bridge must be built immediately. In addition, there are several areas that do not yet have electricity, inadequate health facilities and telecommunications networks that are also not evenly distributed.

Tourism has broad objectives, such as increasing economic growth, eradicating poverty, overcoming unemployment, preserving nature and the environment, and advancing culture. Sustainable tourism is tourism that develops as quickly as possible, taking into account current accommodation capacity, local population and the environment (8). However, the development of sustainable tourism in coastal areas is often hampered by several factors, the main one being the lack of political commitment from the government in providing adequate infrastructure.

Political will is defined as "the willingness of political actors to allocate energy and resources in pursuit of certain political goals" (9). In this context, creating political will is often a crucial task for strengthening government capacity. In line with this view, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (10) assert that effective governance requires three key elements: political power, administrative effectiveness, and the active involvement of the state and civil society organizations.

Political will is the willingness and political commitment to take action aimed at achieving a series of goals, accompanied by ongoing efforts. Political willingness or political desire refers to the "intention of the leadership" to do things that are considered necessary for the common good in the long term (11). Derick W. Brinkerhoff (12) suggests that there are at least 6 components of political will, namely: Government Initiative, Policy/Program Choices, Mobilization of Parties, Public Commitment and Resource Allocation, Business Sustainability, Learning and Adapting.

This study aims to explore the relationship between government political commitment and sustainable tourism development in coastal areas. This study will also identify factors that influence government commitment in tourism infrastructure development and its impact on environmental sustainability and local community welfare. Thus, this study is expected to provide recommendations for more effective public policies in supporting sustainable tourism

in Indonesia.

2 Method

This study uses a qualitative method, (qualitative research) with a descriptive research type. Qualitative research is an approach or investigation to explore and understand a central symptom (13). The sampling technique used is the purposive technique. The stages of data analysis in this study include: data reduction stage, then data presentation, and finally drawing conclusions. Data sources come from primary data and secondary data. Primary data comes from informants, namely individuals or individuals such as the results of interviews conducted by researchers. Secondary data can be in the form of laws and regulations, journals and documents related to research problems.

3 Discussion

Several forms of action that are concrete manifestations of the Government's political will in developing sustainable tourism in coastal areas through infrastructure development, specifically in Rupa Utara District, Bengkalis Regency, include:

Government initiatives in infrastructure development are essential to support the development of KSPN in Rupa Utara District. The government needs to take proactive steps, starting from strategic planning, adequate budget allocation, to implementing infrastructure projects that support the tourism sector. Some forms of initiatives that can be taken by the government include: Strategic Planning: The Bengkalis Regency Government has prepared a DeD but has not been fully realized. Budget Allocation: The Bengkalis Regency Government has directed APBD funds to infrastructure development. Partnership with the Private Sector: Partnerships carried out by the Bengkalis Regency Government with the private sector include: Pertamina Hulu Rokan (PHR) and there are also grant funds from Japan for the Development of International Ports in Bengkalis Regency. Supporting Regulations and Policies: Supporting policies that have been established by the Bengkalis Regency Government include: Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2021 concerning the Bengkalis Regency Tourism Development Master Plan for 2021–2025. Increasing Human Resource Capacity: Increasing Human Resource Capacity includes promoting training for business actors, MSMEs, Pokdaris and the local community. Promotion and Marketing: The Bengkalis Regency Government has provided a website and social media for promotion and marketing, but its management is not yet optimal.

Policy/Program Options: Comprehensive infrastructure development master plan development program: The Master Plan and Detail Engineering Design (DED) are two crucial components in tourism development in Bengkalis Regency, especially in Rupa Island. The Master Plan serves as a long-term guide that sets out the vision, objectives, and strategies for tourism development. Meanwhile, the DED provides technical details for infrastructure design and construction, ensuring that projects are implemented according to established standards. Although these two documents already exist, there is an urgent need to strengthen them. The Bengkalis Regency Government (Pemda) has taken a strategic step by coordinating with the

Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) to review the Master Plan for tourism development in Rupert District. This coordination aims to improve and perfect the existing draft Master Plan, so that it can meet effective planning standards.

Next Significant Regional Budget Allocation: Bengkalis Regency Government, under the leadership of Regent Kasmarni with the Bermanwah Maju dan Sejahtera (BERMASA) program, has succeeded in obtaining a budget allocation from the APBN through the PUPR Ministry. Through the Inpres program, Bengkalis Regency received funds of 60 billion rupiah for projects on Rupert Island.

Then, in the 2024 Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), the Bengkalis Regency Government has allocated funds for various strategic projects in Rupert Utara District, including improving infrastructure and public services. Several main projects include improving main roads, providing housing utility facilities, and building piers and concrete retaining walls, with a total budget of 10.3 billion rupiah. In addition, the budget allocation also includes other sectors such as education, health, and agriculture, which aim to support local economic development and improve the quality of life of the community. The government also plans to immediately complete the operation of the Rupert Pratama Regional General Hospital (RSUD), including adding infrastructure for health workers. Community support is highly expected to accelerate the completion of these projects, so that RSUD Pratama Rupert can function effectively in meeting the health needs of the community. With these steps, the Regional Government is committed to realizing sustainable development and providing maximum benefits for the community in Rupert Utara District.

The total budget is IDR 2,580,000,000, - which is in the form of Compiling DED for Connecting Facilities (Accessibility), one of which supports the development of Tourism in Bengkalis Regency, especially in the Rupert Island KSPN in 2022.

Actors Involved: Bengkalis Regent, Bengkalis Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports Agency (Disparbudpora), Rupert District Tourism Management UPT, Head of Tourism Division (Mr. Alwizar), Head of Planning Section of Disparbudpora, Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency (PUPR), Environment and Forestry Agency (DLHK), Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), National Land Agency (BPN)

Forms of Mobilization: Internal Cooperation: Local Government: Local governments have a key role in planning and implementing tourism policies, as well as providing infrastructure and services that support tourism development. Support in terms of regulation, planning, and budget allocation is essential for the success of this sector. Local Business Actors: Local business actors, including hoteliers, restaurants, and tourism service providers, need to be involved in the planning and implementation of tourism activities. They can provide insight into the needs and preferences of tourists, and assist in the promotion and provision of quality services. While External Cooperation: Provincial and National Governments: Support from provincial and national governments is needed for the provision of funds, construction of large infrastructure, and promotion of tourism at a broader level. Cooperation with the central government can open access to resources and programs that support tourism development. Investors and Private Partners: Investors and private partners can play an important role in providing funds, technology, and expertise needed for the development of tourism facilities.

Cooperation with the private sector can accelerate development and improve the quality of tourism services. Local Communities: Community Empowerment: Local communities must be involved in the tourism development process, both as business actors and in the form of active participation in tourism activities. Empowering local communities not only increases economic benefits but also ensures that tourism is conducted in a way that respects local culture and environment. With a solid pattern of cooperation between internal and external stakeholders, Rupert District can maximize its tourism potential and create a broad positive impact. Well-planned and coordinated development will help attract more tourists, improve the local economy, and ensure the sustainability of the local environment and culture. Effective cooperation will be the key to achieving success in making Rupert District a leading tourism destination at the national and international levels.

Public Commitment: The regional head of Bengkalis Regency has set a clear and ambitious vision for tourism development, especially in Rupert District. This vision reflects a strong commitment to developing the tourism sector as a driving force for the regional economy and improving community welfare. To implement the regional head's vision. This includes the preparation and implementation of a clear work plan, determination of responsibilities, and effective supervision. Good communication between the regional head and the agencies is also important to ensure that the vision and strategic plan can be translated into real action. With effective follow-up from related agencies, the regional head's vision in tourism development can be realized optimally, providing a positive impact on the regional economy, and improving community welfare in Rupert District.

Business Sustainability: To realize sustainable tourism in North Rupert, adequate infrastructure development is needed. Infrastructure development can also be one of the benchmarks for the success or failure of the development of a tourism area, in addition, local community participation is also no less important. active involvement of local communities to participate in controlling tourism development, using infrastructure that has been built by the government such as stands for selling for MSMEs on Lapin Beach, identifying resources that will be maintained and improved and developing goals and strategies for the development of tourism areas, which in this case can be through representatives of POKDARWIS (Tourism Awareness Group) located in North Rupert.

The sustainability of this business is important for the development of tourism potential on Rupert Island, including: Natural Tourism, namely: Beach Tourism (Pesona Beach, Tanjung Lapin Beach, Pasir Putih Beach, Makeruh Beach, Ketapang Beach), Beting Aceh Island Tourism which is one of the outermost islands in Indonesia, located in the Malacca Strait, Mangrove Forest Tourism, Migratory Bird Tourism, Duyung/Dogong Tourism. Then, Cultural and Historical Tourism: Traditional Malay Community Customs, Traditional Games of the Malay Community in North Rupert District, Akit Tribe Culture in Titi Akar Village and Hutan Ayu Village, Zapin Api-Api in North Rupert District, Tomb of Putri Sembilan. Furthermore, Cultural and Historical Tourism: Cap Go Meh Celebration and Temple and finally Artificial Tourism: Mandi Safar Tanjung Punak Village, Rupert Beach Festival

6. Learn and Adapt

Learning from experiences and best practices in other areas is essential in developing

sustainable tourism. This learning can include observing policies in other countries or cities that have succeeded in developing sustainable tourism. According to the researcher's observations, in terms of learning and compiling program planning, it has been carried out by the Bengkalis Regency Government, but in its realization has not run completely as desired. This means that the willingness to learn independently is not suffice in implementing a policy/program plan it must be accompanied by a strong commitment from the government. Government commitment is the key to the success of implementing tourism development policies in Bengkalis Regency according to what has been planned. From the results of the interview, the Head of the Technical Implementation Unit (UPT) for Tourism Management in Rupert District said that the Government had conducted benchmarking with other areas, one of which was in the construction of stands for selling for MSMEs at Tanjung Lapin Beach, but the stands that had been built by the Government were not used by the local community as they should have been.



Source: Researcher Documentation

Figure 3 Empty Stands at Tanjung Lapin Beach

From this it can be said that the ability to adapt cannot be separated from the learning process from other regions that have excelled in developing sustainable tourism. Understanding and improving local adaptive capacity is very important for sustainable development in the tourism sector (14). The government's ability to adapt ensures that programs that have been adopted from other regions can be successfully implemented and benefit the community and are in accordance with the characteristics of the region and local community. This means that the government's commitment to the learning and adaptation process in developing sustainable tourism on Rupert Island needs to be improved.

4 Conclusion

The results of the analysis show that strong political commitment from local governments is a key factor in determining the success of sustainable tourism sector development. Although a clear vision has been set by the regional head, the main challenge faced is the lack of follow-up from related agencies, which hinders the implementation of programs designed to achieve these goals.

The development of adequate infrastructure, such as road access and public facilities, has proven to be one of the concrete steps that can increase tourist attraction and support the

welfare of local communities. Good infrastructure not only increases accessibility, but also creates a conducive environment for economic growth through tourism. Therefore, a greater commitment is needed from the government to ensure that the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects are carried out effectively and sustainably.

In addition, active involvement of various stakeholders, including local communities and the private sector, is essential to create broad support for tourism policies. Through solid collaboration, all parties can contribute to designing and implementing programs that are not only economically beneficial, but also respect local culture and environment.

Thus, this study recommends that the local government be more proactive in developing a clear action plan, assigning responsibilities, and conducting effective supervision. This will ensure that tourism development in Rupa Island, Bengkalis Regency is not only sustainable, but also provides broad positive impacts on the community and the environment. This conclusion confirms that the success of sustainable tourism is highly dependent on political commitment, appropriate adaptation, adequate infrastructure development, and the involvement of all relevant parties.

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