

# Challenges and Recommendations for Sustainable Cidomo Transportation in Gili Trawangan, Lombok: A Tourism Perspective

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**Abstract.** Cidomo is a traditional mode of transportation on the island of Lombok. Etymologically, the term "cidomo" is an acronym derived from "cikar," "dokar," and "motor," referring to a carriage with car wheels pulled by local horses. In Gili Trawangan, cidomo was initially used by local residents as the primary means of transportation before the island became a popular tourist destination. This study aims to analyze the health of the horses, the environmental impact caused, and to provide recommendations to cidomo owners and managers. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method, grounded in both theoretical frameworks and empirical field data. Data collection was conducted through interviews, involving both tourists and cidomo operators in Gili Trawangan. In Gili Trawangan, there are 52 cidomo units, all managed under a single cooperative, Koperasi Janur Indah, which consists of all cidomo owners. The study found that cidomo horses require increased attention to their health and hygiene to minimize environmental impacts such as pollution and emissions. This proactive approach enables tourists, cidomo horses, and the environment to work in harmony, promoting sustainable, pollution-free tourism in Gili Trawangan, Lombok.

**Keywords:** Traditional Transportation, Cidomo, Gili Trawangan

## 1 Introduction

As a renowned small tourist destination in Indonesia, famously known as the "Zero Pollution Island," Gili Trawangan, a part of Lombok Island, has become a global tourist magnet. According to the North Lombok Regency Tourism Office, Gili Trawangan spans only 340 hectares, with a circumference of just 7 kilometers. Its vibrant underwater beauty and a wide range of tourist attractions ensure a constant flow of visitors throughout the year. The island's pristine flat beaches, characterized by white sand and striking color gradations, are its primary tourism asset. Tourists can experience breathtaking sunrises against the backdrop of Mount Rinjani, the highest peak in West Nusa Tenggara, and equally stunning sunsets with Mount

Agung, Bali's highest mountain, forming a majestic silhouette—both of which are rare sights not to be missed [1].

The island also boasts exquisite snorkeling and diving spots, attracting tourists with their panoramic coral reefs, turtles, and various species of ornamental fish—making them must-see attractions. However, behind this natural beauty lies several challenges that impact the island, including maintaining guest comfort during their stay on this exotic island. The “Zero Pollution Island” title is well-deserved, as motor vehicles emitting exhaust fumes are strictly prohibited. Only a few motor vehicles specifically for waste transport are allowed, with operating hours carefully regulated to avoid disturbing tourists.

Cidomo, one of the oldest, and in many cases, the only means of transportation, is highly needed by visitors, particularly those staying far from their arrival point and carrying luggage. The term "cidomo" is an acronym derived from "cikar," "dokar," and "motor," where “motor” refers to the use of car wheels, and the wooden cart resembles a "dokar" or "delman," pulled by horse power, thus supporting a pollution-free environment. Initially, cidomo was the primary mode of transportation on the island due to the absence of motorized vehicles. As the destination's popularity grew, along with an increasing number of tourists visiting Gili Trawangan, the use of cidomo has surged. While cidomo offers a unique and traditional experience for tourists, it also raises concerns and controversies that need attention. Issues such as animal welfare, environmental pollution, socio-economic and cultural aspects, as well as impacts on sustainable tourism, are significant considerations [2].

Given these phenomena, the island must explore more sustainable and eco-friendly transportation solutions for the future, without compromising the preservation of its deep-rooted cultural heritage. This is particularly critical in light of growing criticism from animal rights advocates, who argue that the use of cidomo in Gili Trawangan should be reassessed, as it may constitute animal exploitation [3].

## **2 Research Method**

This study aims to examine the health and welfare of the horses, as well as the environmental impact resulting from the use of cidomo. A qualitative research approach is employed, wherein the researcher acts as the primary data collection instrument and evaluator. In this study, the researcher will engage directly with both the subjects and the environment in Gili Trawangan, conducting face-to-face interviews with tourists and cidomo operators. In qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument, and thus must undergo "validation" to assess their readiness to conduct fieldwork. As a human instrument, the researcher is responsible for defining the research focus, selecting informants as data sources, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting the results, and drawing conclusions from the findings [4].

## **3 Results and Discussions**

### **3.1 The Breed of Cidomo Horses and Their Care**

According to S.B. Prakoso from the Genetic Analysis of Lombok Horses, the breed used for cidomo in Gili Trawangan is the local Lombok pony (*Equus ferus caballus*). Despite their small stature, which is generally unsuitable for heavy load-bearing, these horses are favored because

they are indigenous to Lombok and have become synonymous with the island's identity. Consequently, locals prefer to utilize and empower their native breed [5]. As reported by several cidomo owners, health check-ups for the horses are conducted only when the animals show signs of poor health. Common indicators include a loss of appetite, lethargy, and a pale appearance. A veterinarian is called in only when necessary. Fresh grass, which is a primary food source, does not grow well in Gili Trawangan due to the sandy soil and limited freshwater availability. As a result, fresh grass and other supplementary feed are imported from Lombok, which significantly impacts the horses' health. The variety of feed given depends on the available supply. Additionally, the stables are often small and fall below cleanliness standards, further affecting the health and well-being of the horses. This has become a serious concern for cidomo owners, who are urged to maintain higher standards of cleanliness and care to ensure their horses remain healthy, well-groomed, and in good condition.



**Fig 1.** Cidomo Horse Used for Passenger Transport  
*Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2024*



**Fig 2.** Cidomo Horse Used for Goods Transport  
*Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2024*

### 3.2 Working Hours and Schedule of Cidomo Horses

The operation of cidomo in Gili Trawangan is managed by a cooperative association known as Janur Indah. All cidomo on the island must be registered and possess a valid transport permit. The booking system for cidomo relies on a centralized radio service, where an operator relays all information to each cidomo driver through radio frequency. Currently, there are 52 cidomo units operating in Gili Trawangan. The management of cidomo under a cooperative structure has resulted in a perceived monopoly over regulations such as fares, working hours, routes, and other operational details. Private parties or individuals are prohibited from intervening or owning a cidomo without the cooperative's approval.

The operational hours for cidomo are from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Each horse typically works for about 4 hours, depending on the number of routes completed. The decision to rotate horses for rest periods between work shifts is at the discretion of the cidomo driver. This rotation system affects the cidomo owners, who usually have 3 to 4 horses to ensure that they can rotate the horses regularly and maintain their health and stamina.



**Fig 3.** Cidomo Routes and Fares  
*Source: Janur Indah Cooperative, 2024*

According to the Chairman of the Janur Indah Cooperative, Hj. Muh Gufron, the number of cidomo units currently permitted to operate in Gili Trawangan is 52. This number is considered insufficient to serve the approximately 498 properties on the island, as reported by the North Lombok Regency Tourism Office. The policy of adding more cidomo units presents a dilemma for such a small island, especially during high and peak seasons when the demand for transportation, particularly cidomo, surges significantly. During these periods, cidomo horses face a heavier workload due to the increased needs and demands of tourists.

**Table 1.** Tourist Responses Regarding Cidomo Horses

Questions	No	Respondent	Nationality	Age	Summary of Responses
What are your views on the condition and treatment of cidomo horses in Gili Trawangan?	1	FA	Aljazair	26	Unique, small horses, poorly maintained
	2	JQ	Australia	23	Feel sorry for them
	3	VK	India	34	Unhealthy, small
	4	TD	Indonesia	33	Unusual, had to ride it out of necessity
	5	MD	Italia	37	Horses are too small
	6	MS	Australia	49	Unique, small horses, poorly maintained
	7	AN	India	36	Pity, forced to ride
	8	DW	Indonesia	28	Unique, no other options
	9	KL	Rusia	29	Unique, no other options
	10	AA	Indonesia	42	Surprisingly, it was a memorable experience

Based on interviews with ten tourists, both international and domestic, who have used cidomo transportation, nine respondents stated that the small horses used to pull cidomo are poorly cared for. They found the experience unique but felt compelled to use cidomo due to a lack of alternative transportation options. One respondent expressed a positive impression without commenting on the actual condition of the horses.

**Table 2.** Responses on the Environmental Impact of Cidomo Presence

Questions	No	Respondent	Nationality	Age	Summary of Responses
<b>What are the environmental impacts caused by the presence of cidomo?</b>	1	FA	Aljazair	26	Smelly, dusty
	2	JQ	Australia	23	Smelly, dusty, damages the road
	3	VK	India	34	Dusty, smell of urine
	4	TD	Indonesia	33	Dust, congestion, flying dirt from hooves
	5	MD	Italia	37	Smelly, dusty
	6	MS	Australia	49	Damages the road, noisy
	7	AN	India	36	Smell of urine on first impression
	8	DW	Indonesia	28	Floating hair, smell
	9	KL	Rusia	29	Horse shoes scattered, smelly
	10	AA	Indonesia	42	Slightly smelly and dusty

Source: Researcher Interviews (2024)

For the second question posed to the same respondents, eight out of ten stated that the areas where cidomo horses are stationed tend to smell bad and are dusty. One respondent mentioned that the horses' hooves damage the roads and create noise pollution, while another respondent noted that the air becomes polluted due to the large amount of horsehair floating around. Tourists also reported that upon stepping out of the harbor, they were immediately greeted by an unpleasant odor, which they attributed to horse urine not being properly cleaned up.



**Fig 4.** Interview Activities with International Tourists  
Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2024



**Fig 5.** Interview with a Cidomo Driver  
*Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2024*

Based on interviews with tourists who have used cidomo transportation during their visit to Gili Trawangan, the primary reason for using cidomo is that the accommodations they booked are often too far to reach on foot, especially with luggage. The only available transportation option is cidomo. Most respondents highlighted concerns about the horses' condition, noting that they are small, poorly cared for, and appear exhausted. The environmental impact is also evident, with air pollution caused by unpleasant odors, dust from the horses' hooves, noise pollution, and fine horsehair floating in the air, which can irritate the respiratory system [6].

From the research and additional interviews with respondents, several issues regarding the use of cidomo in Gili Trawangan were identified:

1. **Animal Welfare:** Animal rights advocates prefer walking, even over long distances, because these horses are often required to undertake long journeys and heavy loads daily, leading to excessive physical strain. Sometimes, they are whipped if they refuse to run.
2. **Pollution from Emissions:** The emissions produced by horse manure can pollute the environment, especially if not properly managed.
3. **Safety Concerns:** In narrow spaces and roads, cidomo traffic can cause congestion, affecting other road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, and creating a constant stream of noise.
4. **Impact on Sustainable Tourism:** The excessive use of cidomo can diminish the quality of the tourist experience by generating noise pollution and disturbances caused by the sound and presence of cidomo.

#### **4 Researcher Recommendations Regarding Cidomo in Gili Trawangan**

This study recommends limiting the use of cidomo to check-in and check-out processes only, with lighter and less bulky loads. For touring the island and enjoying its natural beauty, it is more advisable to use bicycles or walk to reduce the reliance on cidomo. This would help alleviate the workload on the horses, thereby improving their health and welfare. Proper care and maintenance of the horses should be ensured according to established standards, including regular veterinary check-ups and health assessments. Reducing the use of cidomo as a traditional mode of daily transportation would also help mitigate the perception of animal exploitation, particularly in Gili Trawangan and Lombok in general.

## 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that cidomo, a traditional mode of transportation in Gili Trawangan, requires more serious attention in its management, particularly concerning horse health and mitigating its negative environmental impacts. The government must play an active role by providing support and input, including educating drivers, owners, and cidomo operators to ensure that cidomo remains a long-standing tourism icon in Gili Trawangan. The initial impression of dirtiness and unpleasant odors must be promptly addressed—not merely by rinsing away urine but through concrete measures such as establishing temporary storage and drainage systems that do not flow directly into the sea. Practical actions, such as demonstrating compassion towards the horses, avoiding mistreatment, and ensuring proper care, will foster a positive image of cidomo as the oldest form of transportation in Lombok.

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