

## **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION IN INDONESIA: EMPHASIZING GREEN TOURISM, COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM, AND LOCAL EMPOWERMENT**

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### **Abstract**

Several crucial concepts are integral to the successful implementation of sustainable tourism practices in Indonesia. Among these, green tourism, community-based tourism, and local empowerment stand out as pivotal frameworks. Green tourism has promise as an environmentally friendly offering, although it requires a deeper understanding of environmentally conscious advancement within the tourism sector. At present, difficulties remain in delineating the notion of sustainable tourism and implementing it in tourism destinations. This study fills the gap in the existing research on sustainable tourism by providing recommendations to enhance environmental sustainability practices by focusing on green tourism, community-based tourism, and local empowerment. This article aims to explore these concepts in depth and highlight the best practices associated with each one. This research employs a qualitative methodology, specifically an integrative literature review approach, to investigate the implementation of green tourism in Indonesia. In conclusion, sustainable tourism implementation in Indonesia is a complex and multifaceted process. It involves the active participation of local communities, the development of sustainable policies and plans, and the promotion of a green economy. Government engagement and community involvement are crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable tourism. To comprehensively examine the role of stakeholders and prioritize variables crucial for devising strategies for sustainable tourism implementation, further research utilizing a quantitative approach is recommended. Additionally, it is imperative to test the concept of step-by-step local empowerment using quantitative methods to ensure its validity.

**Keywords:** Green Tourism; Community Based Tourism; Local Empowerment; Sustainable Tourism

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### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism in Indonesia is experiencing a notable resurgence following the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from the Ministry of Tourism indicates that both domestic travel and international tourist numbers in 2022 have doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. In 2022, international tourist arrivals in Indonesia reached 5.5 million, while domestic travel exceeded 800 million trips, resulting in the creation of 22.8 million jobs and contributing to 4.5% of Indonesia's total GDP (Kemenkeu, 2023). While this surge in tourism brings substantial revenue for the government and local communities, it also raises concerns about the potential environmental consequences. The high carbon footprint associated with increased travel and the significant waste generated during tourist activities pose significant challenges for the environment.

Sustainable tourism implementation in Indonesia holds paramount importance, given the nation's wealth of natural beauty and cultural heritage. Recognizing tourism as a key economic driver, the Indonesian government has proactively initiated measures to promote sustainable tourism development (Anele, 2021). The core objective of sustainable tourism is to strike a delicate balance between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of tourism, ensuring enduring benefits for local communities and the preservation of the country's invaluable natural resources (Uchiyama et al., 2022). This coordinated approach not only underscores the necessity of responsible tourism practices but also emphasizes the pivotal role of sustainable tourism in safeguarding Indonesia's natural landscapes and fostering the well-being of its diverse communities. However, the implementation of

sustainable tourism in Indonesia faces challenges. Unsustainable tourism practices continue to be promoted in certain tourist destinations, leading to concerns about the balance between the environmental, social, and economic realms (Uchiyama et al., 2022). Rapid tourism growth without proper consideration of sustainability issues has been identified as a problem (Uchiyama et al., 2022).

Several studies have examined the implementation of sustainable tourism in specific locations in Indonesia. For example, research has been conducted on the implementation of sustainable tourism in spiritual tourism at Pura Luhur Tamba Waras in Bali (Putra et al., 2022). The study found that while the social and economic concepts of sustainable tourism were implemented well, the environmental concept was not maximally implemented (Putra et al., 2022). Another study analyzed the implementation of sustainable tourism in the Dieng Culture Festival and found that while economic and social aspects were fulfilled, the festival fell short in terms of environmental sustainability (Haryanto et al., 2023).

Several crucial concepts are integral to the successful implementation of sustainable tourism practices in Indonesia. Among these, green tourism, community-based tourism, and local empowerment stand out as pivotal frameworks. These approaches not only underscore the significance of community involvement and environmentally friendly practices but also emphasize the empowerment of local communities in the context of tourism development. By prioritizing these concepts, Indonesia can foster a tourism industry that is not only environmentally sustainable but also socially responsible and economically beneficial for its communities. Green tourism holds potential as a sustainable product, yet it necessitates a more comprehensive grasp of green development within the tourism industry (Chengcai et al., 2022). Currently, challenges persist in defining the concept of sustainable tourism and in its implementation (Law et al., 2016). This study fills the gap in the existing research on sustainable tourism by providing recommendations to enhance environmental sustainability practices by focusing on green tourism, community-based tourism, and local empowerment. This article aims to explore these concepts in depth and highlight the best practices associated with each one.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative methodology, specifically an integrative literature review approach, to investigate the implementation of green tourism in Indonesia. Integrative literature reviews play a crucial role in synthesizing research outcomes at a meta-level and identifying areas that require further investigation (Snyders, 2019). This, in turn, is instrumental in establishing theoretical frameworks and constructing conceptual models. An integrative review approach proves particularly beneficial when the objective is not to comprehensively cover all published articles on a topic but rather to amalgamate diverse viewpoints to generate novel theoretical constructs. By amalgamating insights and perspectives from numerous empirical studies, a literature review can address research inquiries with a comprehensiveness that no individual study can achieve (Snyders, 2019). These reviews contribute to the knowledge base on sustainable tourism implementation in Indonesia.

## **C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **Green Tourism**

Green tourism in Indonesia focuses on promoting sustainable practices and minimizing the environmental impact of tourism activities. It involves the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the promotion of responsible tourism behavior (Walpole & Goodwin, 2001). The implementation of green tourism practices in Indonesia requires a comprehensive approach that involves various stakeholders, including the government, local communities, and tourists (Nugroho et al., 2023). To effectively put green tourism into practice in Indonesia, a holistic and inclusive approach is imperative, necessitating the active engagement and collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including the government, local communities, and tourists themselves (Nugroho et al., 2023). This collaborative effort underscores the significance of collective responsibility in nurturing a tourism industry that not only safeguards the country's

natural beauty and cultural legacy but also serves as a driving force for sustainable development. By integrating the efforts of various stakeholders and fostering a culture of environmental consciousness, green tourism in Indonesia can serve as a crucial instrument for the preservation of the country's natural wonders and the promotion of a more sustainable and eco-friendly tourism landscape.

One important aspect of green tourism in Indonesia is the inclusion of local communities in the decision-making process and the sharing of benefits (Walpole & Goodwin, 2001). Local attitudes towards conservation and tourism play a crucial role in the success of green tourism initiatives (Walpole & Goodwin, 2001). This recognition underlines the significance of fostering community participation and empowerment within the framework of green tourism practices, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between the conservation of natural resources and the social and economic well-being of the local populace. By integrating the perspectives and interests of local communities, green tourism endeavors can not only promote environmental conservation but also act as a catalyst for the holistic development and empowerment of these communities, thus ensuring the sustainable coexistence of nature and society.

A pivotal dimension of green tourism in Indonesia is centered on the cultivation of a green economy within the tourism sector, as highlighted by Law et al. (2016). The progression towards a green economy entails the integration of sustainable practices, the mitigation of carbon emissions, and the promotion of eco-friendly tourism products and services (Law et al., 2016). In this transformative journey, the government assumes a central role in fostering a policy environment that supports the evolution of the tourism sector into a green economy, as emphasized by Owners et al. (2019). This involves the implementation of regulatory frameworks and the introduction of incentives that actively encourage the adoption of sustainable practices among tourism stakeholders. Additionally, the promotion of green certification programs for tourism businesses is integral to this process, serving as a means to both incentivize and recognize environmentally responsible practices within the industry (Owners et al., 2019). By cultivating a supportive policy landscape and incentivizing sustainable practices, the Indonesian government can pave the way for the integration of green principles into the tourism industry, fostering a more environmentally conscious and sustainable approach to tourism development and operations.

The evolution towards a green economy necessitates the seamless integration of sustainable practices, collaborative efforts to curtail carbon emissions, and the active promotion of eco-friendly tourism products and services (Law et al., 2016). Amidst this transformative trajectory, the government assumes a pivotal role in creating and nurturing a policy framework conducive to the establishment and growth of a green economy within the tourism sector, as accentuated by Owners et al. (2019). This undertaking involves the formulation and implementation of regulatory mechanisms that facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices among diverse stakeholders within the tourism domain. Moreover, the introduction of strategic incentives serves as a catalyst for encouraging and incentivizing the uptake of sustainable practices among tourism participants. In this context, the introduction and propagation of green certification programs for tourism businesses emerge as an indispensable tool for not only motivating but also acknowledging environmentally responsible practices within the industry (Owners et al., 2019). By fostering a supportive policy ecosystem and incentivizing the adoption of sustainable practices, the Indonesian government can lay the groundwork for the seamless assimilation of green principles into the tourism industry, consequently fostering an eco-conscious and sustainable approach to tourism development and operations. This collaborative effort not only propels environmental conservation but also positions the tourism sector as a potent driver for sustainable development, thereby ensuring a harmonious coexistence between tourism and the natural environment.

A crucial element of green tourism in Indonesia involves integrating local culture and traditions into tourism development, as highlighted by Widyatwati and Mahfudz (2021). This integration serves to showcase and preserve Indonesia's rich cultural heritage while providing

visitors with an authentic and immersive experience. For instance, the development of maritime tourism can be enriched by promoting indigenous cultural practices like the traditional ritual of Sedekah Laut (Widyatwati & Mahfudz, 2021). By incorporating these practices, the tourism industry pays homage to the region's cultural roots and offers tourists a deeper understanding of local customs. Furthermore, incorporating local cultural practices into tourism development can bring tangible economic benefits to communities. By embracing these traditions as part of the tourism experience, it creates income opportunities for locals, contributing to sustainable livelihoods and community development (Widyatwati & Mahfudz, 2021). This mutually beneficial relationship between cultural preservation and economic empowerment not only safeguards the continuity of indigenous customs but also underscores the importance of cultural heritage in driving responsible and sustainable tourism practices. By embracing and promoting the local cultural heritage, the Indonesian tourism industry can effectively leverage cultural richness to foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, enhancing the overall tourism experience.

In conclusion, the concept of green tourism in Indonesia revolves around the promotion of sustainable practices, the active involvement of local communities, and the preservation of the country's natural and cultural heritage. Achieving these goals requires the collaboration of various stakeholders, including the government, local communities, and tourists themselves. The successful execution of green tourism practices involves the careful conservation of natural resources, the transition to a more environmentally conscious economy, the promotion of responsible tourism behavior, and the integration of local cultural elements into the tourism experience. By embracing these comprehensive practices, Indonesia can foster a tourism industry that is not only environmentally sustainable but also socially responsible and economically beneficial. By safeguarding the natural beauty and cultural richness of the country, Indonesia can establish itself as a leading advocate for eco-friendly and culturally sensitive tourism. This collaborative effort not only contributes to the preservation of Indonesia's diverse ecosystems and cultural traditions but also ensures the long-term prosperity and well-being of both the local communities and the broader tourism sector.

### **Community Based Tourism**

Community-based tourism is an approach that involves the active participation of local communities in the development and management of tourism activities (Sebele, 2010). It is often seen as a tool for sustainable tourism and can contribute to the economic development of a country (Dodds et al., 2016). By empowering local communities to actively engage in tourism activities, it enables them to not only preserve their cultural heritage and natural resources but also to leverage these assets for economic development and growth. Such an approach underscores the significance of community collaboration in fostering tourism that is both sustainable and economically beneficial, thereby fostering a symbiotic relationship between tourism and local communities.

The success of community-based tourism depends on various factors, including community participation, leadership, empowerment, and economic gain (Dangi & Jamal, 2016). Additionally, community-based tourism can also contribute to community empowerment and welfare (Sasmitha & Marhaeni, 2019). By actively involving local communities in the various facets of tourism, it fosters the creation of opportunities for income generation, subsequently leading to an amelioration of the overall socio-economic well-being of the community (Sasmitha & Marhaeni, 2019). This approach not only aids in the economic upliftment of the community but also provides a platform for fostering a sense of ownership and pride, thereby promoting sustainable development and fostering a sense of social cohesion within the community.

Overall, community-based tourism has the potential to contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in Indonesia. On the whole, community-based tourism stands poised to make a substantial contribution to the sustainable advancement of tourism in Indonesia. Through the active engagement of local communities and a collaborative effort to understand and cater to their needs and ambitions, it has the potential to lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive

and responsible tourism industry. By integrating the perspectives and priorities of local communities, this approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community, thereby instilling a deeper commitment to the sustainable development of the tourism sector. This, in turn, facilitates a more inclusive and mindful approach to tourism, which not only preserves the natural and cultural heritage of Indonesia but also ensures that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed among the local populace. By creating a harmonious balance between tourism development and community welfare, community-based tourism can serve as a catalyst for fostering sustainable growth and long-term prosperity in the Indonesian tourism landscape.

### **Local Empowerment**

Enhancing local empowerment stands as a crucial foundation for achieving sustainable tourism in Indonesia. This essential strategy revolves around the idea of enabling and uplifting local communities to actively participate in and reap the rewards of tourism development (Cole, 2006). One specific avenue through which this empowerment is manifested is the implementation of community-based tourism (CBT). Supported by the local government of Central Java, Indonesia, CBT serves as a platform to encourage the active involvement of communities within the tourism sector, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among the locals (Sunuantari, 2017). By embracing the principles of CBT, the local government aims not only to promote the region's cultural richness and natural beauty but also to cultivate a sustainable and thriving local economy. This approach underscores the pivotal role that local communities play in driving the sustainable growth of the tourism industry and ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably. It thus fosters a more inclusive and equitable model of tourism development in Indonesia.

Information and communication play a vital role in empowering local communities in the context of sustainable tourism. Providing information and knowledge to the community enables them to make informed decisions and actively participate in tourism development (Cole, 2006). The Penta Helix Strategy, introduced by the former tourism minister of Indonesia, emphasizes the collaboration between government, industry, academia, community, and facilitators to achieve sustainable tourism destinations (Pradhipta et al., 2021). This strategy recognizes the importance of involving multiple stakeholders, including the local community, in decision-making processes and empowering them to contribute to sustainable tourism development.

The Penta Helix Strategy notably recognizes the pivotal role played by various stakeholders, particularly the local community, in the decision-making processes that shape sustainable tourism development. By empowering local communities with knowledge and ensuring their active involvement, this framework strives to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community. It seeks to establish a collaborative ecosystem that enables all stakeholders to contribute their unique perspectives and resources, thereby fostering a more inclusive and holistic approach to sustainable tourism development in Indonesia. Fundamentally, the upliftment of local communities forms a foundational element for accomplishing sustainable tourism in Indonesia. This comprehensive strategy entails equipping these communities with essential information, fostering efficient communication channels, and motivating their active participation in the process of tourism development. An instrumental method to achieve this empowerment is through the integration of community-led tourism, fostering direct engagement and accountability among local residents.

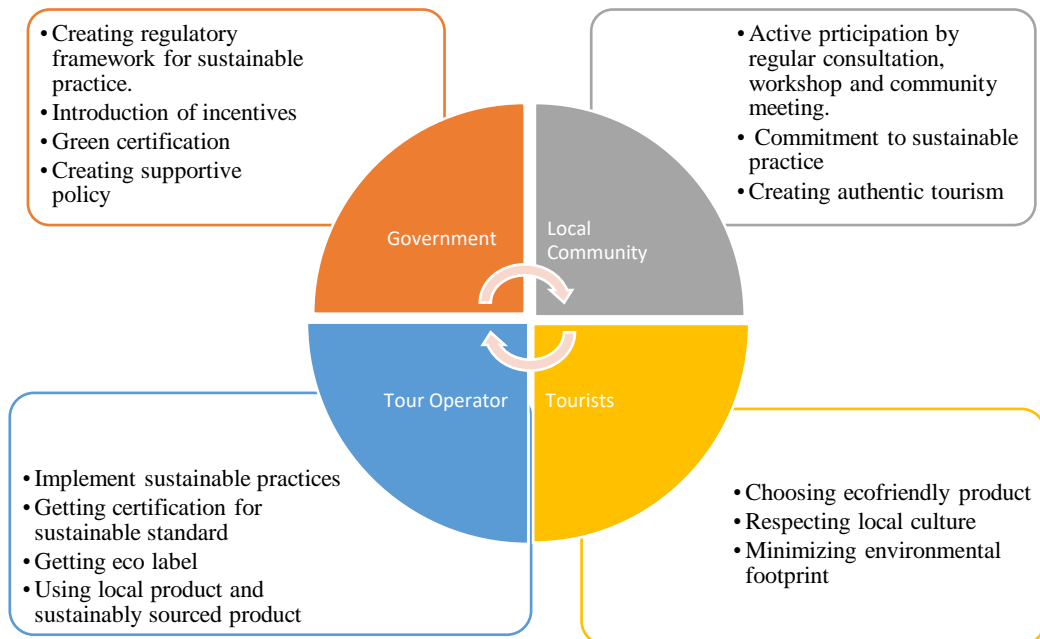
Furthermore, the prioritization of robust communication strategies serves as a crucial mechanism to ensure that local communities are well-informed and equipped to contribute meaningfully to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. Embracing alternative frameworks, such as the innovative Penta Helix Strategy, offers a promising avenue to bolster local empowerment. This strategy underscores the importance of collaborative engagement among various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, industry players, educational institutions, and local communities, fostering a comprehensive and inclusive approach to sustainable tourism development. By integrating these diverse initiatives, Indonesia can effectively establish a robust

foundation for the empowerment of local communities, thereby fostering a more sustainable and community-centric tourism industry. This collaborated effort not only aids in preserving Indonesia's cultural and natural heritage but also ensures the long-term socio-economic prosperity of the local populace, fostering a harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship between tourism and the communities it serves.

Government engagement and community involvement are crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable tourism. Governments should actively involve local communities in tourism promotion and environmental protection practices (Uchiyama et al., 2022). All stakeholders, including governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and communities, should work together to ensure sustainable tourism development and prevent environmental degradation (Uchiyama et al., 2022). In terms of policy, the idea of a green economy has been proposed to promote economic development in the tourism sector while preserving the environment (Nugroho et al., 2023). The implementation of green economy policies in the tourism sector can contribute to environmental sustainability and support sustainable tourism practices (Nugroho et al., 2023). Legal policies that accommodate the idea of a green economy can serve as a reference for tourism actors to maintain environmental sustainability and realize sustainable tourism (Nugroho et al., 2023).

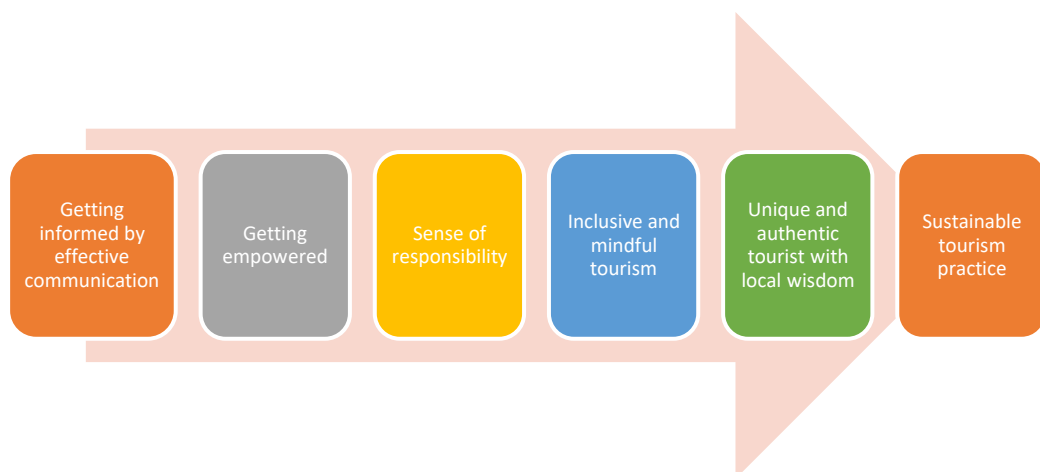
It is important to involve local communities in decision-making processes and ensure that their voices are heard and their interests are taken into account (Paunovic & Jovanović, 2017). This can be achieved through regular consultations, workshops, and community meetings, where local communities can provide input and feedback on tourism development plans and initiatives. Government agencies play a crucial role in facilitating and coordinating the multi-stakeholder approach. They can establish policies and regulations that promote sustainable tourism practices and provide guidance and support to stakeholders (Paunovic & Jovanović, 2017). Government agencies can also facilitate collaboration and cooperation among different stakeholders, ensuring that their efforts are aligned and coordinated. Tourism operators and businesses also have a responsibility to implement sustainable practices and engage with stakeholders. They can adopt sustainable tourism certifications and standards, such as eco-labels or sustainability certifications, to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability (Paunovic & Jovanović, 2017). By engaging with local communities and involving them in tourism activities, businesses can contribute to the social and economic development of the local area. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups play a crucial role in advocating for sustainable tourism and holding stakeholders accountable. They can provide expertise, resources, and support to local communities and help them develop sustainable tourism initiatives (Paunovic & Jovanović, 2017). NGOs can also raise awareness among tourists about the importance of sustainable tourism and encourage responsible travel behavior. Tourists themselves are also important stakeholders in sustainable tourism. Their choices and behaviors can have a significant impact on the environment and local communities. Tourists can support sustainable tourism by choosing eco-friendly accommodations, respecting local cultures and traditions, and minimizing their environmental footprint (Paunovic & Jovanović, 2017). It is important to educate and raise awareness among tourists about the principles of green tourism as part of sustainable tourism and the importance of responsible travel. Drawing from the preceding discourse on green tourism, community-based tourism, and local empowerment, the author synthesizes the implementation of these concepts within the purview of key stakeholders, including the government, local community, tour operator, and tourist, in the context of sustainable tourism practices. Additionally, the author examines the means to engage local communities in community-based tourism, outlining strategies for local empowerment, as vividly depicted in Figures 1 and 2.

**Figure 1** Roles of Government, Local Community, Tour Operator, and Tourists



Source: (Adapted from: Uchiyama et al 2022; Nugroho et al., 2023; Cole, 2016; Sunuantari, 2017; Pauvanovic, 2017)

**Figure 2** Step by step Local Empowerment in Community Based Tourism



Source: Adapted from Cole, 2006; Sunuantari 2017

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, sustainable tourism implementation in Indonesia is a complex and multifaceted process. It involves the active participation of local communities, the development of sustainable policies and plans, and the promotion of a green economy. Government engagement and community involvement are crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable tourism. While there are challenges and areas for improvement, efforts are being made to ensure that tourism in Indonesia is sustainable and benefits both the local communities and the environment. The implementation of green tourism in Indonesia requires a multi-stakeholder approach that involves the active participation and collaboration of government agencies, local communities, tourism operators, NGOs, and tourists. Effective communication, engagement, and coordination among stakeholders are crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable tourism practices. By working together, stakeholders can ensure that tourism in Indonesia is environmentally friendly, socially inclusive, and economically beneficial for local communities. To comprehensively examine the role of stakeholders and prioritize variables crucial for devising strategies for sustainable tourism implementation, further research utilizing a quantitative approach is recommended. Additionally, it is imperative to test the concept of step-by-step local empowerment using quantitative methods to ensure its validity.



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