

## Implementation of Regenerative Tourism in the Development of Tourism Destinations in Indonesia

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### Abstract

In the last few decades, a travel-based activity with a purpose of traveling has become one of the most important developments in the economic sector around the world. The development of tourism in a region has not only giving a positive impact but also a negative impact on the destination. Tourism has a major impact on the environment (such as; biodiversity loss, landscape impact, waste and water scarcity) and social impact (such as; over tourism, gentrification and social uprising). Regenerative tourism has the idea that tourism activities should leave something better at the destination than the previous circumstances. Unlike the concept of sustainable tourism that requires leaving the destination as it should without changing or causing more additional damage. The COVID-19 pandemic shows that the tourism sector is highly vulnerable, but on the other hand it is also an opportunity to rethink how to develop tourism. Regenerative tourism is presented as a new idea or concept in tourism as a way of thinking about how to rebuild tourism more better. Thus, the implementation of regenerative tourism policies can make the world better as it used to be by restoring landscapes and teaching tourists skills that can be applied in their country or region of origin.

**Keywords:** Implementation of Regeorative, Regenerative Tourism, Tourism Development

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### A. INTRODUCTION

Since the decline in COVID-19 cases in 2022, travelling has become one of the activities humans need in recent months. This trend is also referred to as "revenge tourism," due to the psychological condition of the people who feel locked up during the COVID-19 period, resulting in a sense of stress. So, when the number of COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 status in various regions decreased, the public's enthusiasm for travel increased drastically. The emergence of this revenge tourism trend can have a positive impact on the tourism sector that has been "dead" for the last two years. Peace in the various tourist destinations indicates that this sector is beginning to flourish and revive. However, this trend still needs to be balanced with strict health protocols during travel and avoiding practices that do not support sustainable tourism. In the Figure 1 below the Central Statistical Authority of Indonesia (BPS) recorded the arrival of foreign tourists to Indonesia in 2022 as 5.471.277. The number of visits by such international tourists increased from the previous year recorded in 2021, when the number of visits was only 1.557.530.



Figure 1. Number of Foreign Tourist Visits  
Source: Processed by Researchers, BPS 2023

Given that tourism growth in Indonesia has been declining since 2020 and is starting to rise again in 2022 after the COVID-19 pandemic, in developing the existing tourist destinations in Indonesia, it is necessary to review them with more appropriate development planning and in accordance with the standards for their development. "Covid-19 has shown us the extent to which the travel industry can be affected. The tourism and hospitality industries are the worst affected industries globally, and the continuous waves of the virus and new variants are forcing governments to impose strict lockdowns" (Asif, 2021). A study conducted by Hussain Asif in 2021 explains that the future of tourism after the pandemic can be seen from three perspectives, namely: tourism awareness, destination recovery, and regenerative tourism. Every decision made in the development of a destination must be sustainable, and tourists also need to be aware of reducing the negative impact of tourism. Regenerative tourism is a special innovation pioneered by three practitioners based in the UK, the United States, and Chile (Dwyer, 2018; Mang & Reed, 2012; Pollock, 2012; Teruel, 2018) These experts have developed a variety of regenerative tourism approaches from a wide range of place contexts, knowledge, and practices. However, they all generally take advantage of the regenerative development approach. The Global Regenerative Tourism Initiative was established in Latin America in 2015 (Araneda, 2019). Continued with the formation of the Regenerative Travel Alliance starting in 2019 (Araneda, 2019). Additional applications of regenerative tourism approaches are being developed by practitioners using the development of non-tourism regenerative innovation.

Next, what is the difference between sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism? These two topics are actually related; regenerative tourism exists as an advanced concept of sustainable tourism itself. Previously, the development of sustainable tourism was designed to reduce damage to destinations, but it turns out that this did not stop there (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020; Pollock, 2012). So, regenerative tourism continues the existing concept of sustainability by positioning the tourism activity paradigm as an activity that intervenes by developing the capacity of places, communities, and tourists to be able to operate in harmony with interconnected social-ecological systems (Bellato et al., 2023). Thus, the definition of regenerative tourism can be said to be a new, more sustainable way of travelling, with the main aim being that tourists can participate in having a positive impact on tourism destinations by actively revitalising and regenerating them. So, when tourists leave a tourist destination, the condition of the destination remains in the same condition or even better than the condition before the destination was visited. The concept of regenerative itself

has actually been discussed for a long time by various experts, but this topic re-emerged in 2019 when tourism expert Anna Pollock stated at the Visit Flander and the Travel to Tomorrow Summit the importance of shifting from sustainable to regenerative. Next, what is the difference between sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism? Are these two topics actually related?. Regenerative tourism exists as an advanced concept of sustainable tourism itself. Previously, the development of sustainable tourism was designed to reduce damage to destinations, but it turns out that this did not stop there (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020; Pollock, 2012). So, regenerative tourism continues the existing concept of sustainability by positioning the tourism activity paradigm as an activity that intervenes by developing the capacity of places, communities, and tourists to be able to operate in harmony with interconnected social-ecological systems (Bellato et al., 2023). Thus, the definition of regenerative tourism can be said to be a new, more sustainable way of travelling, with the main aim being that tourists can participate in having a positive impact on tourism destinations by actively revitalising and regenerating them. So, when tourists leave a tourist destination, the condition of the destination remains in the same condition or even better than the condition before the destination was visited. The concept of regenerative itself has actually been discussed for a long time by various experts, but this topic re-emerged in 2019 when tourism expert Anna Pollock stated at the Visit Flander and the Travel to Tomorrow Summit the importance of shifting from sustainable to regenerative,

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

Given that there are only a few studies that discuss regenerative tourism, especially in discussing the development of tourism in Indonesia with a complex regenerative tourism approach, such as the limitations of the perspectives and concepts of the experts, Writing this scientific article uses a method of literary study by studying and comparing the content of a book, research results of a scientific article or journal, news, and also reports that correspond to the theory that will be discussed in particular in the field of regenerative tourism and sustainable tourism.

This article is also based only on secondary data obtained through various relevant sources, so the implementation of the results of this research could not be specified within the scope of a specific tourist destination because the data received did not correspond to the characteristics, physical and non-physical conditions, or actual conditions of the tourist destinations existing in Indonesia. It will only present some recommendations for the development plan of tourism destinations using the approach of regenerative tourism that may be developed in Indonesia.

## **C. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

### ***Sustainable Tourism or Regenerative Tourism?***

Regenerative tourism is an approach in the tourism industry that aims to not only reduce negative impacts on the environment and local culture but also leave a sustainable positive impact. This concept focuses on recovery, regeneration, and improving the welfare of local communities and the environment involved in tourism destinations. According to Bellato et. al. (2019), “regenerative tourism is a transformational approach that aims to fulfil the potential of tourism places to flourish and create net positive effects through increasing the regenerative capacity of human societies and ecosystems. Derived from the ecological worldview, it weaves Indigenous and Western science perspectives and knowledge. Tourism systems are regarded as inseparable from nature and obligated to respect Earth's principles and laws. In addition, regenerative tourism approaches evolve and vary across places over the long term, thereby harmonising practices with the regeneration of nested living systems.” What is meant here is that regenerative tourism is a

change in approach that aims to fulfil all the potential of a tourism destination to create a positive impact through increasing the capacity of a community and an ecosystem. So by developing a tourist destination using the concept of regenerative tourism, it will also have main principles such as prioritising the involvement and empowerment of local communities, preserving local culture and heritage, respecting the natural environment, and creating meaningful tourism experiences for visitors. This approach encourages practices that support local economies, reduce carbon footprints, promote environmental sustainability, and establish a healthy balance between environmental sustainability and tourism growth. With a focus on regeneration, regenerative tourism aims to create long-term benefits for all parties involved, both from an economic, social, and environmental perspective. This involves close collaboration between tourism stakeholders, local communities, the government, and related parties to create tourism destinations that are sustainable and have a positive impact.

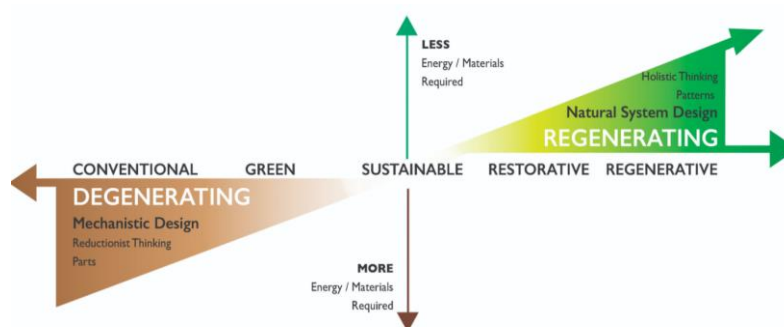


Figure 2. Comparison of Regenerative Tourism Aspects with Sustainable Tourism  
Source: Kosmos Journal

In Figure 2, it can be seen that there are several different aspects of regenerative and sustainable tourism development. Where previously "sustainable tourism" was an idea from the past, "regenerative tourism" is an idea today and should not just be used as a current trend. According to experts in the field of regenerative tourism (Araneda, 2019; Howard et al., 2008; Pollock, 2012), regenerative tourism is a different approach that comes from an ecological worldview and a regenerative paradigm.

In comparison, the mechanistic worldview and industrial paradigm dominate the conceptualization of sustainable tourism. Regenerative tourism focuses its interventions on building system-wide capacity for regeneration. So, rather than managing social-ecological impacts and ultimately achieving unlimited impacts on economic growth, Sustainable tourism essentially considers tourism as an industry and tends to prioritise top-down, standardised, and compartmentalised interventions. In contrast, regenerative tourism approaches reflect and are co-created within the context of place. Regenerative tourism aligns with living systems to work at the local level and prioritises equitable and inclusive co-creation across multiple domains and in harmony with economic development. While both approaches promote the well-being of future generations, sustainable tourism seeks to minimise social-ecological damage.

So, the fundamental difference between regenerative and sustainable tourism development activities is that sustainable tourism requires that when tourists leave a tourist destination, nothing can be changed about the destination and it must be left in the same condition as when they visited the destination; in other words, it must not cause additional damage. Meanwhile, regenerative tourism development has the idea that tourism activities carried out by tourists must leave the destination in a much better condition than the previous condition. Apart from that, in the future,

there will also be a shift from seeking sustainable growth to higher-quality development to improve human welfare by improving the local economy, preserving culture and biodiversity, offering life-changing and authentic experiences to tourists, and making it possible to become a destination. to be better than ever.

### Steps in Implementing Regenerative Tourism

Based on the results of research conducted by (Bellato et al., 2023) in figure 3, which is a refinement of the concept of regenerative tourism previously discussed by (Mang & Reed, 2012), the application of the concept of regenerative tourism in a tourism destination consists of five dimensions as shown in the image below:

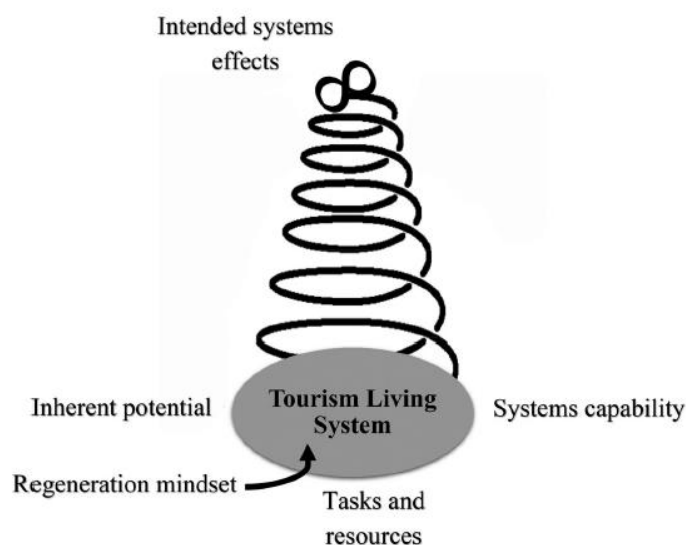


Figure 2. *Conceptual Framework* Regenerative Tourism  
Source: (Bellato et al., 2023)

#### **Dimension A: Regeneration Mindset (Regenerative Thinking Framework)**

A regenerative thinking framework will see the importance of the principles of 'assessing from an ecological perspective' and 'thinking about the use of living systems'. Adopting a regeneration mindset is the entry point to being able to operationalize this framework in a regenerative way. As in the previous picture, the mindset of tourism destinations is considered critical. This dimension considers: How can tourism be aligned with an ecological perspective and living systems thinking?

#### **Dimension B: Inherent Potential**

The inherent potential is explored using the principle of 'discovering the unique potential' of regenerative tourism destinations. The source of good change lies in the inherent potential of each unique place and community (Mang & Reed, 2012). This dimension will later be considered: What potential is there in this tourism destination and community?

#### **Dimension C: Systems Capability (System Capability)**

System capabilities are implemented through the principles of 'harnessing the capabilities of tourism living systems to catalyse transformation' and 'adopting a regenerative approach that supports cultural revival, land reclamation, knowledge perspectives and practices of marginalised indigenous communities, and the granting of privileges to communities. This dimension will focus on developing the capabilities of stakeholders in a tourism system to improve the destination by uncovering: What new regenerative capabilities can be created in tourism and related systems?

### **Dimension D: Intended System Effects (Expected System Effects)**

The desired system effects are implemented through the principle of 'creating regenerative places and communities'. It is a shared goal among all stakeholders in a destination or initiative that guides the broader system impact that stakeholders wish to achieve. These dimensions will establish: What will guide tourism stakeholders to develop a reciprocal relationship with nature and contribute to the progress of places and communities?

### **Dimension E: Tasks and Resources (Tasks and Resources)**

Tasks and resources are operationalized through the principle of 'collaborating to enact a regenerative tourism approach'. Tourism stakeholders contribute resources and carry out tasks that enable regeneration within and outside the tourism system. These dimensions determine: What tools, resources, and frameworks do we need to use, co-create, and implement?

### **Examples of Successful Implementation of Regenerative Tourism in Various Countries**

As planning develops for a better tourism future, related parties or stakeholders from each tourism destination have an opportunity to rethink how tourism activities can be carried out in a regenerative way, how tourists travel, and in what ways this can improve the quality of life on this earth. The main goal of a regenerative tourism approach is not limited to the concept of rethinking the tourism sector. Experts have also found several examples of how regenerative tourism can be applied and implemented in various case studies from various countries, which will be explained after this section.



Figure 3. Via Organica Ranch, Mexico.  
Source: tripadvisor.com

The first example in figure 4 of the success of implementing regenerative tourism in a country is in Mexico. In a town called San Miguel de Allende, local farmers from the town's Via Organica Farm created a framework that could simultaneously regenerate the village landscape and livelihoods in the town. These farmers utilised 75 hectares of land that was previously only used as agricultural land and pasture into a regenerative plantation that provides organic vegetables, herbs, fruit, plant seeds, and nutritious animal production.

Apart from that, visitors to Via Organica Farms can also learn various agricultural techniques and how to rehabilitate land organically and regeneratively, such as biointensive gardening, composting, seed saving, and tree planting. Via Organica Ranch also has a plan to replant the desert landscapes of Mexico, South America, and beyond with a polyculture of mesquite, nopal, and agave plants, all of which originate from Mexico. From this example, it can be seen that regeneration occurs at two levels, namely, by restoring landscapes and teaching tourists skills they can apply to their home regions.





Figure 4. *Eco Lodge Rewa Village*, Guyana  
Source: <https://www.rewaecolodge.com/contact>

Furthermore, the second example in figure 5 comes from the country of Guyana. In this country, there are also several local community groups that own and run eco-lodges privately, one of which is in Rewa Village. Economically, tourism in Guyana can benefit every member of society and enable the community to protect the ecosystem on which tourism activities in the area depend, thereby having local and global benefits.

Rewa Village is home to more than 300 residents who also participate in managing a 350 km<sup>2</sup> conservation area that has a pristine rainforest ecosystem that can annually absorb more than 70,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is usually calculated by tourists visiting Guyana to carry around 2,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. 8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year, both through international flights and domestic flights. For example, if 200 tourists visit this village every year, this would be the same as carrying CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 560 metric tonnes per year. Thus, the existence of tourism activities in the village can reduce overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through tourism activities in the middle of the rainforest, thereby making the world better than before. Rewa Village is a small example that illustrates how tourism can create a community that is positive, clean, and has benefits for the environment. This goes beyond sustainability and produces a positive total impact.



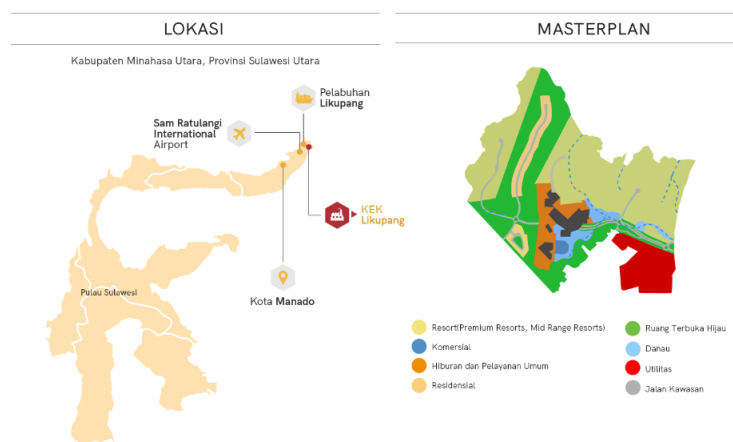
Figure 5. *Tiaki Promise New Zealand*  
Source: <https://ttgasia.2017.ttgasia.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/11/Tiaki-Promise.jpg>

The third example in figure 6 comes from New Zealand. This country has a principle in the form of a 'promise' called the 'Tiaki Promise' which means 'to care for, preserve, and protect'. The Tiaki

Promise is a commitment to caring for New Zealand through sharing a connection with nature. This commitment aims to ensure that people who visit New Zealand take part in or participate in protecting nature in that country. The relationship between 'tangata whenua' (people living in New Zealand) and nature is very close. Intrinsically, their life with nature is very intertwined; every relic on earth has its own story and significance for their culture. Therefore, by following the commitment to the Tiaki Promise, tourists can see nature through the eyes of local communities, which creates a bond with nature. Apart from that, the Tiaki Promise also explains that when tourists visit New Zealand, they will also care for the land, sea, and nature; walk lightly and leave no trace; travel safely, showing care and concern for everyone; respect the culture; and travel with an open heart and mind. So the regenerative aspect demonstrated in this example lies in the fact that this promise is in the DNA of New Zealanders and is also used to increase awareness among tourists.

### **Implementing Regenerative Tourism in Indonesia**

In order to understand how to make an appropriate plan for implementing regenerative tourism in developing tourist destinations in Indonesia, it is necessary to carry out separate research related to the actual physical and non-physical conditions of the tourism destination itself. This is because Indonesia is an archipelagic country that stretches across a wide area, has islands, and has different characteristics or features in each region. Currently, the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, Sandiaga Uno (2023), stated that there will be tourist destinations in Indonesia that will be developed through the concept of regenerative tourism, which can consider environmental and social sustainability and will be implemented in the Likupang Special Economic Zone (KEK). , North Sulawesi, where the Likupang SEZ is expected to become the centre of regional economic growth.



Gambar 6 Zonasi Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus Likupang  
Source: <https://kek.go.id/kawasan/KEK-Likupang>

Meanwhile, Operational Director of PT Minahasa Permai Resort Development, BUPP KEK Likupang Paquita Widjaja, explained that Likupang has its own character. Indonesia has a very large territory with thousands of islands spread from Sabang to Merauke. Likewise, its natural wealth is very abundant. Indonesia's geographical and astronomical location also influences the richness of the fauna that inhabits Indonesia's homeland. Apart from that, the Likupang SEZ also has advantages that other tourism destinations in Indonesia do not have, namely that the Likupang SEZ is not only on the Wallace Line but also in the heart of the coral triangle, which creates biodiversity diversity in the Likupang SEZ. Of course, implementing regenerative tourism has now become a



necessity in taking the right steps for a tourism destination to participate in tackling climate change issues and also issues of changes in CO2 emissions. Because when tourists have carried out tourism activities, they should leave the destination in better condition than before.

However, based on the data, concepts, theories, and examples described in the previous section, the first thing that must be addressed is to foster a sense of awareness of the crucial importance of carrying out tourism activities in a regenerative manner so that it is embedded in the minds of tourists and the public in tourism destinations in Indonesia. Reflecting on the Tiaki Promise launched by the government and companies in New Zealand, this can be used as a reference in starting or the first step in implementing regenerative tourism in Indonesia because the target is not only tourists but also to raise awareness of regenerative tourism among the population as well.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

In this article, we have analysed how to plan the development of a tourism destination area, especially in Indonesia, using the conceptual approach of regenerative tourism, as described by experts. In this sense, sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism each have different definitions and cannot be generalised. Although regenerative tourism is a continuation of sustainable tourism, these two concepts certainly have different goals.

Apart from that, to be able to narrow down and implement a plan to develop more regenerative tourism activities in Indonesia, it is necessary to carry out separate research to be able to provide analysis by adjusting the appropriate steps in developing a tourism destination, supported by more accurate and specific primary data for each type of destination. tourism in Indonesia because these destinations will, of course, be different and have their own characteristics when compared between one destination and another. Next, before starting to improve tourism destinations in Indonesia that promote the concept of regenerative tourism, it is necessary to first instill a sense of awareness, both from residents or local communities and also from tourists visiting Indonesia, about the importance of tourism activities that are based on regenerative development.

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