

## **STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPER-PRIORITY TOURISM TO BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH IN LABUAN BAJO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research analyzed the development strategies of super priority tourism in increasing economic growth in Labuan Bajo, West Manggarai Regency. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The research informants include local government officials, tourism business actors, MSME actors, and local communities around tourist destinations. The data were analyzed using SWOT analysis to identify internal and external factors influencing the development of super priority tourism. The results indicate that Labuan Bajo has significant strengths, such as world-class natural and cultural tourism potential, strong government policy support, and improved tourism infrastructure. Opportunities include increasing domestic and international tourist interest and strong support from central government programs. However, several weaknesses and threats were identified, including limited human resource quality, economic disparities among local communities, and environmental pressures. The appropriate development strategy is to optimize tourism potential through infrastructure enhancement, MSME empowerment, human resource development, tourism promotion digitalization, and the implementation of sustainable tourism principles. The development of super priority tourism in Labuan Bajo has positively contributed to regional economic growth and improved local community welfare.*

**Keywords:** *super priority tourism, development strategy, economic growth, SWOT analysis, Labuan Bajo.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

East Nusa Tenggara is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is famous for its various natural beauty and diverse culture as well as the hospitality of its people. East Nusa Tenggara is known for having tourism potential in each of its districts and has different characteristics of natural beauty and diverse culture. One of them is West Manggarai Regency which is a Regency located at the western tip of Flores Island has a very strategic geographical location with Labuan Bajo as the Capital of the Regency, West Manggarai Labuan Bajo, located at the western tip of Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), is a tourist destination that has a million charms and strong attractions for domestic and international tourists. Labuan Bajo is the entry point for tourists who want to visit Rinca Island and Komodo Island which are habitats for Komodo dragons, endemic animals that only exist in the region. In addition, tourists can enjoy panoramic sunsets on various hills such as Amelia Hill and Love Hill, as well as explore local culture in traditional villages such as Wae Rebo which is located at an altitude of 1200 meters above sea level. The local government is also actively developing Labuan Bajo's tourism potential by combining natural, cultural, and religious attractions to improve the welfare of local communities while strengthening Labuan Bajo's position as a tourist destination. Government Regulation (PP) Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan for 2010-2025 or Ripparnas 2010-2025. To accelerate this transformation, the government also established the Labuan Bajo Flores Tourism Area Management Authority (BPOLF) through Presidential Decree Number 32 of 2018. This agency was established so that the management, development, and construction of the Labuan Bajo and Flores tourism areas are more coordinated, systematic, directed, and integrated. In line with that, the government also designated Labuan Bajo as one of five Super Priority Tourism Destinations (DPSP).

Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2014 This Regional Regulation regulates the implementation and management of tourism in West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Its scope includes the management of tourist attractions, community empowerment, and preservation of regional culture. Tourism is organized based on certain principles and aims to improve the economy and welfare of the community as well as preserve the tourist environment. Other government programs, the President of the Republic of Indonesia also directly intervened to oversee and ensure that the transformation of Labuan Bajo runs smoothly and brings benefits to the people and the state. While leading a limited meeting at Plataran Komodo Resort, Labuan Bajo on January 20, 2020, the President delivered seven directives that later became the cornerstones of accelerating the transformation, especially the arrangement of areas and infrastructure in Labuan Bajo.

In addition to natural wealth, the development of artificial tourism in West Manggarai is carried out to complement the tourist experience and encourage local economic growth through MSMEs, culinary centers, and modern recreational facilities. In the background discussion, the researcher is interested in conducting this research with the title "Super Priority Tourism Development Strategy in Increasing Economic Growth in Labuan Bajo".

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is field research, using case studies to obtain various data and information related to the issues discussed. Therefore, this research aims to find and collect data for the development of integrated tourism at tourist attractions in Labuan Bajo City.

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research aims to uncover qualitative information, emphasizing the process and meaning of describing a problem. This research approach was chosen because it illustrates and explains the role of

government and tourism sector development in integrated tourism, with the research object being Labuan Bajo City.

In this study, the population includes all parties related to tourism activities in the research area who have the potential to provide information through the distribution of questionnaires.

This study used a sample of 100 respondents, selected using random sampling techniques, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. All respondents completed a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. This number was deemed sufficient to represent the population and support objective and representative research analysis.

Data collection techniques in this study include interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative descriptive analysis combined with a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis systematically identifies various factors to formulate a company's strategy.

A SWOT analysis compares external factors, opportunities and threats, with internal factors, strengths and weaknesses, allowing for informed decisions. This analysis is based on logic, defining strengths and opportunities while simultaneously minimizing weaknesses and threats. The decision-making process is always linked to the development of the company's mission, objectives, strategies, and policies.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### SWOT Analysis in Determining the Development Strategy for Super Priority Tourism Objects in Labuan Bajo

Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) analysis is a management strategy used to identify the internal and external conditions facing an organization. This analysis is also based on logic related to the development of a business's mission, goals, strategies, and policies in making strategic decisions that are deemed feasible to develop.

**Table 1 SWOT Analysis Matrix**

<b>INTERNAL</b>	<b>Strengths(S)</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES(W)</b>
<b>EXTERNAL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural beauty (Komodo National Park)</li> <li>2. The local community is friendly and plays a role in service</li> <li>3. Local culture (traditional villages, culinary) is interesting</li> <li>4. Infrastructure remain(airport, port, main road) adequate</li> <li>5. Central government &amp; private sector support in investment</li> <li>6. Development of local MSMEs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting infrastructure (village roads, sanitation) is inadequate</li> <li>2. The quality of tourism human resources (guides, hospitality) is not yet even</li> <li>3. Accommodation and transportation prices are relatively high</li> <li>4. Lack of public awareness in maintain cleanliness</li> <li>5. The availability of public facilities (ATMs, restaurants, foreign exchange, etc.) is inadequate.</li> </ol>

<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The government determines Labuan Bajo as DSP</li> <li>2. <i>Event</i> international (festival, Summit) increase popularity</li> <li>3. Digitalization and promotion <i>on line</i> open market opportunities</li> </ol>	<p><b>STRATEGYSO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Optimizing the natural tourist attractions and Support DPSP policy For Expand market domestic and international tourism.</li> <li>2. Develop digital promotion based on the power of natural potential and culture so that attract more traveler.</li> <li>3. Encouraging the development of MSMEs based on local potential with take advantage of the growth in tourist visits.</li> </ol>	<p><b>STRATEGYST</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using status DPSP to determine regulations strict in maintaining sustainability environment from the threat of damage caused by mass tourism.</li> <li>2. Strengthening government-private collaboration-public For reduce the negative impacts of competition between destinations.</li> <li>3. Develop environmental monitoring systems and sustainable tourism governance.</li> </ol>
<p><b>THREATS(T)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land conflict or unconformity interest</li> <li>2. Risk environmental damage consequence increased visits</li> <li>3. Economic dependence on the sector vulnerable tourism</li> </ol>	<p><b>STRATEGYWO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving supporting facilities travel through APBN/APBD support And private investment to meet international standards.</li> <li>2. Developing diversification product cultural, culinary and local event-based tourism for reduce dependency on natural tourism.</li> <li>3. Providing tourism human resources training through government programs to improve service quality.</li> </ol>	<p><b>STRATEGYWT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build system Management rubbish integrated to reduce threats damage environment and cover up management weaknesses.</li> <li>2. Reduce dependence on one type tour by developing package integrated tourism (nature, culture, culinary).</li> <li>3. Develop risk mitigation policies to reduce impact economic uncertainty and other external conditions.</li> </ol>

From the SWOT analysis above, the Super Priority tourism development strategy for Labuan Bajo City is as follows:

**1. SO (Strength-Opportunity) Strategy**

The SO (Strength-Opportunities) strategy is a strategic approach designed to maximize internal strengths to capitalize on available external opportunities. This strategy positions a region or organization in a favorable position, supported by strong internal potential and an external environment that offers development opportunities. In developing super-priority tourism in Labuan Bajo, the implementation of the SO strategy is highly relevant, given the region's rich natural and cultural resources and significant policy support from the central government.

A SWOT analysis shows that Labuan Bajo possesses several key strengths, including international-class natural attractions, designation as a Super Priority Tourism Destination (DPSP), the availability of supporting infrastructure, and the involvement of the community and local MSMEs. These strengths are combined with external opportunities such as increasing tourist interest in nature and cultural tourism, the existence of national policies supporting tourism development, and the development of the digital economy and sustainable tourism concepts. Therefore, the SO strategy is aimed at accelerating the growth of the tourism sector while simultaneously increasing regional economic growth in a sustainable manner.

#### 1) Optimizing Natural and Cultural Tourism Potential

Development tourist LabuanBajo This involves optimizing the region's natural and cultural tourism potential. Various advantages, such as Komodo National Park, exotic island clusters, marine panoramas, and rich local culture, are being leveraged to address the growing demand for nature-based tourism and ecotourism. In its implementation, the central and regional governments are structuring tourist areas, implementing conservation-based management, and developing supporting tourist destinations to enrich the range of attractions offered. This strategy is aimed at preserving the environment while strengthening Labuan Bajo's position as a world-class tourism destination.

Forms of policy implementation carried out by the West Manggarai government in managing tourism sites:

- a. The government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, has designated Komodo National Park as a world-class tourism icon and implementing visit restrictions (carrying capacity) to maintain environmental sustainability.
- b. The local government is developing and promoting supporting destinations such as Padar Island, Batu Cermin Cave, Sylvia Hill, and Wae Rebo Tourism Village to expand the choice of tourist attractions.
- c. The arrangement of natural tourism areas is carried out through conservation programs and tourism zoning so that the natural attractions are maintained in the long term.

2) Strengthening Integrated Tourism Promotion and Marketing Labuan Bajo's strength as one of the nation's leading tourism destinations is optimally utilized to respond to increasingly wide-open tourism promotion opportunities.

The forms of policy implementation carried out by the West Manggarai Regency Government in tourism management include:

- a. Utilizing the power of Labuan Bajo's image as one of the nation's leading tourism destinations to respond to increasingly open tourism promotion opportunities.
- b. Implementation of an integrated promotional strategy by the central government and regional governments through strengthening the national branding of Wonderful Indonesia.
- c. Organizing and supporting various national and international tourism events as a means of promoting destinations.
- d. Utilization of digital media as the main means of communication in tourism promotion.

- e. Collaboration with tourism industry players, mass media, influencers, and creative industry players to increase the visual appeal and promotional narrative of destinations.
  - f. The use of digital platforms, such as social media, official tourism websites, and audiovisual promotional content to reach domestic and international tourist markets.
- 3) Encourage the development of MSMEs based on local potential by leveraging the growth in tourism visits. The West Manggarai Regency Government's policy implementation in tourism management includes:
- a. As a major force in developing MSME products that are unique and competitive.
  - b. Increasing the active participation of local communities in tourism economic activities as an effort to empower communities and strengthen community-based economies.
  - c. Development of value-added MSME products that reflect local identity and are able to meet the needs and preferences of tourists.
  - d. The role of local governments and destination managers in providing training and capacity building programs for MSMEs, both in terms of production, business management, and service quality.
  - e. Implementation of sustainable business mentoring activities to improve the professionalism and competitiveness of MSMEs in the tourism sector.

## **2. Indicators of Success of Tourism Promotion Strategy**

The success of Labuan Bajo's tourism promotion strategy can be measured through several main indicators, namely:

- a. Increasing tourist visits: The success of the promotion is reflected in the increasing number of domestic and international tourists visiting Labuan Bajo year after year. This indicator demonstrates the effectiveness of the promotion in attracting tourist interest and decision-making.
- b. Expansion of tourism segmentation and market  
Promotional success is also measured by the increasing segmentation of the tourism market, whether based on tourist origin, age group, or travel interests. This demonstrates that promotions are able to reach a broader and more diverse market.
- c. Increasing accommodation occupancy rates (occupancy rate) Increasing hotel and tourism accommodation occupancy rates is an indicator of successful promotion, because it shows an increase in the length of stay and tourist activity at the destination.
- d. Increased interaction and reach of digital promotions The success of digital promotions can be measured by the increasing number of visits to the official tourism website ([www.komodowanderlusttour.com](http://www.komodowanderlusttour.com)), the growth of followers and the level of interaction (engagement) on social media, and the increased distribution and reach of digital promotional content.
- e. Destination improvement and competitiveness This indicator can be seen from the increasing recognition of Labuan Bajo as a leading destination in various publications, media, and national and international tourism forums, as well as positive tourist perceptions of destination quality.

## **3. Phinisi Ship Tax Regulations**

Phinisi boats, as a mode of marine tourism transportation, play a vital role in supporting tourism activities in Labuan Bajo and the West Manggarai Regency. In addition to serving as a means of transportation for tourists, they also serve as a cultural and maritime tourist attraction. As tourist visits increase, their presence contributes to regional revenue through various taxes and levies.

Regulatory requirements for Phinisi ships, as a tourism transportation service, include several taxes and levies, both central and regional. From a central tax perspective, businesses are required to comply with tax regulations administered by the Directorate General of Taxes, such as Income Tax (PPh) on business income, Value Added Tax (VAT) on certain services, and other tax administration obligations. Furthermore, the Ministry of Transportation regulates ship safety and operational licensing through ship registration, measurement certificates, and seaworthiness certification.

From a regional perspective, local governments can levy taxes and levies, such as tourism service business taxes, mooring fees, port fees, and contributions to the use of tourist areas. These levies aim to support port facility maintenance, safety monitoring, and environmental management of tourist destinations. Thus, the Phinisi boat tax serves not only as a source of regional revenue but also as a tool for managing tourism activities to ensure sustainability.

However, in practice, several challenges remain, such as uneven tax compliance among business actors, suboptimal vessel data collection, and the presence of traditional vessels operating without official permits. This situation can reduce potential regional revenue and foster unfair business competition. Therefore, regulatory strengthening, digital data collection, and public awareness of tax obligations to vessel owners are needed.

Overall, transparent, fair, and integrated management of Phinisi boat taxes can provide dual benefits: increasing regional revenue while encouraging the development of orderly, safe, and sustainable marine tourism. This policy is also expected to support the welfare of local communities dependent on the maritime tourism sector.

### **Local Government Strategy in Developing Tourism Objects in Labuan Bajo**

The West Manggarai Regency Government plays a strategic role in developing Labuan Bajo as a leading tourism destination. With Labuan Bajo's designation as a Super Priority Tourism Destination (DPSP), the local government serves not only as an implementer of central government policies but also as a key actor in formulating technical policies tailored to the region's characteristics and the needs of the local community.

Regional tourism development policies are aimed at supporting sustainable tourism development, encompassing economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. This is reflected in regional policies that emphasize strengthening basic infrastructure, improving destination quality, and empowering local communities as key stakeholders in tourism. Regional governments strive to ensure that the growth of the tourism sector generates a tangible economic impact for the community without compromising the preservation of the local environment and culture.

In its implementation, the local government has developed various regulations and strategic programs to support tourism development, including improving accessibility to tourist destinations, developing tourist areas, and developing supporting tourism amenities. Furthermore, tourism promotion policies have become a key focus, utilizing digital media and cross-sector collaboration to enhance Labuan Bajo's appeal at the national and international levels (Salukh et al., 2023).

Local governments also encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration (collaborative governance) between the government, the private sector, and communities. This approach is considered crucial for addressing various challenges in tourism development, such as resource constraints, land conflicts, and the environmental impacts of increased tourism activity. Through this collaboration, tourism policies are expected to be more effective and sustainable.

With thus, policy local government in developing tourism in Labuan Bajo is not only oriented on improvement amount tourist visits, but also on creating inclusive and sustainable tourism governance. This policy is a crucial foundation for establishing Labuan

Bajo as a world-class tourism destination capable of sustainably improving the well-being of local communities.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The super-priority tourism development strategy in Labuan Bajo has proven to play a significant role in driving regional economic growth. Tourism development not only increases the number of tourist visits but also has a direct impact on increasing community income, creating jobs, and growing various supporting sectors such as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), transportation, hospitality, and the creative economy. Tourism activities create a multiplier effect that can stimulate the local economy more broadly and sustainably.

Furthermore, Labuan Bajo boasts strong tourism potential, particularly in world-class natural and marine attractions, such as Komodo National Park, small island tourism, and unique and exotic natural panoramas. This potential is further strengthened by the support of central and regional government policies, such as the designation of Labuan Bajo as a Super Priority Tourism Destination, followed by infrastructure development, improved transportation accessibility, regional development, and sustainable tourism promotion. The synergy between this natural potential and policy support is a key factor in enhancing the destination's competitiveness at both the national and international levels. However, the results of the analysis show that the implementation of tourism development strategies still faces a number of obstacles.

Pressures on environmental sustainability due to increased tourism activity, limited human resources in the tourism sector, and the unequal distribution of economic benefits to local communities are challenges that must be addressed immediately. If not managed effectively, these issues have the potential to hamper the sustainability of destinations and reduce long-term economic benefits.

Therefore, the super-priority tourism development strategy in Labuan Bajo must continue to be guided by the principles of sustainable tourism development, balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects. Collaboration and synergy between the government, businesses, and local communities are key factors in ensuring that tourism development not only boosts regional economic growth but also preserves the environment and improves community well-being in a sustainable manner over the long term

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