

Research Article

Trust in Tourism Governance Partnership in Managing Sustainable Marine Tourism in Southwest Papua Province

Yusdi Nurdin Lamatenggo^{1*}, Muh. Akmal Ibrahim², and Muhammad Musa'ad³

¹Doctoral Student of Public Administration Program, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

²Department of Administrative Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

³Department of Administrative Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Cendrawasih University, Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia

Abstract.

Marine tourism is an activity that relies on the appeal of natural panoramas and coastal marine environments with special interest activities in the form of fishing, snorkeling, swimming, recreation, and others, which utilize coastal areas as their main vehicle. This study aims to analyze tourism governance partnerships in the management of sustainable marine tourism in Southwest Papua Province. The trust element relates to building trust between actors involved in the development of sustainable marine tourism. This study uses qualitative analysis, using data collection methods through in-depth interviews and documentation studies to explore trust between multiple actors in building and maintaining relationships in sustainable marine tourism management in Southwest Papua Province. Data sources consist of primary and secondary data, while data analysis is carried out using interactive methods. Informants in this study are actors involved in sustainable marine tourism management in Southwest Papua Province. The results of the study indicate that trust in tourism governance partnership in the management of sustainable marine tourism in the West Papua Province is improving the quality and quantity of actors formulating shared vision and targets. Communication was built through a tourism coordination forum. In maintaining trust between actors, consistency in action, transparency, and respecting the role and rights of each actor. Maintaining commitment in the management of marine tourism, the tourism office and the indigenous community to make an agreement or memorandum of understanding (MoU). However, building trust there are still obstacles, namely that coordination between actors is not yet fully optimal in building joint marine tourism branding and other obstacles.

Keywords: trust, management, sustainable marine tourism

Corresponding Author: Yusdi Nurdin Lamatenggo; email: yusdilamatenggo@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has so much marine potential, especially in terms of tourism. According to the Parliamentary Analysis Center of the Expertise Agency of the DPR RI Secretariat General, marine tourism is one of Indonesia's leading tourisms. Data from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries shows that Indonesia has 20.87 million ha of marine, coastal, and small island conservation areas. Indonesia's coastline stretches 99,093 km with a sea area of 3.257 million km², causing the potential for marine biodiversity to be very large. Some parts of Indonesia are even included in the coral triangle area which is home to more than 500 species of reef-forming corals, which have adapted to various habitats [1]. On the other hand, geographically, the Indonesian archipelago is located in a tropical area flanked by two continents (Asia and Australia), two oceans (Pacific and India), and is the meeting point of three continental plates (Eurasia, India-Australia, and Pacific). Bio-geophysical interactions make the Indonesian archipelago have great natural resource wealth supported by the existence of valuable biological and non-biological resources [2].

In recent decades, the development of coastal tourism areas for tourism has continued to increase. WTO (2004) stated that almost three-quarters of tourist destinations in the world are coastal areas. This indicates an opportunity in the development of coastal tourism areas in order to contribute to regional income [3]. In its development, the trend of marine tourism is increasingly in demand by tourists. In the type of nature tourism, 45 percent of foreign tourist visits to ecotourism and 35 percent of visits to marine tourism. Likewise, domestic tourist visits to marine tourism reached 11.29 percent in 2021. As a result, marine tourism is included in the top three favorite tourist destinations among domestic tourists [4].

The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education stated that the main objective of tourism sector development is related to development in socio-cultural, economic and political aspects. This is in line with Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism which states that the implementation of tourism is aimed at increasing national income in order to improve the welfare and prosperity of the people, expand and equalize employment opportunities [5].

Tourism is part of a multi-dimensional development that has an impact on various aspects of life. Tourism, which is now a source of foreign exchange for the country, shows a social reality where tourism is a complex phenomenon, not just an activity with the main object of the service industry involving product and market management,

but more than that it is a process of dialogue between tourists as guests and local communities as hosts (Demartoto, 2009) [6].

State revenue through tourism is also quite large and can help the economy of the area where the tourist attraction is located, especially in the marine sector which is one of Indonesia’s natural resources. Data from the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia shows quite significant data from the development of tourism sector revenue in Indonesia since 2015-2024 as follows:

TABLE 1: Amount of Foreign Exchange from Indonesia’s Tourism Sector (2015-2024).

Year	Foreign Exchange Rate (Billion US Dollars \$)
2015	\$10.76 USD
2016	\$11.21 USD
2017	\$13.14 USD
2018	\$16.43 USD
2019	\$16.91 USD
2020	\$3.38 USD
2021	\$0.52 USD
2022	\$6.78 USD
2023	\$14.00 USD
2024	\$16.71 USD

Source: Bank Indonesia is reprocessed by the Data and Information Systems Bureau, Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism explained that the Tourism Sector Foreign Exchange is the country’s foreign exchange earnings originating from the activities of foreign tourist visits (wisman) to Indonesia. To measure the achievement of foreign exchange value from this sector, the Ministry of Tourism refers to data on receipts (exports) of foreign tourist travel services (inbound travel) recorded in the Current Transaction in the Services component in the Indonesian Balance of Payments Report (NPI), published by Bank Indonesia. Based on the Indonesian Balance of Payments Report for Quarter IV of 2024 released by Bank Indonesia, total foreign exchange earnings from the tourism sector in 2024 reached 16.71 billion USD [7].

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the tourism sector has an important role in state revenue and of course the revenue of the tourist area. In implementing regional government, the government has a role in developing its region from various sectors, one of which is tourism. West Papua Province has various potentials in

the field of marine tourism, both the potential of its natural waters and its coastal culture. Several international-scale marine tourism attractions encompass the Raja Ampat National Tourism Strategic Area and its Surroundings, because its existence is part of the Coral Triangle (CT) so that it has received the attention of various international institutions such as Conservation International (CI), World Wide Foundation (WWF) The Nature Conservation (TNC) and other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). The commitment to developing the tourism sector of the West Papua Government has been stated in the 2023 Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPPDA) in accordance with the mandate of Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism.

There are several marine tourisms that are superior and have extraordinary marine biodiversity in the Province of Southwest Papua, including coral reefs, mangrove forests, and leatherback turtle habitats in Tambrau (Table 2). Some other tourist destinations include:

TABLE 2: Marine Tourism Potential of Southwest Papua Province.

Region	Marine tourism
Raja Ampat	Piaynemo, Wayag, Misool, Arborek, and Dampier Strait
Push	Tanjung Kasuari Beach, Doom Island, and World War II historical tours
Tambrau	Sausapor Beach, Jamursba Medi Leatherback Turtle
Maybrat & South Sorong	Ayamaru Lake, Kohoin River

Source: Provincial Government of ProvinceWest Papua 2025

The presence of Raja Ampat in the Province of West Papua has received direct recognition from UNESCO and various other marine or sea tourism that have the same high ecological, cultural and economic value. However, in this marine sector there are still various challenges, including infrastructure limitations, lack of community participation, and the need for more than governance in managing tourist attractions and maritime-based creative economies. In order to develop tourism governance in the province of West Papua, the Tourism Governance Partnership approach is the main strategy proposed to increase synergy between the government, academics, the private sector, local communities, and the media. This model emphasizes the active participation of all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of tourism policies, so as to create a management system that not only increases the competitiveness of tourist destinations, but also ensures community welfare and environmental sustainability.

The description of the condition of Southwest Papua above shows that this region has great potential as a target for global marine tourism with extraordinary natural, cultural and historical wealth. However, limited infrastructure, disaster reduction and partnership-based governance are some of the main challenges that need to be overcome. Several strategic steps that need to be implemented. Increasing accessibility and connectivity infrastructure between districts, strengthening ecotourism programs for environmental protection, strengthening communities in tourism management.

In terms of partnership cooperation, each related stakeholder such as the provincial and district governments have synergized to advance the tourism sector. The government is trying to involve other instruments such as the private sector and related agencies to work together, but the lack of coordination and differences in vision are still obstacles in the partnership.

Based on the explanation that has been described, mature cooperation between various related stakeholder lines is very necessary. The tourism governance approach is a new approach and one of the governance variants that focuses on managing the tourism sector. Where this approach has several important elements including trust, social capital and power relations [8]. One of the elements in this theory, namely trust, is related to building trust between actors involved in the development of sustainable marine tourism.

The trust that is established between the stakeholders involved is certainly an important point to create a systematic tourism management and have a clear direction in developing marine tourism in the province of Southwest Papua. The need for supporting activities and programs in building the trust of stakeholders involved has an influence to unite understanding. Therefore, this study will further explore the trust aspect as a reference in the Tourism Governance Partnership in the management of sustainable marine tourism in the province of Southwest Papua.

2. Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative research method. Data collection methods include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data sources consist of primary and secondary data, while data analysis is carried out using interactive methods. The informants of this study are individuals who have a relationship in this study such as the Tourism Office of Southwest Papua Province, the Regional Government of Southwest

Papua Province, Investors and tourism industry players, local communities and NGOs or organizations involved in Sustainable Marine Tourism Management in Southwest Papua Province. The location of the study focuses on tourism areas in the province of Southwest Papua and Sorong City which is the capital of the province of Southwest Papua. The duration of the study is two months, namely from February to March 2025.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Trust understanding has been built between stakeholders involved in marine tourism management through regular meetings between actors (government, customs, NGOs, private sector, communities) to develop a shared vision with two main targets, namely quality with a focus on tourism services, environmental conservation, and visitor experience. Also, Quantity which focuses on increasing the number of destinations, accommodation capacity, transportation services, and promotion. Stakeholders in this program mutually agree that increasing quantity should not sacrifice the quality of the environment and local culture, for example visitor capacity is regulated based on the carrying capacity of the ecosystem/environment.

In addition, to ensure the sustainability of marine tourism development, multi-party collaboration is essential. In addition, several associations and communities that play a role in the tourism industry in Southwest Papua include (Table 3):

TABLE 3: Collaboration data of Tourism Associations and Communities in Southwest Papua.

Association and Community Names	Role
ASITA (Association of Indonesian Travel Agencies)	focuses on the travel industry.
PHRI (Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association)	which supports hotel and restaurant standards.
HPI (Indonesian Tour Guide Association)	which develops the professionalism of tour guides.
Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis)	who play a role in community-based tourism management.
environmental NGO,	Flora Fauna International and Walhi, which support conservation and community empowerment

Source: data reductionSouthwest Papua, 2025

Synergy between the government, business actors, local communities, and non-governmental organizations is the key to encouraging the growth of the marine tourism sector based on sustainability. Another thing that the West Papua Provincial Government has done to support the development of higher quality marine tourism is to hold

several cross-sectoral discussion forums to discuss the direction of marine tourism development in the West Papua province. The government has held several discussion forums with other stakeholders to improve the cooperation that has been established. The discussion forums in question are as follows:

TABLE 4: Discussion forum for tourism management in Southwest Papua Province.

Formal Forum	Informal Forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tourism coordination forum between stakeholders.• Workshop• Focus Group Discussion (FGD)• Socialization of regulations• customary deliberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community discussions joint field visit• social media WhatsApp/Telegram group

Source: data reduction 2025

Based on the Table 4 above, the discussion between stakeholders in the management of sustainable marine tourism in the Province of West Papua is divided into two, the first is a formal forum where the discussion activities that take place are carried out with more official rules and procedures. This discussion is expected to find output or outcomes in the form of specific objectives, can identify important issues, produce ideas, which will then be used as a reference in managing tourism in the Province of West Papua. While in the informal forum, the activities carried out are more about discussions to confirm and ask for guidance on previously determined decisions, especially concerning the management of sustainable marine tourism in the Province of West Papua. However, there are still obstacles faced by the government regarding the discussion where in its implementation there has been no dynamic cooperation between each party so that it requires more attention to foster the enthusiasm of the various parties involved.

In order to maintain the trust of stakeholders involved in the management of marine tourism in the Province of West Papua, the government always strives for consistency in every action it takes. Every commitment must be followed by real implementation from every implementing element. Things like transparency of decision information and budget use must be clear and easily accessible to every stakeholder member involved. Respecting the role and rights of each actor, especially customary rights to land and sea, is also considered important by the government of the Province of West Papua, where seeing the diversity of culture and customs that are still strong, the government must be careful so that the decisions they make to develop marine tourism do not damage the social and cultural life of the local community and can run harmoniously.

The form of commitment formed in the management of marine tourism in the Province of West Papua is also carried out in several ways such as making an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): For example, an MoU between the Tourism Office and the indigenous community in managing a tourist area, or with other institutions, then joint programs: for example, the “Wonderful Indonesia Sustainable Experience Trips” program, Declaration of commitment: Joint declaration to maintain the sustainability of the sea and culture in all tourism development and finally Involvement in monitoring or evaluation.

TABLE 5: Actors involved in sustainable marine tourism management in Southwest Papua.

Actor	Resources Owned
Provincial/District Tourism Office	Regulations, budgets, development programs, access to national and international networks, tourism data.
Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries	Marine zoning data, marine conservation regulations, access control over conservation areas.
Village/Customary Government	Customary land management rights, local cultural resources, social legitimacy.
Local Community	Traditional knowledge, local human resources (tour guides, craftsmen, tourist fishermen), culture and customs.
Private/Investor	Financial capital, promotional networks, managerial capabilities, innovation in tourism services.
Academics/Universities	Scientific research, environmental data, evidence-based development innovation.
Media/Tourism Promoter	Digital promotion network, social media, national/international marketing campaigns.

The form of communication carried out to build trust aspects between institutions in the marine tourism sector of the province of West Papua is also in the form of the establishment of a Marine Tourism Coordination Forum at the provincial and district/city levels consisting of government, customary, private, community, media, universities and NGOs (Table 5). Regular coordination meetings (at least once every 3 months), Appointment of cross-sector coordinators: for example, one coordinator for conservation, one for promotion, one for infrastructure. Preparation of a joint annual work plan (RKPB: Marine Management Work Plan) as a guide for activities. Use of digital platforms for information updates and fast reporting (such as online tourism management dashboards).

However, in the involvement of each stakeholder, there are still several problems such as conflicts of disagreement, both at the provincial and district/city levels to determine the priority of tourism sector development. On the other hand, the lack of communication between the private sector and the government has caused low

investment in the marine tourism sector, minimal community involvement in tourism management, resulting in a lack of sense of ownership of tourist destinations in their areas. This problem is still homework for the West Papua Provincial Government. In addition, the differences in vision and mission of each related stakeholder are an obstacle in

4. Conclusion

Communication is still one of the main problems in the aspect of trust in sustainable marine tourism management in the province of West Papua. Although the discussion forum has been running well both formally and informally, it has not been able to foster enthusiasm from related stakeholders to be directly involved in marine tourism management in the province of West Papua. The government as a party that has a major role in managing the tourism sector in West Papua should be able to be an active leader in consolidating the desires of the actors involved in marine tourism management in the province of West Papua. In addition, because the coordination situation is not optimal: There has not been a strong synergy between districts/cities in building a joint marine tourism branding. Dependence on external parties: Conservation programs or tourism development are often dominated by NGOs or the private sector without the active involvement of the local community. Based on the results of the study, the provincial government of West Papua has tried to open a discussion space with related parties, but this is still considered insufficient to increase enthusiasm in the cooperation that has been established. Continuous motivation is needed in implementing this program by taking a direct approach with related agencies and organizations to accommodate all their respective interests. Furthermore, the provincial government, which acts as a leader, needs to unite these different interests and visions into a policy so that it can become a common foundation for each party.

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