

Conference

Bintan Regency Government Strategy to Increase Tourism During the Pandemic

Nurul Khotimah^{1*}, Kismartini Kismartini² and Budi Puspo Priyadi²

¹Magister Administrasi Publik, Diponegoro University

²Department Public Administration Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Diponegoro University

ORCID

Nurul Khotimah: 0000-0002-6688-1256

Abstract. Tourism is a supporting sector of the economy because it provides a large foreign exchange contribution. Bintan makes tourism a leading sector of the region. However, Bintan tourism was badly affected by the pandemic, with 82% fewer visits, leading to a decline in PAD and economic growth rates. This study aimed to analyze the strategic steps taken by the Bintan Regency Government to generate tourism during the pandemic. This study used qualitative methods. Based on the research, it can be seen that the strategy taken by the Bintan Regency Government was to provide a sense of security in traveling (safe travel) because currently tourists need security and safety guarantees when traveling; also, the government provided free tax sanctions for businesses given the difficult economy, and changed the target market by aiming for opportunities to increase domestic tourist visits by providing various attractive promotions.

Keywords: tourism, tourists, health protocol, Covid-19

Corresponding Author: Nurul Khotimah; email: nurulkhotimahrahman@gmail.com

Published 15 March 2022

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Nurul Khotimah et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the IAPA Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

The world of tourism is currently growing very rapidly, especially by offering various charms of natural beauty and the uniqueness of each region. The tourism sector is still a priority sector for the government because it is considered capable of being the locomotive of the nation's economic movement. The management of the tourism sector continues to be developed by the government, through various policies carried out by the government to make Indonesian tourism more advanced and known in the eyes of the world. The role of the national tourism sector is increasingly important in line with the development and contribution made by the tourism sector through foreign exchange earnings, regional income, regional development, as well as in the absorption of investment and labor and business development spread across various parts of Indonesia (1).

Indonesia is a country that has a lot of potential for natural tourism. Besides Bali, Bintan is one of the tourist destinations that attracts domestic and foreign tourists due to its natural beauty and strategic geographical location, which is directly adjacent to

OPEN ACCESS

Malaysia and Singapore. With a land area of only 2% of the total area. Bintan is located in the Riau Islands Province and has many potential tourist destinations and has a leading tourist destination in the form of the Lagoi Integrated International Tourism Area. This area has dozens of exclusive international standard resorts in an area of 23,000 hectares. With its international class facilities, Bintan makes foreign tourists its main target. Bintan Regency has a geographical location that is directly adjacent to Singapore and Malaysia, making the border strengthen various investments, especially in the tourism sector (2).

The Lagoi integrated international tourist area is located in Teluk Sabong District, where in this area there are also many restaurants and various other tourism supporting sectors. In addition to the Lagoi tourist area, Bintan also still has a lot of tourist destinations scattered in almost all sub-districts in Bintan. Some of them are Trikora beach in Gunung Kijang sub-district. This beach also presents a panorama that is no less beautiful and exotic. This beach stretches for approximately 25 km with white sand and rocks. Lagoi area and Trikora beach are just a few of the many tourist destinations in Bintan.

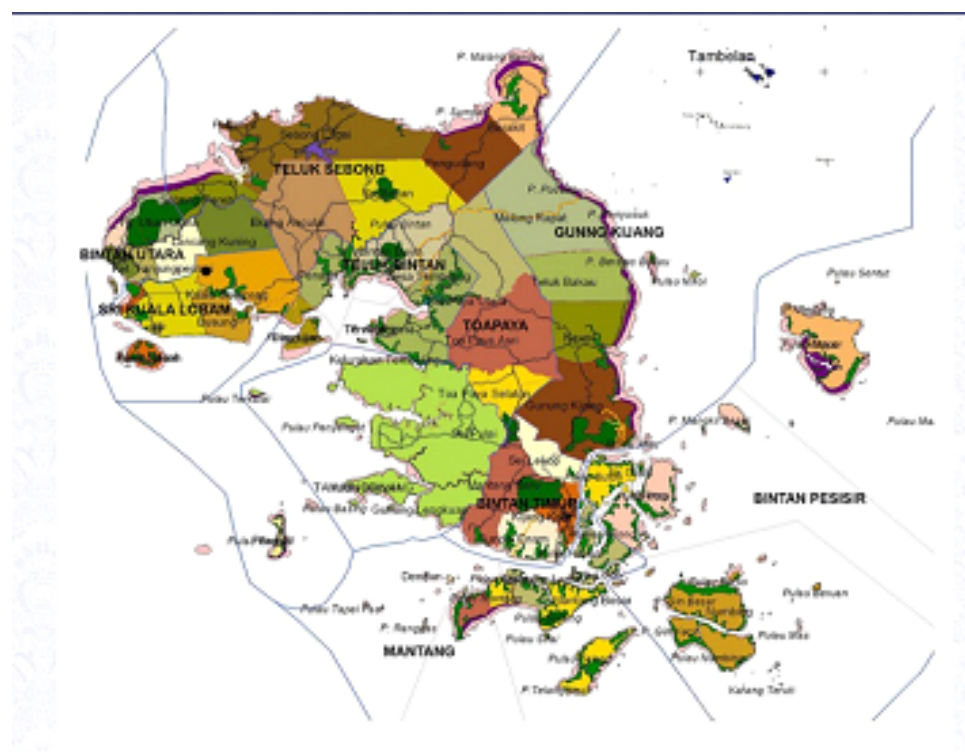


Figure 1: Geographical Location Of Bintan Regency. (Source: Regional Government of Bintan Regency, 2021)

However, since the beginning of 2020, the tourism industry has experienced a slump due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. The covid-19 pandemic is an infectious disease caused by a type of coronavirus that was

first discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. In its development, the covid-19 pandemic has spread to various countries around the world, including Indonesia. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in all parts of Indonesia starting from the beginning of March 2020 (3).

Tourism became one of the sectors most affected for the first time by the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions policies as well as cancellations and reductions in flight frequency, hotel closures have reduced domestic and international tourism supply and demand. Based on the UNWTO report until the period of June 2020, it is estimated that foreign tourist arrivals (tourists) decreased by 93% or lost 440 million visits compared to 2019 and USD 460 million in export income from the tourism sector and became the worst period in global tourism development since 1950 (4).

Bintan as one of the areas that makes tourism a leading sector also feels the spread of the virus. This can be seen from the number of tourist visits coming to Bintan which has decreased significantly, reaching 82.49% from the previous year (5).

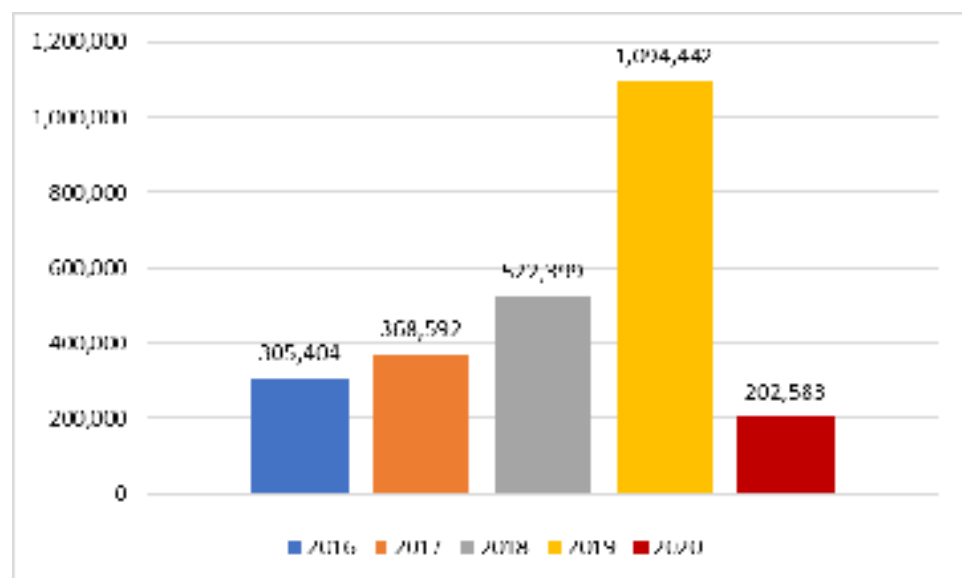


Figure 2: Tourist visits to Bintan Regency 2016-2020. (Source: Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Bintan, 2020)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Bintan Regency Tourism was in a slump. This is because more than 80% of tourists who visit are foreign tourists and are dominated by Singaporean citizens. Tourism is one source of local revenue (PAD) which has a contribution of 58.66% in 2019 or 148 billion compared to other sectors.

The pandemic causes uncertain conditions in almost all sectors including tourism. This condition demands the response of the Bintan Regency Government to act quickly and immediately adapt to the changing situation as it is today. The government needs a special strategy to revive the tourism sector and increase the confidence of domestic

and foreign tourists. The policies taken must be adapted to current needs, this is of course in line with the government paradigm that is currently starting to develop. This paradigm is referred to as the agile paradigm, where the government is expected to work more strategically, flexibly and also adaptively. This paradigm is used to respond quickly and effectively to any changes through policies and services (6).

So that matters related to the strategic efforts made to revive tourism in Bintan Regency are very interesting to be analyzed further to obtain an overview of the Bintan Regency Government's response to the current pandemic situation. And to find out what steps are being taken to adapt to the pandemic conditions.

2. Methods

The method used in this research is qualitative method. The purpose of qualitative methods is mainly for clarification, interpretation at a certain level, as well as to provide explanations. This research method is used to describe the efforts made by the government to generate tourism during the pandemic. The data used to analyze is the result of in-depth interviews and also secondary data obtained from various electronic sources (7).

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the research conducted, the pandemic besides having an impact on decreasing the number of tourist visits also had an impact on decreasing the amount of PAD by 55.46% and various other impacts such as layoffs for employees, especially in the tourism sector. The pandemic, which had a huge impact on the tourism sector in Bintan, prompted local governments to undertake several strategic alternatives. This action was taken as an effort to keep tourism moving during the pandemic, by adjusting the current situation and conditions. The alternative taken is of course to provide security guarantees for foreign tourists to visit Bintan Regency. The government made several strategic efforts, namely providing security guarantees for tourists, providing the abolition of tax sanctions and changing the target market so that Bintan tourism can immediately rise from adversity.

1. Safe Travel

The government of Bintan Regency seeks to provide security guarantees for tourists visiting Bintan. This is evidenced by the various efforts to accelerate vaccines that have been carried out both for the people of Bintan and for workers engaged in tourism.

Currently, employees who work in the tourism sector have administered dose 2 of the vaccine, while for the people of Bintan in general, around 70% have vaccinated. In addition, tourist attractions in Bintan also comply with health protocol standards and have obtained the first CHSE (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, Environment) certificate. The certificate was given by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy with the implementation of strict health protocols. Currently, around 5000 employees routinely perform GeNose every day and PCR every 7 days for early detection.

In addition, currently the Lagoi tourist area as Bintan's leading destination has implemented various scenarios, to ensure the safety and comfort of tourists during their visit to Bintan. Some of them are as follows:

a) Communicating and Cooperating with Singapore

As the country with the most visits to Bintan, Singapore has a very close relationship, this is supported by the geographical location of Bintan and Singapore which can be reached in just 1 hour by sea. Even Singaporean tourists can transact using Singapore dollars. This has prompted the Bintan Regency Government, the management of Bintan Resort and the Singaporean side to communicate regarding strategies and plans for tourism recovery and several other technical matters related to the visit of Singaporean tourists to Bintan. With this collaboration, it can provide an overview and input what things are considered and the needs of foreign tourists to travel in the midst of a pandemic. In addition, the Bintan Government can also learn and adopt some of what Singapore has done to suppress the spread of COVID-19. This is done by holding training for employees of resorts and hotels in the Lagoi area to work according to the health protocols set by the government but still able to provide the best service for tourists who come to Bintan.

In addition, regulations related to travel corridors were also discussed in the discussions held between the various parties. This is done to immediately attract foreign tourists to visit Bintan again. However, until now there is no regulation that regulates tourist travel corridors, so this is one of the obstacles in tourism marketing in Bintan. This is because there is still no official policy from the central government that becomes a policy reference at the regional level.

b) Mapping Tourist Areas

The Lagoi integrated tourism area has 17 international standard resorts and hotels. Currently the Lagoi tourist area is mapped to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and to provide a sense of security for tourists. The mapping is carried out into 3 zones, namely vaccination zone 1, vaccination zone 2 and vaccination-free zone but it is mandatory to carry out an antigen test to enter the area. For foreign tourists, they can do a PCR test

to enter all tourist areas in Lagoi, making it easier for tourists who come to visit. This zoning is expected to minimize the risk of transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

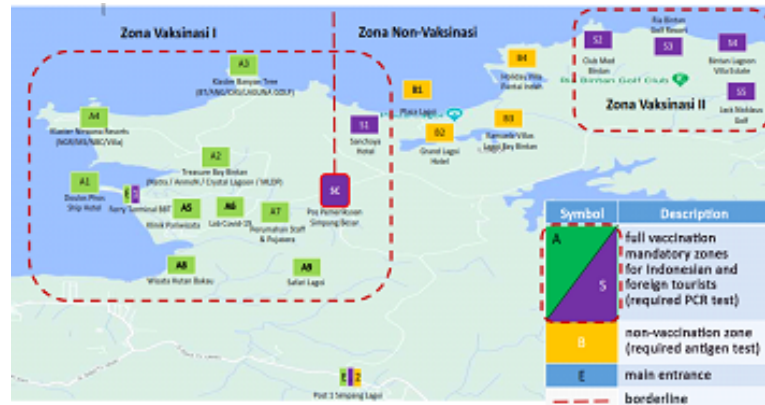


Figure 3: Mapping of Tourist Areas in Lagoi. (Source: *Bintan International Tourism Promoting in New Normal, 2021*)

Based on Figure 3, it can be seen that the mapping is carried out clearly so that it is expected to minimize the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. This mapping aims to reduce the density of visitors who come to these tourist attractions, besides that it also makes it easier for tourist area managers to monitor and also trace if things happen that are not desirable. This of course is also one of the efforts that are quite well made to maintain health protocols during tourist trips in Bintan.

c) Give a Blue Pass while the Visitor is in the Tourist Area

Blue pass is a tracing tool made with Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology that has been used in Singapore for a long time. Blue pass are used by all employees and given to tourists who visit to monitor and conduct searches if there are confirmed COVID-19 cases. This makes it easy to handle properly and quickly. This tool has been tested for use and is quite effective in detecting and tracking anyone who makes contact with the user.

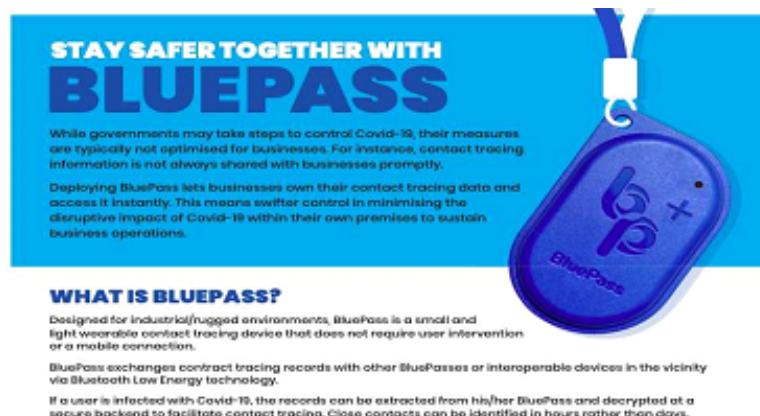


Figure 4: Blue Pass. (Source: *Bintan International Tourism Promoting in New Normal, 2021*)

Blue pass has a small form so it is very easy to be carried by visitors who are in tourist areas. In addition, this tool also does not require GPS to work so that it can function anywhere and anytime. Blue pass works by recording people who are 3 meters around the user as people who are in close contact so that when a tourist is confirmed positive, it can immediately trace anyone who has close contact with that person. In addition, the blue pass also has a battery that lasts up to 12 months so that the use of this tool is considered effective enough to track the transmission of covid-19.

d) Availability of Laboratory Facilities for PCR

Given that this integrated tourism area is very large, Bintan Resort also has laboratory facilities to conduct PCR tests in collaboration with the Government and the Bintan District Health Office. The PCR Lab is operated by the Galang Island COVID-19 Special Hospital for Infection (RSKI), which has a National PCR Lab certification and coordinates with the PCR Lab in Singapore. This LAB is also a recommendation from the National Task Force (BNPB) as a screening effort for tourists and employees who work in tourist attractions in Bintan. This shows the commitment of all parties to organize a safe travel trip by providing facilities that have now become a necessity to ensure the safety and comfort of tourists. Currently, security guarantees while traveling are very important points before someone decides to travel, so the PCR test facilities provided are certainly an added value to attract tourists to visit Bintan.

e) Mechanisms for Handling Tourists Confirmed COVID-19

The scenario for handling tourists who are confirmed to be COVID-19 is also a concern for tour operators to anticipate things that are not desirable. Tourists who are confirmed positive are provided with a special place to isolate both in the Lagoi tourist area and at the Raja Ahmad Tabib Hospital, which has collaborated with Lagoi. In addition, for Singaporean tourists, a mechanism for returning tourists has been provided in accordance with health protocol standards. Even resort employees have been checked for Gnose every day and carry out PCR tests regularly and carry out various trainings to provide services in accordance with the current pandemic conditions. In addition, the employees also simulated the handling of positive confirmed patients properly and according to the health protocol standards set by the government.

The steps taken to guarantee a safe and comfortable trip are complete enough with the cooperation of all parties. This can be seen from the various efforts that have been taken to provide the best service for tourists. With various health protocol supporting facilities offered by tourist attractions in Bintan, it will be an added value that can be offered to tourists. Of course, this will be a consideration for tourists to choose Bintan as a tourist destination. With the pandemic conditions that have not yet ended, while

people need time to travel, tourists tend to look for tourist destinations that are able to provide security guarantees.

2. Elimination of Taxpayer Fines (Perbup Number 402/VIII/2021)

The economy is one of the sectors most affected by the pandemic. The economy of people of all levels is experiencing a slump. This is also felt by the people of Bintan, especially those who work and have businesses in the tourism sector. With a decrease in the number of tourist visits to Bintan, of course, it will also affect people's income. In fact, many tourism businesses and tourism supporting sectors have been forced to temporarily lay off or lay off some of their employees. This is certainly a concern for the Bintan government to make policies that can alleviate economic problems, especially in Bintan. So, The government of Bintan Regency has adopted a policy of eliminating administrative sanctions for all taxpayers. This includes hotel tax, restaurant tax, entertainment tax, advertisement tax, street lighting tax, non-metallic minerals and rock tax, parking tax, groundwater tax, swallow's nest tax, land and building tax and land and building acquisition fees. The waiver of the fine is obtained with the condition that the principal receivables of regional taxes are paid for the period 1995-2020.

In addition, the government guarantees that the position of SMEs is not burdened with interest from loans. The loan interest will be subsidized through the Government Budget with a maximum loan size of 30 million rupiah. This program will be synergized with the Cooperatives and SMEs office with the regionally owned Conventional Bank, namely the Rural Bank (BPR Bintan) whose mechanism is formulated jointly and aims to ease the burden on SMEs that have already been established and in order to grow new entrepreneurs in Bintan Regency.

The policy taken by the Bintan government is an effort to help ease the burden on the economy which has declined during the pandemic. This is certainly very helpful for the community, especially for tourism activists and SME owners in Bintan.

3. Change of Target Market

According to the Acting Regent of Bintan, the government is currently changing the target of tourism marketing which has been dominated by foreign tourists. Now the target is focused on attracting domestic tourists, preparing several things related to tourist travel security and waiting for government policies related to visits by foreign nationals. Several policies were taken regarding changes in the target market:

a) The Government of Bintan Regency shall strengthen community-based tourism in the village (tourism village) with coaching and training activities. So that the potential of the village can be developed and become a cheap alternative tourism so that it is affordable for all people. Apart from being an effort to develop and increase the

number of community-based tourist destinations, this policy is also expected to be able to provide various contributions to the community, especially to help improve the standard of living and the economy of the community.

b) The Gerbang Kampung program, namely the movement to build villages by providing funds to manage and highlight the potential that exists in the village, to become a new tourism icon. With the assistance funds provided by the government, it is hoped that the community can properly manage the tourism potential of each village so that they can highlight the uniqueness of the tourism offered and can compete with other tourist destinations

c) Local scale tourism events, namely local events targeting domestic tourists in order to support economic recovery including the Bintan-Kepri National Tourism Family rally and the Nusantara Culinary Festival. This event is held as an effort to continue to develop and preserve the culture that exists in Bintan. In addition, this activity is also an effort to attract tourists to visit Bintan, especially domestic tourists.

d) The government conducts online promotions by collaborating with various media, travel associations, tourism business services and bintan district genpi. In addition, the Bintan Regency Government also collaborates with various parties to carry out promotions with several discounts for tourists visiting Bintan. Massive promotions are mainly carried out in the Lagoi area which is famous for being expensive and exclusive, so far domestic tourists can enjoy international quality facilities at more affordable prices. In the current pandemic conditions, collaboration from various parties is really needed so that tourism can bounce back from adversity. By collaborating, it is hoped that tourism conditions in Bintan will slowly but surely improve again.

Considering that the pandemic is still not completely over, the government's option to focus on domestic tourist visits is the most appropriate option. Tourism as one of the leading sectors must continue to move so that it can continue to contribute to the region and employees who work in the tourism sector. In addition, the option of making domestic tourists the main target can also introduce bintan which is still not very popular in the community with all the potential for its natural beauty.

4. Conclusion

The Bintan Regency Government has tried to overcome the impact of the pandemic on tourism by taking several strategic steps that are tailored to the needs during the pandemic. This step was also taken to revive the tourism sector in Bintan by taking into account the economic conditions of the community. The first step is to provide

security guarantees for tourists who come to Bintan and of course this step is taken to increase the confidence of tourists to return to visit Bintan. By providing security and comfort guarantees while traveling in Bintan, it is hoped that it will increase the number of tourist visits. Then the government also provided several reliefs related to tax payments aimed at easing the burden on people affected by the pandemic. This is certainly quite helpful considering the difficulty of the economy during the pandemic. And finally, the change in the target market is also an effort to keep tourism moving during the pandemic. Because travel is a journey to get pleasure and tranquility so that the guarantee during a tour is very important to note. With various safe and comfortable travel scenarios, it is hoped that tourists will no longer worry about traveling in Bintan. So slowly but surely Bintan tourism will rise again.

References

- [1] Elistia E. Perkembangan dan dampak pariwisata di indonesia masa pandemi Covid-19. Paper presented at: Konferensi Nasional Ekonomi Manajemen Dan Akuntansi (KNEMA); 2020 Desember 10-11.
- [2] Marina H. Ekonomi politik pariwisata kawasan wisata lagoi kabupaten bintan. Kepulauan Riau : Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji; 2015.
- [3] Nawawi M. Optimalisasi sektor pariwisata di masa pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Keislaman, Kemasyarakatan dan Kebudayaan*. 2021;22(1):41–56.
- [4] Masbiran VUK. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on west Sumatera tourism. *Jurnal Pembangunan Nagari*. 2020;5:148–164.
- [5] Mahadiansar M, Wijaya AF, Wanto AH, Timur J. Analisis dampak penutupan akses pariwisata di wilayah perbatasan kabupaten bintan pada masa pandemi COVID-19. Paper presented at: Seminar Nasional Perbatasan dan Desa. Tanjungpinang, Indonesia ; 2021 Apr 14. 118–127.
- [6] Purwanto EA. Kebijakan publik yang agile dan inovatif dalam memenangkan persaingan di era vuca (Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). Yogyakarta; 2019.
- [7] Heyink JW, and TJ. Tymastra. The function of qualitative research. 1993;29(3):1–8.