

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project Background

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world—in 2019 alone, there was an estimated number of 1,460 million international tourist arrivals with total international tourism receipts of USD 1,481 billion (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2020). According to UNWTO (2019), due to continuous expansion over the decades, sustainability has become a key part of the industry's policies and is referred to as an objective. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism principles address the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development (UNWTO, n.d.). This shows how sustainable tourism helps conserve nature, create jobs for local communities, and preserve their local values and culture.

Furthermore, a sub-component of sustainable tourism is ecotourism (Kiper, 2013). Ecotourism itself is responsible travel to natural areas that pay attention to environmental conservation, local community welfare, and educational involvement (The International Ecotourism Society [TIES], 2015). According to Kiper (2013), through ecotourism, one can learn to respect nature and local culture, making it an important educational component. In addition, countries that have many natural and socio-cultural attractions are suitable as ecotourism destinations. Therefore, Indonesia shows high potential in ecotourism because the country is known for its natural and cultural diversity (Butarbutar & Soemarno, 2013).

As the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesia has 17,499 islands with a total area of approximately 7.81 million Km²—and 3.25 million Km² of its territory consists of oceans (Direktorat Jenderal Pengelolaan Ruang Laut, 2020). Among them are 201 marine conservation areas, seven of which are marine national parks, including Bunaken National Park (JP, 2021). Bunaken National Park is full of biodiversity. It has various marine creatures, such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, fish, mollusks, marine mammals, and sea turtles, as well as several species of mangroves (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan Republik Indonesia [KLHK], 2018).

Apart from being a conservation area managed by the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the marine park is also an ecotourism site. Nevertheless, most of the park's tourist facilities are managed by local residents. They benefit from restaurants, lodging, souvenir sales, and snorkeling and diving equipment rentals. These businesses are fully run by themselves, making them their main source of income besides fishing and agriculture. Hence, the authors are interested to dig deeper into how ecotourism in Bunaken National Park—especially in the Bunaken Island area—aids the ecosystem and the local communities. On top of that, the authors aspire that this storytelling project can be an educational tool for the audience regarding the importance of ecotourism as a way to promote sustainable tourism.

1.2. Problem Formulation

1. What are the ecotourism activities around Bunaken Island?
2. What are the benefits of ecotourism for the marine ecosystem and local community of Bunaken Island?

1.3. Project Purpose

1. To show the ecotourism activities around Bunaken Island.
2. To describe the benefits of ecotourism for the marine ecosystem and local community of Bunaken Island.

1.4. Project Benefit

This project is expected to show the audience the importance of ecotourism as a way to promote sustainable tourism.

1.5. Target Audience

1. Domestic and international tourists that want to travel to Bunaken Island.
2. Tourism students and practitioners that want to learn about ecotourism in general and/or in Bunaken Island.

In order to suit the target audience—which includes international audiences—this project is written and produced in English.