

## Tourism Policy Analysis in East Nusa Tenggara: Challenges and Opportunities

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**ABSTRACT:** This research aims to analyze tourism policy in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) with a focus on the challenges and opportunities faced, using qualitative research methods. NTT, as a potential tourism destination in Indonesia, shows rich natural, cultural and historical potential. Using a qualitative approach, this research documents the identification of current tourism policies, explores problems and obstacles in their implementation, and evaluates development opportunities that can be explored. Through qualitative data analysis involving interviews, observations and documentation studies, this research identified that the complexity of regulations and coordination between government agencies are the main obstacles in implementing tourism policies in NTT. Meanwhile, aspects of infrastructure that are not yet optimal are also a significant challenge in increasing accessibility and comfort for tourists. However, this research also reveals great opportunities for empowering local communities and the potential for developing superior tourist destinations that can attract more visits. The results of this research provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of tourism policy in NTT and provide a basis for improving and formulating more effective policies. The implications of this research also involve efforts to formulate policy strategies that can overcome challenges and exploit opportunities, by ensuring the sustainability of tourism and positive contributions to the welfare of local communities. It is hoped that this research can serve as a guide for policy makers, researchers and related parties in developing the NTT tourism sector in a sustainable manner.

**KEYWORDS:** East Nusa Tenggara, Tourism, Tourism Policy.

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### 1. ADVANCE

Tourism is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary industry. Tourism is not a stand-alone sector and requires the participation of all parties. In the development of integrated destinations, the consideration of linkages between sectors and tourism management becomes increasingly complex (Brawnwel in Theobald (ed), 2005: 406).

In the context of these important changes, the tourism policy environment has become a strategic means for governments to increase tourism potential. In this case, tourism policy becomes very strategic and important in tourism development. One stakeholder that plays a key role is the government's understanding to ensure that all tourism initiatives are planned and implemented in a coherent and sustainable manner.

The government wants to ensure that tourism development provides benefits and minimizes social and economic costs as well as environmental impacts (Wanhill, in Theobald, 2005). Conversely, profit-seeking entrepreneurs cannot regulate what they should do, but what they do not do can be regulated by the government through policies and regulations. For example, by establishing spatial regulations, permits, licenses, certificates, and laws.

Government intervention in tourism development can be done through the implementation of several policy instruments that can be used to control and provide incentives for sustainable tourism development. Land use regulations, restrictions on tourist access to affected areas, protection of local culture, environmentally sound guidelines of tourist conduct, restrictions on energy use, conservation of scarce natural resources, pollution reduction, transportation systems, etc. Hosts also benefit from providing incentives for infrastructure, development and protection of urban green spaces and national parks.

The selection of policy instruments becomes very important if it is not based on partial and incomplete research, but rather on a thorough review of the objectives to be achieved in the most efficient way possible. The most important thing is also to be based on good morals and political will. The problems that develop today in relation to tourism planning are only limited to technical aspects, when in fact they are political issues related to organizing all components of tourism in the context of sustainable tourism (Theobald, 2005).

The role of policy makers in determining tourism policies taken to develop sustainable tourism is very important. Therefore, policy makers need to understand the concept of good tourism planning. East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) is one of the provinces in

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Indonesia that has great tourism potential. The province consists of several islands that have amazing natural beauty, such as beautiful beaches, high mountains, and rich culture. However, despite its great potential, tourism in NTT still faces many challenges. Therefore, proper tourism policy analysis is needed to overcome these challenges and take advantage of existing opportunities.

One of the main challenges in tourism development in NTT is inadequate infrastructure. Many areas in NTT are difficult to reach due to damaged roads or inadequate public transportation. This makes it difficult for tourists to visit tourist attractions in NTT. Therefore, policies that focus on developing adequate infrastructure are needed to support tourism in NTT. Security issues are also a challenge in tourism development in NTT. Some areas in NTT are still prone to conflict and violence, making tourists reluctant to visit the area. Therefore, policies that focus on improving security in these areas are needed so that tourists feel safe and comfortable when visiting.

The lack of tourism promotion is a challenge in tourism development in NTT. Many tourists do not know the tourism potential in NTT because of the lack of promotion carried out. Therefore, policies that focus on NTT tourism promotion are needed to be better known by tourists. The lack of availability of tourism facilities is also a challenge in tourism development in NTT. Some areas in NTT still lack adequate tourism facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, and environmentally friendly tourist attractions. Therefore, policies that focus on developing adequate tourism facilities are needed to support tourism in NTT.

In addition, environmental issues are also a challenge in the development of tourism in NTT. Some tourist attractions in NTT are still poorly maintained, so they can damage the environment and reduce tourist attraction. Therefore, policies that focus on good environmental management are needed to support sustainable tourism in NTT. Lack of community involvement is also a challenge in tourism development in NTT. And policies that focus on community empowerment in tourism development in NTT are needed because many people in NTT have not been involved in tourism development, making it difficult to utilize existing tourism potential.

Despite facing many challenges, NTT also has great opportunities in tourism development. One of these opportunities is the cultural wealth owned by NTT. NTT has a variety of unique tribes and cultures, such as the Sasak Tribe in Lombok and the Bajau Tribe in Flores. Therefore, policies that focus on the development of cultural tourism in NTT are needed to take advantage of this potential.

Based on the explanation above, the formulation of the problem of this study is to identify obstacles to tourism policy implementation and the potential development of the NTT tourism sector. The purpose of this study is to provide strategic guidance to local governments, tourism stakeholders, and local communities to formulate effective and sustainable policies. The benefits of this research are a deep understanding of the impact of policies on tourism growth as well as solutions to overcome emerging obstacles, maximize NTT's tourism potential, and face the challenges faced.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is research that provides a written picture of the research. Qualitative research is a research method that describes objects, phenomena, and social conditions from data and events in the field in the form of text, words, and images (Sugiono, 2017). The analysis techniques used are observation and interviews with Labuan Bajo managers and visitors.

This research is located at the Tourism Office of East Nusa Tenggara Province. This location determination is based on the consideration that this location has stakeholders who know tourism policies in NTT. The instruments in this study are documentation and interview guidelines at the Tourism Office of East Nusa Tenggara Province

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Tourism Potential in East Nusa Tenggara

Kabupaten/Kota	Daya Tarik Wisata				Jumlah
	OOTW Alam	OOTW	Musik/Budaya	OOTW	
Sumba Barat	60	82	20	-	262
Sumba Timur	21	16	-	-	37
Kupang	31	7	2	-	40
Timor Tengah Selatan	23	22	2	-	47
Timor Tengah Utara	9	7	1	-	17
Belo	66	72	9	-	147
Ida	21	16	2	-	39
Larantuka	46	29	6	-	81
Flores Timur	88	62	21	-	171
Sikka	36	22	13	-	71
Ende	37	20	-	-	57
Ropka	25	25	8	-	58
Manggarai	23	12	8	-	43
Kota Naha	68	32	6	-	106
Manggarai Barat	39	24	22	-	85
Sumba Tengah	5	42	-	-	47
Sumba Barat Daya	27	20	-	-	47
Ngada	21	22	1	-	44
Manggarai Timur	7	19	6	-	32
Batu Naha	15	8	-	-	23
Makasa	34	12	8	-	54
Kota Kupang	37	9	8	-	54
East Nusa Tenggara	689	636	226	0	1551

Source : BPS Pariwisata NTT

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East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) is a tourism paradise rich in natural, cultural, and historical potential. Geographically, NTT consists of beautiful islands such as Flores, Komodo, Sumba, and Timor, which offer stunning natural beauty. These islands offer white sandy beaches, colorful coral reefs, and dazzling green hills. In addition, with its status as home to Komodo dragons, rare and unique ancient animals, NTT is a great attraction for nature lovers and biological researchers. This natural tourism potential can be managed sustainably to maintain its natural beauty while providing economic benefits to the local community.

In addition to its natural wealth, NTT is also known for its unique cultural diversity. Each island in NTT has its own traditions, dances, and traditional ceremonies. Cultural festivals such as Pasola in Sumba, traditional Waiwu Dedu ceremonial traditions in Flores, and Bhakti Waworaha rituals in Timor are attractive to tourists interested in authentic cultural experiences. This cultural tourism not only provides an opportunity to understand the rich cultural heritage, but also supports the local economy through the promotion of traditional handicrafts and community-based tourism activities. By utilizing and preserving its natural and cultural potential in a balanced manner, East Nusa Tenggara has great potential to become a leading tourism destination in Indonesia.

### **3.2. Tourism Potential in East Nusa Tenggara**

The current identification of the East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Tourism Policy reveals various initiatives that have been implemented to develop the tourism sector in the region. The NTT government has focused on improving tourism infrastructure, such as road construction and other supporting facilities, to improve accessibility and comfort for tourists. The development program of superior destinations, such as Labuan Bajo on Flores Island which is famous for its underwater beauty, shows strategic efforts in advancing certain destinations to increase tourist attraction.

In addition, intensive tourism promotion policies have been adopted to increase NTT's visibility as an attractive tourist destination. Marketing initiatives involve online campaigns, promotions at international tourism fairs, and collaborations with tourism industry players. The NTT government has also established rules and regulations that support tourism sustainability, focusing on environmental preservation and the welfare of local communities. While there have been positive steps, the identification of these policies may also include challenges and potential improvements to achieve sustainable tourism development in NTT. Continuous evaluation of these policies is key to ensuring that NTT's tourism sector develops in line with people's expectations and needs.

### **3.3. Challenges and Opportunities for Tourism Policy Implementation in East Nusa Tenggara**

The implementation of tourism policy in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) faces a series of challenges and opportunities that require strategic thinking. One of the main obstacles is the complexity of regulations that can hinder the efficiency of policy implementation. This challenge involves better coordination between various government agencies and relevant stakeholders, in order to create a regulatory framework that is clear, consistent, and supports the growth of the tourism sector. By improving the regulatory framework, policy implementation can become smoother, provide confidence to investors and pave the way for the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

Infrastructure is another important aspect that challenges the implementation of tourism policy in NTT. Limitations in transportation facilities and accessibility to tourism destinations may limit the growth of this sector. Although there have been development efforts, opportunities to improve tourism infrastructure need to be considered further. Investment in road, airport and port improvements will create better connectivity, allowing travelers to explore the beauty of NTT more easily and comfortably.

On the other hand, the implementation of tourism policy in NTT also offers a number of opportunities that can be utilized. Empowering local communities can be a major force by involving them in the planning and management of tourism destinations. Active community involvement can create more authentic tourism experiences and support local economic development. In addition, smart and sustainable tourism promotion can enhance the attractiveness of NTT destinations globally, opening the door to further investment and increased positive impact on people's well-being.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

With extraordinary natural and cultural potential, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) clearly has a significant attraction to become a leading tourism destination in Indonesia. Its natural beauty, such as white sandy beaches, coral reefs, and biodiversity including Komodo dragons, attracts nature lovers and biological researchers from all over the world. In addition, the rich cultural heritage on each NTT island offers an authentic cultural tourism experience. This cultural tourism is not only an attraction for tourists, but also supports the local economy through the promotion of traditional handicrafts and the participation of local people in the tourism sector. However, the implementation of tourism policy in NTT is also faced with a number of challenges. Complex regulations and infrastructure problems that are still constrained can hamper the growth of the tourism sector. However, there are opportunities to improve coordination between government agencies and strengthen tourism infrastructure through appropriate investments. Empowering local communities is also an important opportunity to maximize the economic and social benefits of tourism, as well as ensure sustainable destination management. Through proper policy evaluation and improvement, NTT has great potential to optimize its attractiveness, advance the tourism sector, and have a positive impact on local communities.

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