



# **Sustainable Tourism Development: Unveiling the Socio-Economic and Environmental Aspects of Community Projects in Indonesia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to explore the role of community projects in supporting sustainable development and green economy in the tourism sector of Indonesia. A qualitative research method was employed to gain a deep and contextual understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and impacts of community projects on environmental, cultural, and socio-economic aspects. Data collection utilized a Forum discussion group, and in-depth interviews were conducted to optimize research outcomes with the participation of 11 experts involved in green economy and tourism. This collaborative effort included experts from Musamus University and the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism of South Papua Province.

Research findings elucidate the role of environmentally friendly technology and sustainable practices in supporting social green economy, aiming to achieve a balance between social justice, poverty alleviation, and environmental preservation. Community projects, particularly in the tourism and environmental sectors, are recognized as effective means to enhance social welfare and have a positive impact on the green economy. Challenges persist regarding the conservation of natural resources, underscoring the need for sustainable measures. By prioritizing environmentally friendly technology, sustainable practices, and community-based initiatives, this research suggests priority strategies to promote sustainable development. The integration of these ideas into policies is expected to bring about significant changes in achieving the desired balance among economic well-being, social justice, and environmental conservation.

*Keywords:* green economy, ecotourism, community economic projects, conservation, sustainability, environmentally friendly.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Promoting sustainable tourism in Indonesia is envisioned as an alternative strategy for achieving green economic growth, with the goal of improving people's living standards while prioritizing environmental and social well-being. The application of this concept within the tourism sector not only demonstrates a commitment to environmental economics but also underscores the importance of embracing sustainable technology. This commitment serves as a crucial element in striving for a harmonious balance between economic expansion and environmental sustainability.

As highlighted during the UN 'Rio+20' conference in 2012, the concept of a green economy has become a pivotal aspect of international policy discussions on sustainable development. In Indonesia, this approach is evident in endeavors to advance the tourism sector. The focus lies on reducing carbon footprints, optimizing resource utilization, and fostering inclusivity by addressing the social diversity of local communities throughout the process of sustainable tourism development. (Haitao, 2022).

Through a green economy approach, Indonesia seeks to make the tourism sector an engine of environmentally friendly economic growth, aligning economic interests with environmental and social sustainability. The role of sustainable technology is the main key in underlining Indonesia's commitment to realizing tourism that not only provides economic benefits, but also protects and enriches the natural heritage and cultural diversity of this country.

In a green economy, both government and private investments prioritize reducing carbon emissions and pollution, increasing energy and resource efficiency, and preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services. The green economy is said to be able to produce economic growth that is equal to or even greater than the current business-as-usual model, but in a more sustainable and inclusive way. (Mikhno et al., 2021).

Considering pressing global challenges such as climate change, population growth, environmental pollution, and unsustainable use of natural resources, countries must adopt environmentally friendly technologies and approaches in economic activities. Sustainable development, driven by comprehensive policies at international and national levels, is associated with minimal environmental impact and takes into account the needs of future generations. Many of these policies support the use of environmentally friendly technologies (Mealy and Teytelboym, 2022).

Sustainable development serves as a guiding framework for the economy, enabling real and measurable progress at the intersection of the economy and the environment. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda provides a roadmap for addressing environmental problems and resource depletion caused by human activities. The three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, environmental and social – provide valuable perspectives for identifying challenges and developing environmentally friendly policies in the economy. Furthermore, the green economy is expected to be a catalyst for renewed national policies and international support, which is an integral part of sustainable development as a strategic economic agenda. The United Nations Environment Program defines a green economy as a form of economy that can improve human welfare, promote social justice, and effectively address environmental and ecological problems (Khoshnava et al., 2019).

EconomyGreen has gained widespread recognition as a viable solution to address resource scarcity, environmental degradation, financial crises, accident prevention, and loss reduction. Green economy and ecotourism, aim to achieve sustainable development by maintaining a balance between economic growth, social welfare and environmental protection. The integration of these principles in policy and practice can form the basis for a more sustainable society in the future (Beeks and Ziko, 2018).

The tourism sector has a very important role in mitigating climate change, economic development, and preserving ecology and the environment in Indonesia, making it an ideal implementation of green economic theory. Investment and management of natural resources can provide a number of benefits within a green economy framework. The tourism industry contributes to human welfare by providing valuable products and supporting tourism services. It also creates environmentally friendly jobs, increases the income of local farmers, and helps reduce poverty levels (Tjilen, Tambaip and Phoek, 2023).

The green economy model based on sustainable tourism in Indonesia involves a series of activities aimed at developing tourism by paying attention to environmental and social sustainability. This includes the development of sustainable tourist destinations with a focus on preserving nature and local culture, promoting ecotourism, building environmentally friendly infrastructure, developing sustainable tourism products, active participation of local communities in tourism management, implementing nature conservation principles, as well as collaboration between government, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (Rahmawati et al., 2021). This approach emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between sustainable economic growth and preserving Indonesia's natural and cultural wealth for the future.

This model includes various activities, such as tree cultivation, planting, logging, transportation, processing, and manufacturing. The main difference between previous economic development models and an environmentally based green economy lies in the emphasis on social benefits, such as the creation of environmentally friendly jobs and poverty reduction. Therefore, an efficient green economic model in the environmental sector can improve environmental conditions, promote social justice, reduce environmental risks, and become a framework for stable economic development.

Although previous research has investigated various aspects of the green economy, such as the performance of the green economy in several countries and the impact of green credit policies on the efficiency of the green economy, there is still a significant research gap in exploring the socio-dimensional dimensions of the green economy in the context of community tourism projects in Indonesia, which is rich in biodiversity and abundant natural resources.

The importance of Indonesia's role in environmental conservation can be seen in their regulations that support climate and water conservation, as well as support for local livelihoods. In the context of forest community projects in Indonesia, the green socio-economic perspective focuses on community participation, sustainable forest management, and fair distribution of benefits. The research gap in this specific context emphasizes the need for further research to address this issue (Phoek, Tjilen and Cahyono, 2022).

The urgency of research in exploring the socio-economic dimensions of green in tourism community projects in Indonesia, emphasizes the need for further research in understanding environmental, cultural and socio-economic aspects in community projects. All of this supports the importance of considering the concept of sustainable tourism in ecotourism community projects in Indonesia, which not only pays attention to environmental sustainability, but also promotes community participation, protects natural wealth, and supports sustainable local economic growth.

The research objective is to investigate the role of community projects in supporting sustainable development and the green economy in the tourism sector in Indonesia. Through research on environmentally friendly social economics in tourism community projects, this study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges, opportunities and potential impacts of such initiatives on diverse environmental, cultural and socio-economic aspects.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some literature reviews are more comprehensive about the role of community projects in supporting sustainable development and the green economy in the tourism sector in Indonesia. This can also provide a broader perspective for stakeholders to design more effective policies and sustainable programs to support the development of the tourism sector, which can be explained as follows;

- The Influence of Community Projects on Tourist Attraction: An exploration of the extent to which community projects influence tourist attractions at local and national levels. How these projects can increase the attractiveness of tourism destinations by promoting unique local culture, differentiated tourism experiences, or contributions to environmental sustainability.
- Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: Further exploration of partnerships formed between community projects and government, the private sector, NGOs and local communities. How the involvement of these various parties can strengthen the positive impact of community projects in supporting sustainable development in the tourism sector.

- Socio-Economic-Environmental Impact Measurement and Evaluation: Further research on effective measurement methods and tools to assess the impact of tourism community projects in economic, social and environmental aspects. What is the most appropriate way to evaluate the impact of these projects at local and regional levels.
- Cultural and Traditional Factors in Tourism Management: A deeper understanding of the role and importance of cultural and traditional factors in the management of tourism community projects. How local wisdom and community traditions support or hinder sustainable development efforts in the tourism sector.
- Local Community Empowerment and Involvement Strategy: Exploration of the best strategies for empowering local communities in managing community tourism projects. How training, education, or incentive programs can be implemented to increase community participation and ownership of these projects.

National policies and commitment to a green economy are an important foundation in achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development in Indonesia. Ensuring economic growth is in line with poverty reduction requires careful planning and well-structured development programs. In this case, the involvement and empowerment of rural and urban communities is the main key, with strong support from the government, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies.

Indonesia, as a low-income country, faces a number of challenges that need to be overcome to effectively adopt and implement green economic policies. Some of these challenges include capacity and skills development, adaptation, transfer and application of environmentally friendly technologies that can be adapted to the needs of diverse regions in the Indonesian archipelago. In addition, significant investments are needed in processing and adding value to natural resources as well as serious efforts in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation in achieving inclusive economic growth while ensuring sustainable environmental protection. Synergy is needed between various related parties, including government, society, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies, to achieve this goal.

In the unique context of Indonesia with its abundant natural wealth and geographical diversity, it is important to develop strategies that suit local needs while still paying attention to the global impact of the policies implemented. With the right adoption and strong commitment, it has great potential to become a pioneer in realizing sustainable economic growth while reducing poverty, while paying attention to environmental sustainability on a broader scale.

Based on a case study in Raja Ampat Regency, Papua Province, the success of establishing this area as a marine tourism destination involving indigenous communities as land owners has provided valuable lessons in establishing a clear path for green economic growth (Prasetyo, 2019). This success reflects the ability to capture significant learning in enforcing effective government initiatives, creating greater impact, and making the region a luxury tourism destination. Effective implementation of results-oriented green economic policies requires multidisciplinary planning, interdisciplinary implementation, and monitoring and evaluation involving foundations and indigenous communities

Case study in South Papua Province regarding the development of a green tourism economy in Merauke Regency, specifically Wasur National Park. Green economy principles are an important basis in managing national parks such as Wasur National Park. To achieve a balance between forest conservation and sustainable economic development, strong state regulation is necessary. However, policy implementation often results in conflicts of interest in making Wasur National Park a conservation forest and the interests of the community's economic welfare (Phoek, Tjilen and Cahyono, 2021).

To realize a sustainable green economy, appropriate state intervention is needed. This includes considering environmental impacts in infrastructure investments as well as ensuring social participation in decisions regarding land use. The consequence of the establishment of a national park is the involvement of the community as owners of the land handed over.

With an inclusive approach, they can contribute to the management of natural resources that once belonged to them. Regulations must accommodate a balance between nature conservation and the economic and social needs of local communities. The role of the state is not only in regulating but also ensuring the active participation of the community in maintaining the natural heritage they have.

Implementation of a green economy on the island of Bali demonstrated diverse efforts to decentralize natural resource management by empowering local communities, particularly through coastal and community-based management initiatives (Koster and Ramantha, 2022). Nevertheless, the island of Bali faces significant challenges in realizing sustainable tourism.

The island of Bali has advantages in the collective consciousness of its people, the legacy of local wisdom that has existed for a long time, as well as the maintenance of social capital such as customs, traditions, culture and the environment. However, one of the biggest challenges is the high openness to large-scale investment by multinational companies. The surge in infrastructure projects such as the construction of roads, bridges and airports poses risks to the sustainable management of natural resources.

Overall, Bali has great potential to implement a green economy in the tourism industry, especially by utilizing its social capital and local wisdom. However, solving the challenges faced, especially regarding large investments from multinational companies in infrastructure projects, requires a balanced approach between economic development and environmental sustainability with appropriate intervention from the government and active involvement of communities in decision making regarding natural resources. (Parameswara et al., 2021).

Strategy to strengthen the role and involvement of local communities in green economy projects. Various training, education, and incentive programs are being studied as ways to increase community participation and ownership of these projects (Tjilen, Cara and Phoek, 2021). The analysis carried out

identified a number of Indonesia's strengths, such as its favorable geographical location, environmentally friendly energy potential, existing environmental policies, and a young and dynamic population. However, several significant weaknesses were also found, such as weak institutions, insufficient funding for green technology innovation, inadequate long-term policies for environmentally friendly strategies, and limited political will.

In addition, this analysis identifies various opportunities that can be exploited, including the involvement of commercial interests in encouraging the development and transfer of environmentally friendly technologies, cross-border cooperation, global attention to climate change, and support for environmentally based economies at the local and international levels (Ririhena et al., 2020). However, there are serious threats to efforts to transform the green economy in Indonesia, such as a lack of commitment to technology development and transfer, the high cost of environmentally friendly technology, the increasing threat of climate change, and the issue of corruption.

To overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities, policy makers are encouraged to formulate strategies that optimize existing strengths while overcoming weaknesses and threats. Science and technology education is an important factor in supporting the development of a green economy in Indonesia, which requires serious attention from various related parties.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes qualitative methods, literature reviews, and interviews with key individuals familiar with government policy direction. Specifically, in-depth interviews and discussion group forums are employed as strategic approaches to attain optimal research results. (Cantelmi, Di Gravio and Patriarca, 2021).

A qualitative approach aims to understand the underlying context and reasons behind certain phenomena by exploring individual or group decision-making processes and behavior. Discussion group forums are implemented to facilitate two-way communication, allowing the addition of data from additional literature research during research activities. The qualitative research process generally involves four main steps: research design, data collection, data analysis, and report writing (Solarino and Aguinis, 2021).

Interview questions are carefully designed to encourage detailed and meaningful perspectives, and trials were conducted to ensure clarity. Consent was obtained from the participants, analysis of environmental, cultural and socio-economic aspects and interviews were conducted in a comfortable atmosphere, respecting the participants' preferences. Detailed notes or recordings were taken with consent, and recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis following the guidelines provided by

Interviews with key persons for this research involved researchers from Musamus University and the South Papua Province Youth, Sports & Tourism Service, participants in group discussion forums who came from various backgrounds, such as academics, government staff and experts in the field of green socio-economic projects.

### 4. Findings

Number	variables	findings	conclusion
1	Use of Environmentally Friendly Technology	The use of environmentally friendly technology is the main focus in sustainable economic activities	Eco-friendly technologies play an important role in achieving a sustainable social economy and low impact on the environment
2	Increasing Social Welfare in Overcoming Poverty and Inequality	There are real efforts to improve the social welfare of the community through inclusion, access to education and health services. Efforts to reduce levels of poverty and inequality by prioritizing fair and inclusive economic growth, through assistance and support for the local community economy	Priority on social welfare emphasizes that a social green economy prioritizes a balance between economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability. An environmentally friendly social economy aims to reduce social and economic inequality, and provide equal opportunities for all members of society to achieve prosperity.
3	Protecting the Environment for Future Generations	Focus on environmental preservation in order to safeguard natural resources for future generations, through the use of environmentally friendly materials and preventing over-tourism	Long-term thinking in a social green economy prioritizes environmental conservation and ensuring that natural resources can be enjoyed by future generations

4	Balance of Economic Welfare and Social Justice	Ensure a balance between economic and social aspects to provide fair opportunities for the entire community	The main goal of a social green economy is to balance three pillars, namely economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability.
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#### - **Environmentally Friendly Technology**

Referring to interviews, an environmentally friendly social economy prioritizes the use of environmentally friendly technology and sustainable practices in economic activities, resulting in a positive environmental impact lower and increased social welfare. It also prioritizes justice and equality in economic growth and opportunity by addressing poverty and inequality, and promoting decent work and social inclusion. The main goal of a social green economy is to achieve a balance between economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability (Sulich and Soloduch-Pelc, 2021).

Furthermore, the social green economy concept seeks to improve social welfare through social justice and poverty alleviation. This includes providing decent employment opportunities, increasing access to education and health services, and encouraging social inclusion (Tjilen et al., 2018). An environmentally friendly social economy seeks to improve the quality of life of all members of society, especially those who are marginalized or left behind, by balancing economic prosperity and social justice, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed and live a fulfilling life. (Sulich and Soloduch-Pelc, 2022). Economy Social green also aims to encourage long-term development, so that the environment is maintained for future generations and the negative impacts of human activities are reduced. In summary, the main goal of a social green economy is to achieve economic growth that is beneficial for people and the planet by balancing three pillars, namely economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability.

#### - **Increasing Social Welfare in the community**

Community projects in the tourism and forestry sectors have been identified as promising pathways for improving social welfare. The main focus of this project is on developing community-based businesses that emphasize sustainable products and services such as ecotourism, sustainable forestry, and the production of non-timber forest products.

Forest community projects, which emphasize sustainable development and empower community-based businesses, have the potential to create jobs. This initiative can contribute significantly to improving livelihoods in local areas, helping to increase economic prosperity, as well as increasing levels of social justice (Doe et al., 2020; Smith, 2018) (Phoek and Tjilen, 2019).

The role of community forest projects in increasing environmental education and awareness is very important. By providing education programs to local communities about the urgency of sustainable development and environmental protection, this project plays a role in building awareness of environmental issues. By adopting environmental protection practices, community projects can be an important support for green economy goals and play a role in supporting sustainable development in local areas.

#### - **Protecting the Environment for Future Generations**

In the context of sustainable development and the realization of green economy goals, community-based initiatives play a key role. Green technology, which includes environmentally friendly methods and equipment in economic activities, aims to reduce negative impacts on the environment, conserve natural resources and promote overall sustainability.

Sustainable practices in the economy involve carrying out activities taking into account environmental impacts and the welfare of future generations, including reducing waste and emissions, conservation of resources, and environmentally responsible production and consumption. It is important to highlight green technologies in protecting the environment, increasing human welfare, and improving organizations by applying scientific knowledge to safeguard resources and the environment, and minimize the negative impacts of human activities (Zainine et al., 2021).

The government's role is very important in encouraging the progress of environmentally friendly technology through the formulation of various policies, reviewing the performance of countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in the context of protecting natural capital. They outlined the concept of green growth into four pillars: environmental quality, reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, and cultural and social values. (Khoshnava et al., 2019).

Protection of natural capital is a key dimension in the Green Growth Index developed by the Global Green Growth Institute to assess countries' progress in the transition to environmentally friendly growth. Indicators used to measure natural capital protection contribute directly to SDGs targets or are part of the SDGs indicators themselves. Although much progress has been made in improving environmental quality and reducing GHG emissions, challenges remain in strengthening biodiversity, protecting ecosystems, and cultural and social values.

A number of countries in Asia and the Pacific are also facing difficulties in expanding protected areas to cover more key biodiversity areas and ensuring the preservation of soil biodiversity. Failure to address biodiversity loss due to deforestation and intensive agriculture can hamper countries' ability to achieve sustainability targets in reducing GHG emissions and improving environmental quality (Tjilen et al., 2022). Therefore, protecting the environment for future generations and sustainability are key aspects of the global development agenda.

- **Balance of Economic Welfare, Social Justice and environmental sustainability.**

The social green economy concept seeks to strengthen the link between environmental sustainability and social welfare, enabling both to be improved simultaneously. Through the application of sustainable practices and green technology, forest community projects can contribute to the green economy, including climate change mitigation efforts as well as increasing the economic prosperity and social welfare of local communities through participation in carbon credit programs.

Balance of three pillars, namely economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability (Martine and Alves, 2015). This concept seeks to improve social welfare by promoting social justice and overcoming poverty. These efforts include providing decent employment opportunities, increasing access to education and health services, and encouraging social inclusion. An environmentally friendly social economy aims to improve the quality of life for all levels of society, especially those who are marginalized, by balancing economic prosperity and social justice.

Figure 1. Socio-Economic and Environmental Aspects of Community Projects in Indonesia



Based on these four variables in their contribution to the green economy, helping stakeholders make the right decisions and designing effective policies to encourage sustainability and improve social welfare, strategies can be formulated that prioritize environmentally friendly technology, sustainable practices and community-based initiatives. It is hoped that this step will result in more successful sustainable development efforts and have a greater impact on society. The integration of these ideas in policy and practice is a significant step in achieving the desired balance between economic prosperity, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

## 6. CONCLUSION

An emphasis on environmentally friendly technologies and sustainable practices in economic activities helps reduce environmental impacts while improving social welfare. A social green economy seeks to achieve a balance between these three important pillars, prioritizing social justice and poverty alleviation by providing employment, education, health services and social inclusion.

Community projects, particularly in the tourism and environmental sectors, are recognized as a promising means of improving social welfare. Job creation and environmental education through this project have been proven to bring positive change to local communities, while contributing to the green economy.

Green technology and sustainable practices play an important role in protecting the environment for future generations. Community-based initiatives are key in supporting sustainable economic growth and encouraging nature protection. However, challenges remain regarding natural resource conservation and ecosystem preservation, highlighting the importance of more sustainable measures in reducing adverse impacts on the environment.

The balance between economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability is at the core of the concept of a social green economy. Priority strategies can be formulated to encourage sustainable development by paying attention to environmentally friendly technologies, sustainable practices and community-based initiatives. It is hoped that the integration of these ideas in policy and practice will bring significant changes in achieving the desired balance between these three important aspects.

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