

## Responsible Tourism in Indonesia: Multiple Choices, Open Ended Answers

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The existence of responsible tourism in Indonesia lies in two underlying conditions. First, environmental degradation often takes place due to conflicts, which are not necessarily tourism. Examples are conflicts of space between farming and conservation areas or threats from illegal logging to conservation areas. Responsible tourism – in this case *ecotourism* - is considered as *one of* the options to reduce the conflicts. This approach is starting to be widely adopted, particularly by organizations focusing in natural protection, wildlife conservation, or sustainable use of natural resources, such as WWF and Conservation International. In Indonesia, one of the examples is ecotourism development in Tangkahan<sup>1</sup>, a small area around Leuser National Park, North Sumatra. This initiative is a joint force of previously illegal loggers of the Park, who have turned their face and become ecotourism activist.

Quoting the Cape Town Declaration, Responsible Tourism<sup>2</sup> is about “making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit”. Responsible Tourism is characterized by travel and tourism which minimize its negative impact on the environment, social, and local culture. It aims to generate greater economic benefit for local people and enhances the well being of host communities. Responsible Tourism strongly stresses the importance to create a respectful and meaningful connection between tourists and local communities.

This definition of responsible tourism is particularly relevant to the challenges faced by many mass tourism destinations in Indonesia. The second underlying condition is when environmental quality in many tourism destinations have declined due to severe tourism activities and irresponsible activities of local population. Tourism is demanded to become more responsible to its cultural and natural context; to conserve not only the habitat but also to maintain its assets. Each destinations have different characteristics and difficulties; thus require different answers. The adoption of responsible tourism in these destinations opens up many choices of solutions; however it has to be cautiously implemented because some answers might not appear as favourable options for the local community itself thus creating friction and refusal.

#### Pangandaran as Tourism Destination

Pangandaran is a coastal area and a primary tourism destination in West Java, Indonesia. Tourism was actually started since colonial plantation era (UNWTO, 2009)<sup>3</sup>; yet modern tourism flourished since the 1970-ies. In 1973, domestic tourists had reached 53 thousand people and significantly increased to 136 thousand people in 1978. However, tourism has arguably flavoured spatial development of the area. According to the statistic of employment, the key livelihood in Pangandaran is predominantly rural; as the key livelihood is agriculture (47.8%) and fishery (13.9%). Yet, many of the issues and phenomena are often relevant to urban problems.

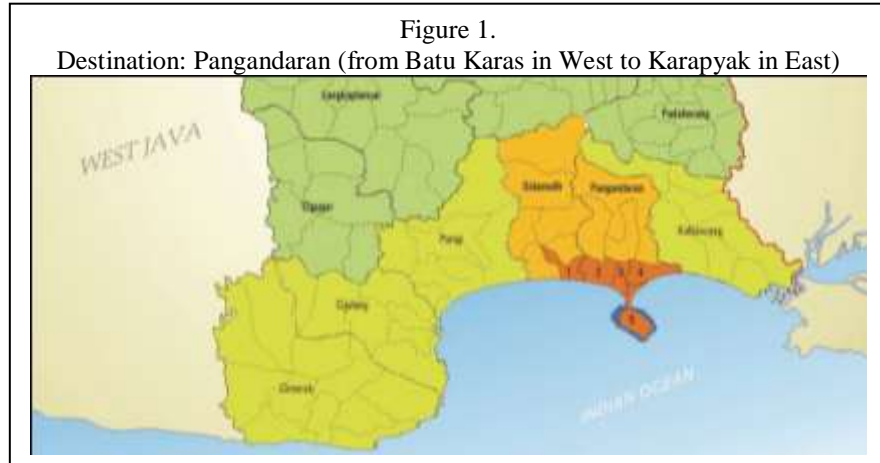
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<sup>1</sup> Further information on Tangkahan can also be found in [www.indecon.or.id/](http://www.indecon.or.id/)

<sup>2</sup> Further information on Responsible Tourism can also be found in [www.artforum.info](http://www.artforum.info)

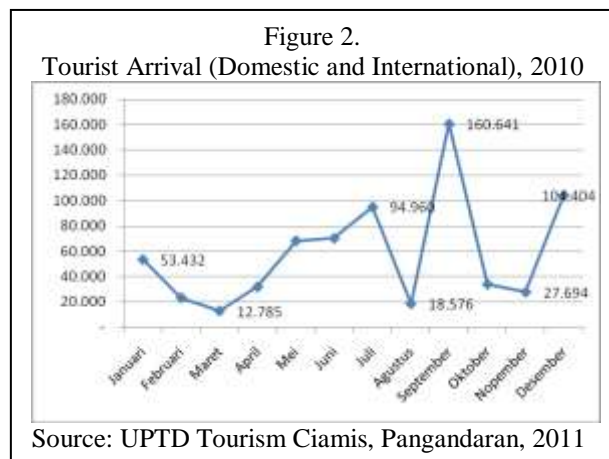
<sup>3</sup> UNWTO, 2009, Pangandaran Tourism Management Plan, UNWTO, Pangandaran

Tourism attractions in Pangandaran are dispersed in many villages of 6 kecamatan, from the West (Batu Karas beach at kecamatan Cimerak) to the East (Krapyak beach at kecamatan Kalipucang). Tourism facilities are mostly located at Pangandaran beach and lately also at



Batu Karas beach. Pangandaran beach is administratively constituted of two villages: Pananjung and Pangandaran. The east and west promenade of Pangandaran beach as well as Pananjung Nature Recreation Park, which are located in these two villages are the main attractions of Pangandaran.

In 2010, Pangandaran hosted 700.337 visitors (District Tourism Office, 2011) or 20% annual increase. The number is not spectacular; but the issue is its accumulation during high season. Pangandaran has 3 main high seasons, which are respectively: Ied Fitri holidays (in 2010 it took place in September), Christmast and New Year holiday, and School holidays (June-July). The lowest season usually takes place between February to March. Tourist arrival fluctuates greatly between highest and lowest season, as the number of tourist in highest season can be more than ten times (23% out of total, in 2010) comparing to lowest season (2% out of total, in 2010). This trend remains for the last four years consecutively during research.



Although tourism in Pangandaran has developed since 1970-ies, it has been nearly without any appropriate planning. After a decade, not only it turns into one of the most visited beach in Java, it also turns into a mass tourism destination. It is facing various environmental problems, including habitat degradation of its natural environment and declining population of its biodiversity. Some of the key spatial impacts of tourism in Pangandaran are:

- Uncontrolled transformation of land and property into tourism related premises
- Traffic congestion and overcrowding, especially during high season
- Uncontrolled consumption of energy and water
- Dominance by non locals in land and property market

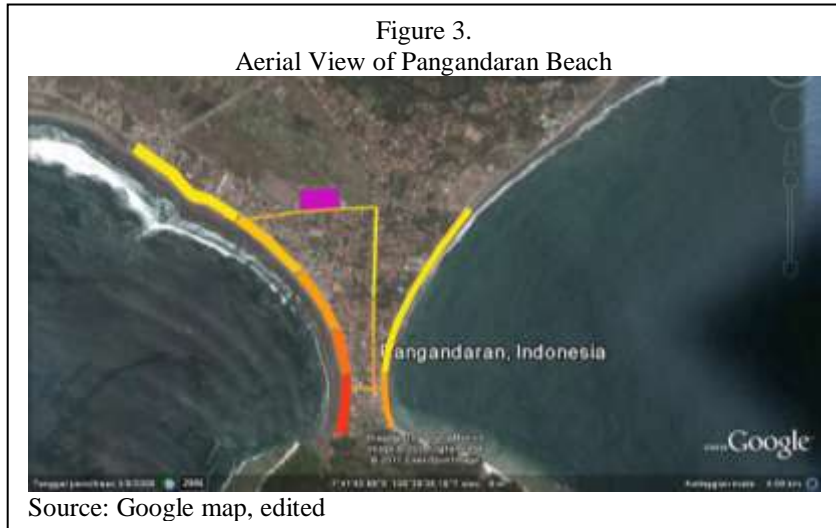
With the domination of local government in planning and taxation; local community and tourism stakeholders are hardly involved. Local population also see that limited profit from tourism is distributed locally.

### Pangandaran Beach

Pangandaran has two promenades: West beach and East beach. These promenades and the Kidang Pananjung road (in the middle) are the backbones of the tourist area. Pananjung Recreation Park and Nature Reserve are located at the southern peninsula. These are the major attractions in Pangandaran, where tourists accumulate.

### **Fisherman Settlement Fading Out**

Although the west promenade has been majorly used for tourist activities; the east promenade was still largely used for fisherman activities – at least until 2006 or before tsunami. In the east promenade, the fisherman used to practice one of their traditional ways of fishing; which is called “Jaring Tarik”. This is also the place where small scale fisherman used to meet and



sell their fish catch to the fish collectors (called “Bakulan”). In the late afternoon, the fisherman ladies open up their small kiosks selling fish and seafood. This is also the same place where many fishermen – living close by - park their fishing boats, depart, and return from the sea. All these elements of fisherman daily life were also attractions for tourist those days. While the attraction of west beach is mainly beach activities; the main attraction of east beach is mainly fisherman activities. However, rehabilitation projects after tsunami have completely changed this.

The wide and fringing beach was replaced by a narrow paved promenade. The promenade is intended to serve more tourist activities, such as banana boat, dock fishing, and walking. A new fisherman dock is currently constructed in a neighboring village (2 kilometre away to the east) to replace this space; while a new fishing auction place is constructed in another village (4 kilometre away to the west). The new promenade structure does not allow the previous fisherman activities to take place. The function and the way this space is used have been completely changed. Several new hotels and restaurants are built along the road; while the pedestrian path is occupied by street vendors.

### **Transformation of Function**

Another phenomenon occurring in Pangandaran due to tourism is the transformation of function of residential areas into tourism related premises, which include: tourist accommodation, restaurant, shop, and other supporting facilities such as commercial toilet. During the days of its highest season, Pangandaran can host more than 4.000 people per day during its highest season. Tourist accommodation is one major facility and its provision has greatly shaped the living environment.

District Tourism Office (2011) recorded that in Pangandaran area (including Pangandaran, Batu Hiu, and Batu Karas) there are 119 tourist accommodation premises. Only 1 is registered as star hotel, while the rest are non star hotels. This data shows a decline; as there were 129 premises were registered in 2008 (Ciamis in Figures; Tourism Management Plan, 2009; District Tourism Office,

2011). District Hotel Association recorded that they have 100 members in Pangandaran and 11 members in Batukaras. Actually, there are many more premises transformed into tourist accommodation – both formally and informally. Temporary result of our survey in 2011 identified 173 tourist accommodation facilities in Pangandaran or 73% more than official data.

Even more interesting is our findings on the variety of accommodation beyond the official classification. They can be described and classified as:

- i. Classification 1. The main characters are hotel-type with formal bussiness management. The rooms are equipped by AC and/or television. The facilities include swimming pool, restaurant, meeting hall, lobby, and breakfast.
- ii. Classification 2. The main characters are hotel-type with formal bussiness management. The rooms are equipped by AC and/or television. The facilities include one of the followings: swimming pool, restaurant, meeting hall, lobby, and breakfast.
- iii. Classification 3. The main characters are lodge with formal bussiness management. Only someof its rooms are equipped AC and/or television, while the rest have fans. The facilities are only lobby, with no room service or breakfast.
- iv. Classification 4. The main characters are budget guest house with minimum employee (usually only guards or cleaning service). The rooms only have fans. It does not have any facilities and does not provide any services (room only).
- v. Classification 5. It is basically rented house or rooms. From its physical look, there is no difference between this rented house with normal house; except the rented house put on a sign board “empty”in front of the house. During its highest season, nearly all houses around Pangandaran beach will be rented out as tourist accommodation.



At the moment of this survey (June-July 2011), there were 23 family houses rent out. However, during the highest season (Ied Fitri, Christmast, New Year), nearly all houses in these two villages are rent out as tourist accommodation. Families move temporarily to relatives in other districts.

Table 1. List of Hotel

No	Hotel	Number		Price Range	Room Capacity	
1	Hotel classification 1	9	5,20%	500.000-700.000	526	17,66%
2	Hotel classification 2	30	17,34%	250.000-500.000	866	29,07%
3	Hotel classification 3	19	10,98%	125.000-300.000	304	10,20%
4	Hotel classification 4	92	53,18%	100.000-300000	1158	38,87%
5	Rented House	23	13,29%	100-000-250.000	125	4,20%
	Total	173	100,00%		2979	100,00%

Fisherman is the primary livelihood in Pangandaran village by 53%. Pananjung village is dominated by 52% of farmer. Currently, most of land and property in these two villages are utilized as tourism related premises. The west promenade is the primary location, where most of the big hotels are located; while the primary and secondary roads are lined up with hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Along the primary, secondary, and tertiary roads, there are alleyways which lead to the inner residential areas. It is the remaining fisherman settlement in these villages. By its spatial coverage, the fisherman settlement consumes about 30% of total area. Local community leaders pointed out that fisherman settlements were gradually replaced by tourist facilities starting in 1980-ies following tourism booms.

At the moment, the daily life of fisherman settlement is hardly noticeable unless people go into these small alleys. In routine days, people can easily notice these houses from the hanging fishing net, boat engine, or piling ice boxes used by the fisherman to keep the fish catch. However in the highest season such as Ied Fitri or New Year, the whole family will move to their relatives or to their parents; while their own house will be rented out as tourist accommodation. In this situation, all tourist accommodation can consume about 80 % of total habited area.

#### **Positive Impact to Destination: Opportunities for access to industry**

Although this trend does not look appealing for planners, it is favoured by local communities because it is considered as another way for local communities to participate in tourism. It is difficult for majority of local population to make investment on tourism facility due to many reasons: lack of financial capital, lack of capacity, or lack of information. It is argued that such situation allows access for local communities to tourism industry because house owners can generate extra income by renting the house.

#### **Negative Impact Destination: Overpricing and High Increase of Property Price**

Nevertheless, this situation also creates negative impact on the destination. In high season, the industry suffers from overpricing and uncontrollable room price. The price increase can be up to four times. To illustrate, a modest 3 bedroom house in the main street cost 9 million Rupiahs for one year rent. If the house is rent for tourist accommodation in high season, the price can be up to one million per night. Therefore, to outcome their yearly income, people only have to rent out the house for 9 days. During the Christmas and New Year holiday, the high season is 9 days; plus another 7 days during Lebaran high season, and about two weeks during school holiday (July). It is much more profitable for house owners to rent the house as tourist accommodation. Land and property market for this area is high and increasing. In the last three years post tsunami recovery, tourism has already flourished and the increase of land price in the primary area can be up to 25% annually.

Goods and services business can get relatively maximum profit during holidays. To illustrate, food and beverage (small restaurant and food stalls), souvenir (cloth, shells), and bike rental businesses can get about Rp 100,000 up to Rp 500,000; according to UNWTO survey in 2008. Some big restaurants and souvenirs shops can even get turnover of Rp 900,00 up to Rp 1,000,000 per day. Yet, the figure drops significantly during low season. More than 50% of respondents interviewed claimed their income fell below Rp 100,000. Food and beverage businesses still get income fairly better than other businesses, probably because they have regular local customers.

#### **Negative Impact Destination: Dominance of Investment from Outside the Area**

Despite their seasonal benefit from tourism, local population is mostly afraid of the domination of outside investor in their living areas. At the moment, based on our recent survey to hotel owners and

managers; most of tourist accommodations in Pangandaran are owned by non-locals mostly from Bandung (the closest and largest cities, 6 hours drive) by 40%; as well as from the neighbouring districts and municipalities by 45%. Although ownership of locals in tourist accommodation is still relatively high of 48%, but the majority is budget guest house (53%) and rental rooms (42%). Only 1(one) hotel is owned by the locals. It indicates that the scale of local investment is actually very low and limited.

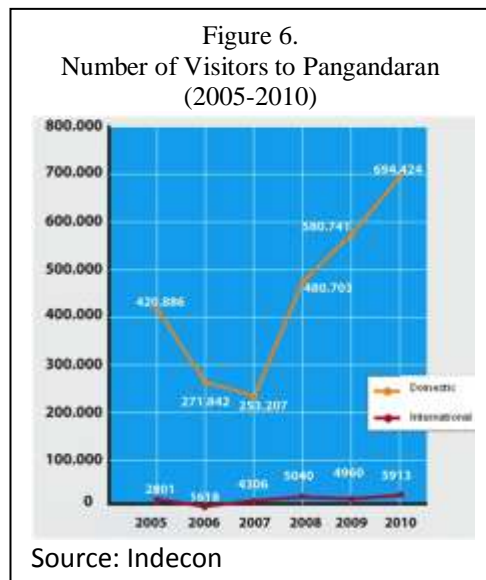
**Negative Impact Destination: Living environmental problems**

Pangandaran also faces environmental problems on living environment, including provision of fresh water supply, solid waste, and sewage management. The infrastructure has never been prepared for high inflow of tourists. Clean water is supplied by local water company (PDAM – *Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum*); but most buildings including hotels also use ground water supply, as clean water supply services are not always reliable. Although the quantity and quality of ground water is still sufficient – presumably due to the existence of its Nature Reserve as main water catchment of the area; it is feared that it will become problems in near future. Limited measures have been tried to reduce water consumption or to look for more renewable water sources. About 48% of our resident surveys in 2008 identified water supply provision as one of the future problems for Pangandaran.

Another major problem in Pangandaran is solid waste management. The responsibility of garbage collection is under District Cleanliness Office. In high season with ten times influx of tourists, the office alone cannot handle garbage collection. Most often, these garbage are piled at garbage bins along the beach promenade and even burned at the beach.

**New Hope from Responsible Tourism**

In 2007, Pangandaran suffered severely from tsunami (2006), which destroyed many tourism facilities and impaired people psychology. Tourist arrival to Pangandaran drops to 253.207 visitors or the lowest in the last five years. The environmental degradation already occurring for many years was revealed even more – as the area was very vulnerable and weak to recover. Mangrove and coral reef ecosystem had been too degraded to sustain the coast. No early warning system or evacuation management was in place to assist local community for such natural disaster. After that time, there had been questions on which kind of development should be encouraged and which path should be taken by local tourism stakeholders. There have been some good answers of enthusiasts of responsible tourism.



In recent years, the local stakeholders has turned their hope to (more) responsible tourism for Pangandaran. Being realistic, it has been very difficult to change a mass tourism destination into a sustainable tourism development. Being optimistic, it has been encouraging to start from simple things. Being more responsible means collecting more garbage, reducing own solid waste, using less electricity and water, introducing more of local good things into visitors, etc. This new wave has been supported particularly by UNWTO in its “Tourism Development Supporting Biodiversity Conservation” project in 2008-2009. The support is continued by UNWTO and Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Indonesia to develop Pangandaran into more sustainable tourism development. MoCT is currently on its second year in developing a Destination Management Organization<sup>4</sup>. Inline with this nation-wide program, UNWTO is implementing a new approach to improve destination resilience under STREAM<sup>5</sup> (Sustainable Tourism through Energy Efficiency with Adaptation and Mitigation Measures) project.

The Cape Town Declaration (2002) outlined guiding principles for being more responsible to the environment. It stresses the needs to assess environmental impact throughout the life cycle of tourist establishment and operations including the planning and design phase, and ensure that negative impact are reduced to the minimum and maximizing positive ones<sup>6</sup>. It also highlights the importance of sustainable management of natural diversity and management of tourist volume and type accordingly to what the environment can support. The key strategies on spatial improvement in Pangandaran, which are also integrated in Pangandan Tourism Management Plan 2009-2018, are:

- Reducing the overcrowd and distributing activities (and its supporting facilities) to the surrounding areas
- Improving the quality (not quantity) of the existing facilities in Pangandaran beach.

Facilities and activities have been accumulated in a relatively small area around Pangandaran west and east beach (the neck-shaped peninsula). It has to be dispersed to its surrounding areas within the same destination, such as Batu Karas, Karang Nini, or Pantai Krapyak; in order to break down the accumulation or overcrowding. In the planning phase, several steps have been conducted, which are:

- Assessing the lifecycle of tourist arrival (including the volume, type, travel pattern) to better understand its impact on living environment and the existing supporting facilities
- Assessing the impact of tourism on socio economic; including how much local population participate or take benefit from tourism activities
- Assessing usage of energy, water, and other natural resources

The current problems in Pangandaran should be cautiously prevented to take place in the other areas, this is the reason why such assessment is importance. As for Pangandaran itself, it should adopt a higher standard on facility development. Hotels are encouraged to participate in energy efficiency measures; capacity building in tourism services are increased; and a stronger instrument on controlling development should be imposed. The main principle is aiming to strengthen the existing settlement areas – not to be fully converted into hotels and accommodation.

### **Energy Efficiency Measures for Hotels**

Using resources sustainably as well as reducing waste and over consumption are imperative actions of responsible tourism. Starting recently, hotels in Pangandaran are developing their climate change mitigation plan. It is expected that the participating hotels will be able to adopt energy efficiency

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<sup>4</sup> For further reference, information can also be found in <http://www.dmoindonesia.com/>

<sup>5</sup> For further reference, information can also be found in <http://biodiv.unwto.org/en/content/stream>

<sup>6</sup> For further reference, information can also be found in <http://www.icrtourism.org/capetown.shtml>

measures and apply renewable energy options. The participating hotels will conduct a self audit scheme – assisted by technical experts; which allow hotels to find out how they have been consuming energy. Findings from the self audit will allow technical experts and hotel managers to develop actions to reduce over consumption and use energy and water more effectively.

This initiative is quite challenging, as the hotels have never been used to any energy efficiency measures. Pangandaran can heat up to 32 degree Celcius during the day, therefore hotels and tourists usually keep air condition in the rooms on all day – even when people are away. Hotels claim that their guests complain severely when hotel asks them to switch off any unused electronic devices. The first constraint in implementing such energy efficiency measures is not technology or fund; but custom and awareness both for hotels and tourists. It is expected that involving hotel managers and employee in energy auditing will also serve as an awareness raising for them.

### **Management Approach**

Pangandaran should adopt a collaborative management approach, as tourism activities here involve too many and too diverse of stakeholders. Tourism Development Vision (2009-2018) which was adopted by local stakeholders; was developed into strategies and development instruments by technical experts. However, results will not be effective if it is not implemented by all stakeholders. It is expected that the Destination Management Organization which is currently in process to be established, will play a significant role in this.

### **Biodiversity Based Tour Products and Souvenirs**

Local community groups are engaging themselves into community and biodiversity based tour products. The approach for tour products are:

- Improving existing tour products, in terms of its education value, its content on biodiversity and culture; which will increase appreciation of tourists to environmental potentials of the destination. It also aims to educate tourists of more environmentally friendly tours. In organization of tours, the approach is to make more fair mechanism between tour operators and local community. The enhanced tours include:
  - Biking and Rickshaw tours.  
The actions are revising the conventional village tour which uses bus or cars to go to the villages; as well as dividing the itinerary into several segments; so tourists can go biking with various options of routes and difficulty level

Figure 7. Newly Improved Tour Products: Biking and Trekking and Supporting Facilities



Source: Indecon



- Thematic tours at Nature Recreation Park  
The actions are improving the interpretation or education content of conventional trekking tours. A special book on biodiversity of the park and training was provided for tour guides in order to improve their interpretation.
- Fishing tours; working together with fisherman who can rent out their boat
- Creating new tour products by linking tourism with biodiversity conservation initiatives and cultural preservation initiatives. The new tour products include:
  - Coral adoption tour; which links with the rehabilitation program of coral reef ecosystem in Pangandaran. Each participating tourist will adopt a fragment of baby coral which will be planted in the field of on-going rehabilitation project.
  - Traditional dance tour; which links with the preservation of traditional dances. It started by encouraging and engaging local community groups to identify old dances which were already not practiced. These community groups then rehearsed regularly and formed an art group, which then revived the traditional dances. Expert assisted local community groups to develop and package the dance into an outstanding dinner-performance tour.

Figure 8. Newly Created Tour Products: Coral Adoption and Dance Tour



Source: Indecon

An integrated action to this is supporting for more environmentally friendly souvenirs. The interests of local women groups for this recycling craft started after continuous awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism. The women group – later called themselves “Campernik (Campuran Runtah Unik – literally means Mix of Unique Garbage)” started to make various souvenirs made from plastic garbage. Starting with only 8 people, now the group has more than 50 members. The products were sold in Pangandaran and neighbouring cities; and they even started to import to Netherland in 2011.

Figure 9. Souvenir Bags and Purse Made of Garbage, Bags Made of Palm Leaves



Source: Indecon

The new tour products and micro business aim to open new job opportunities for local population; strengthen their resilience to mass and homogenous form of tourism; and enabling them to feature their localities as one of the key attraction of the destinations.

### **Adaptation Action**

One of the key foundation – I believe – of responsible tourism is not in tourism itself, but in promoting the message. Incremental and consistent campaign and awareness raising is compulsory; especially in destinations which were previously mass tourism destination like Pangandaran. Campaign and awareness raising have been conducted continuously in the last four years, which include discussions on campaign on coastal ecosystem protection with schools and community groups, games program with schools, radio program, monthly newsletter, merchandise goods, and cultural festivals. The awareness raising campaign targets not only local population, but also tourists and in particular tourism workers such as local guides, hotel employee, and beach vendors.

### **The Challenges**

Our recent – and on going – experience in Pangandaran proves that Responsible Tourism is not impossible to be implemented, even at a mass tourism destination. However, particularly in Indonesia, it shows some key challenges, which are:

- It is very difficult to provide evidence, particularly in such short time as people would expect, that environmentally and culturally sensitive tourism development can provide them alternative income. Anticipation for this is to engage a parallel planning-implementation approach
- It is very difficult to convince local community that local or traditional features really sells; that tourists like biking, cooking traditional food, learning local dances
- It is very difficult to convince local community, local government, and local planners that tourism development is not always physical development. Most people would expect to see new road construction or major market construction following tourism development; but this is not always the case.

Responsible tourism is a choice and is about of changing mindset. It is always impreative to convince all stakeholders in destination prior taking such decision that responsible tourism is: (i) a movement, which needs to involve as many tourism stakeholders as possible; and (ii) a proces, which requires time to take place and results to yield. It will take sometimes to spread the news to tourism industry, both domestic and international. It will take even more time to provide evidences for destinations; but surely the commitment is there.

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