

## IDEAL WATER TOURISM CONCEPT AS AN EFFORT TO REALIZE A BLUE ECONOMY FOR WONOSARI VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the concept of ideal water tourism as an effort to create a blue economy for the community. This research uses a qualitative approach with the method of literature study and content analysis. The data was collected through searching scientific literature, journals, books, research reports, and other related sources of information such as community surveys in the city of Bengkalis. The data is then analyzed systematically to identify the ideal water tourism concept that supports the blue economy for the community at Wonosari Village, Bengkalis. The results of the study show that the concept of ideal water tourism in the blue economy context involves several important aspects. First, sustainable environmental management, including reducing waste, conserving water resources, and protecting aquatic ecosystems, is a key prerequisite. Second, the active participation of local communities in the development and management of water tourism is an important key to ensuring a positive impact on the local economy and people's welfare. In addition, the concept of ideal water tourism that supports the blue economy also includes the integration of social and cultural principles. Empowerment of local communities, community-based sustainable economic development, and preservation of maritime cultural heritage are important components in achieving blue economy goals through water tourism. The findings of this research can be used by governments, decision makers and related stakeholders in planning and developing sustainable water tourism destinations and contributing to sustainable economic growth.*

**Keywords:** *Blue Economy, Water Tourism, Wonosari Village*

### INTRODUCTION

Since it was first introduced by Pauli (2010), the concept of blue economy has gained significant attention in recent years as a sustainable approach to economic development that promotes the conservation and responsible use of marine and coastal resources. Water tourism, which encompasses activities and attractions related to bodies of water such as beaches, lakes, rivers, and water parks, and other forms of water always have potential to contribute to the realization of a blue economy. In the context

of Wonosari Village of Bengkalis, the ideal water tourism concept becomes relevant as it offers an opportunity to leverage the village's natural and man-made tourism attraction potentials including the reservoir, ground-water pool, fishing area, and many others to foster economic growth while ensuring environmental sustainability. By embracing the principles of the blue economy, Wonosari Village in Bengkalis-Riau can aim to create a tourism sector that not only generates economic benefits but also preserves the local ecosystem and empowers the community.

However, the successful implementation of an ideal water tourism concept requires a comprehensive understanding of the village's socio-economic context, environmental conditions, and community aspirations. It is crucial to conduct research that explores the specific needs, opportunities, and challenges faced by Wonosari Village and Bengkalis communities in relation to water tourism and the blue economy.

This research aims to sea deeply the users perceptions and expectations towards an ideal water tourism concept for Wonosari Village that aligns with the principles of the blue economy to fulfill the people's (tourists') expectation and, at the same time, to improve the economy of the community (the villagers).

The findings of this research will provide valuable insights for local authorities, community leaders, and tourism stakeholders in Wonosari Village to make informed decisions and develop policies that promote sustainable water tourism. Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how the blue economy can be practically applied at the local level, showcasing the potential benefits of integrating environmental sustainability, community empowerment, and economic growth through water tourism development.

The definition of water tourism from experts may vary depending on their point of view and area of expertise. The following are some possible definitions of water tourism from the perspective of various experts:

(Firawan, I. G. N. F., & Suryawana, I. B. 2016, Alvianna, S. 2017. Barreto, M., & Giantari, I. G. A. K. 2015., Apriyanti, R. 2014. Suarnayasa, K., & Haris, I. A. 2017) Water tourism refers to any form of travel or recreational activities related to water, such as sailing, diving, swimming, skating or exploring aquatic ecosystems such as



rivers, lakes, seas or waterfalls. Water tourism destinations usually involve fun, recreation, adventure, and interaction with the aquatic environment.

The blue economy is a concept that develops within the framework of sustainable development and responsible management of natural resources. The term "blue economy" was first introduced by Gunter Pauli in 2010 in his book entitled "*The Blue Economy: 10 Years, 100 Innovations, 100 Million Jobs*". However, the definition and understanding of the blue economy may vary among experts Purwendah, E. K. (2018). The following are some definitions of the blue economy according to some experts:

Saksono, H. (2013) defines the blue economy as an approach that proposes job creation and economic growth through the efficient and innovative use of natural resources, by taking inspiration from ecosystem principles and implementing nature-inspired business models.

According to the World Bank, the blue economy is a sustainable economic approach that combines economic growth and social well-being with natural resource conservation and sustainable environmental management. This involves building marine and water-based sectors that contribute to economic growth, employment and poverty reduction, while maintaining ecosystem integrity., Adriadi, G. S., & Afifi, M. (2022).

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): UNCTAD defines the blue economy as a concept that combines social, economic and environmental aspects in the management of marine and coastal resources. The blue economy aims to promote inclusive economic growth, decent work and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources Asriandy, I. (2016).

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research and surveys are different methods used in this social science research to gather information and insights from individuals or groups.

Surveys are used to measure people's opinions, behaviors, preferences, and demographic information. They often involve selecting a representative sample from a target population and administering the questionnaire either in person, over the phone, through mail, or online. The data collected is then analyzed using statistical techniques to identify trends, patterns, or relationships among variables. Surveys provide

researchers with a way to generalize findings to a larger population, as they aim to collect data that is representative of the target population. They can be used to gather information on a wide range of topics and provide quantitative data that can be analyzed using statistical methods..

### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The tourism components (Pitana: 2009) covering *Attractions* (nature, culture, man-made):

1. Government Policy: Adoption of policies that support the blue economy, such as tax incentives for sustainable practices, strict environmental regulations, and sustainable development programs, can increase blue economy readiness.

2. Infrastructure and Technology: The readiness of technology and infrastructure that supports blue economy practices, such as waste management infrastructure, renewable energy technologies, or environmentally friendly transportation systems, are important factors in blue economy readiness.

3. Skills and Knowledge: The readiness of human resources to adopt blue economy practices, including knowledge and skills in environmental management, renewable energy, and green technology, also plays an important role.

4. Cooperation and Partnerships: Collaboration between the public and private sectors, including partnerships with non-governmental organizations and international institutions, can strengthen blue economy readiness through the exchange of knowledge, resources and financing.

5. Community Awareness and Participation: Public awareness of the importance of the blue economy and their active participation in promoting sustainable practices can enhance blue economy preparedness.

6. It is important to note that blue economy perceptions and preparedness can vary by country or society, depending on different social, economic and environmental contexts.

The dream of water tourism in the city for the community also varies depending on the geographic location and the facilities available in the city of Bengkalis. Here are

some examples of water tourism dreams that are commonly desired by people in the city of Bengkulu:

**City Water Parks:** People often wish to have an attractive water park in their city. Municipal water parks can include public pools, water slides, water play areas and other water rides that offer fun and entertainment for all.

**Artificial Beach:** Some cities that do not have direct access to the beach often dream of having an artificial beach. Artificial beaches can include artificial sand, swimming pools with sea water, beach recreation facilities, and cafes/restaurants with beach views, so that people can enjoy the beach atmosphere even though they are in the city.

**River Tourism:** If a city is traversed by rivers or has lakes, people can expect to have river tourism. This could include cruise trips along the river, water sports activities such as white-water rafting or rowing, and recreational facilities on the riverbank such as parks or restaurants.

**Marinas and Harbours:** For cities that have access to seas or lakes, the community's dream may include having a high-quality marina or port. Good marinas and harbors can provide docking facilities, water playgrounds, dining areas, shops, and a lively atmosphere for marine and water tourism enthusiasts.

**Open Water Tourism:** Communities can dream of having open water tourism facilities in their city, such as an artificial lake with rowing boat facilities, fishing lakes, or other water recreation facilities that can be enjoyed by the general public.

**Community Swimming Pool:** A community swimming pool that is open to the public is a dream for many urban dwellers. Swimming pools that are safe, clean and affordable can provide a place for people to swim, exercise or relax amidst the bustle of the city.

**Waterfront Development:** Developing a good waterfront on the banks of rivers, lakes or beaches is a dream for many people. An organized waterfront area, with walking paths, gardens, seating, dining, and panoramic views of the water, provides an attractive and comfortable public space for the community.

**Alternative Water Recreation:** Some cities develop alternative water recreation facilities such as artificial streams, wave pools, or artificial surf. This provides an opportunity for people to experience the thrill of water sports even in the city.

## Discussion

Following are the results of the data obtained in the field regarding the desire of the Wonosari people for water tourism based on 100 respondents from Wonosari residents as follows table:

Tabel 1

Tourism Attractions Expected by Bengkalis People

Expected Tourism Attractions	Total Respondent	Percentage (%)
Attraction	15	15%
Artificial Beach	13	13 %
River Tourism	12	12 %
Open Water Tourism	40	40 %
Community Swimming Pool	10	10 %
Waterfront Development	5	5 %
Alternative Water Recreation	5	5 %

So that it can be concluded that the desire of the Bengkalis people is open water tourism, where there are all the rides and places for complete games.

To unveil the mystery behind Bengkalis residents' strong preference for open water tourism, researchers have embarked on a journey of discovery, engaging with the local community through surveys and initial research to gain profound insights and a comprehensive understanding. Amidst this exploration, several compelling factors have emerged as potential catalysts for this trend.

Bengkalis boasts a bountiful wealth of natural resources, offering a captivating canvas for marine tourism enthusiasts. The shimmering reservoirs, transformed into exquisite development sites, beckon travelers with their pristine beauty. Here, within this unique habitat, lie treasures like the enchanting mangroves, thriving with life, from playful monkeys to the graceful kedabu trees and beyond.

In the realm of economic development, open water tourism emerges as a potent local economic driver. Its transformative impact includes the creation of fresh employment opportunities and the flourishing of local businesses, such as charming restaurants and souvenir shops. Moreover, the sector's allure may have been heightened



by savvy investments and meticulous organization, rendering it a compelling option for tourists.

Beyond its economic impact, open water tourism harmoniously integrates with environmental education, fostering a deeper connection between visitors and the fragile ecosystem. Explorers embark on a journey of discovery, unraveling the secrets of the local biodiversity while immersing themselves in the wonders of the environment.

For those seeking memorable travel experiences, open water tourism unveils a tapestry of activities. From the exhilarating depths of snorkeling and diving to the serenity of swimming in crystal-clear waters, a treasure trove of adventures awaits. All the while, the natural beauty of Bengkalis, from the lush mangroves to the captivating antics of the resident monkeys, serves as a stunning backdrop.

The success of open water tourism in Bengkalis is further propelled by effective promotion and marketing strategies, casting a spotlight on the island's pristine treasures. As certain destinations within this aquatic wonderland become iconic, they draw a growing legion of visitors, perpetuating the trend.

In the realm of health and well-being, open water activities are celebrated as wholesome pursuits. They not only invigorate the body but also rejuvenate the soul, offering a refreshing respite from the demands of daily life. It's a world where leisure meets adventure, and where nature's beauty and human well-being converge, making Bengkalis' open-water tourism an irresistible choice for all seeking an enchanting escape.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on data analysis, several important components were found in the concept of ideal water tourism as an effort to create a blue economy for the people of Wonosari Village. First, sustainable management of water resources and restoration of threatened water ecosystems. This includes protecting and wise use of the water resources and ecosystems that exist in the village. Second, the development of infrastructure that supports water tourism. Good infrastructure, such as clean water treatment, sanitation, accessibility and other supporting facilities, will create a positive experience for tourists and support the growth of the water tourism sector. Third, the development of unique

and sustainable water tourism products and services. Fourth, the active involvement of the community in the management of water tourism. By implementing this concept, it is expected to create sustainable economic growth and provide social benefits for the people of Wonosari Village.

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