



# The Role of Public-Private Relationships in The Development of Marine-Based Tourism in Bintan Regency

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**Abstract**— **Bintan Island is one of the tourist gateways in Indonesia. Bintan Island also has excellent maritime, cultural, history, education and religion potential. This makes Bintan Island a very potential to develop a tourism center and as well as marine-based tourism. The study aimed to examine the role of public-private partnerships to foster develop and enhance the tourism industry in Bintan Regency and how this partnership can assist the industry to grow post-pandemic. The study found that partnerships between private and public organizations in Bintan's tourist industry can help to speed up the industry's recovery. Given the results, this study offers suggestions to tourism policy makers to better understand post-pandemic tourism trends, especially for sustainable marine-based tourism development. Also to assist in creating measures that could increase the positive results of the tourism industry for the post-pandemic period, and to develop more effective instruments leading to the implementation of sustainability in Bintan Regency.**

**Keywords**—*Public-Private Partnership, Marine-Based Tourism, Post-Pandemic Recovery.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Bintan is one of the tourist destinations that attracts foreign tourists due to its natural beauty and strategic geographical location, which is directly adjacent to Malaysia and Singapore. This is evidenced by data on foreign tourist visits which are pretty high. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics for Bintan Regency, in January 2019 40,479 foreign tourists were visiting Bintan Island [1]. Apart from shopping tourism, Bintan Island also has great potential in the maritime, cultural, historical, educational and religious fields. This fifth category is a complete package that can attract tourists to visit Bintan Island.

Bintan as in other countries has been in a slump because of the pandemic. The most critical moments of COVID-19 were the first and second waves of the pandemic because the national vaccination program was still minimal and uneven, in addition to the strict implementation of restrictions on community activities (PPKM) throughout the country [2]. As an international tourism destination, Bintan makes foreign

tourists its main target, and the biggest multifactor challenge posed by the pandemic has resulted in a significant decline in tourist visits. This results from travel restrictions imposed by many countries to stop the Covid-19 virus from spreading [3]. The reason why tourism is important for Bintan Regency is that it is a source of income.

Tourism is one source of local revenue (PAD) which contributes 58.66% in 2019 or 148 billion compared to other sectors [4]. Apart from regional taxes, PAD is supported by regional fees, the results of separated regional wealth management and other legitimate regional revenues. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the hotel sector, restaurants were the biggest contributors to taxes in Bintan Regency [5]. After almost three years, the tourism sector in Bintan has started to rise gradually. However, after the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesian tourism has moved massively towards new tourism, namely trends that prioritize personalized, customized, localized, and smaller sizes [6]. The current tourism trend is no longer mass tourism but emphasizes quality and sustainability tourism.

The urgency and significance of building public-private partnerships during the pandemic was recently highlighted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in its 2020 “Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism” report. In the tourism field, public-private partnerships have often been recognized as a means of cooperation that seeks to foster tourism development [7]. A public-private partnership refers to a cooperative arrangement between the public and private sectors [8]. The benefits of public-private partnerships, that they “bring together interest stakeholders with different objectives and skills, as well as resources in formal or informal partnerships to increase the attractiveness of regional destinations, their productivity, efficiency-related markets, and tourism management as a whole” [9].

Several studies examine the role of public-private partnerships in tourism recovery. The current research seems to strongly support that the governance of public-private partnerships is crucial when tourism destinations face various crises. There are often conflicting views, as this outcome is

commenced on the premise that tourism is a profoundly related industry, no single sector can influence its development, and each sector controls different resources. Public-private partnerships "enhance the resilience of tourism organizations and destinations in times of crisis, strengthening defense mechanisms, limiting potential damage, and enabling a faster return to normalcy." [10]. Another study found that partnerships between private and public organizations can help speed up the recovery of Oman's tourism industry, as well as for post-outbreak recovery of tourism and for visionary long-term strategies [11]. For tourism to recover, various stakeholders must work together strategically in well-established partnerships [12]. Organizations should likewise be equal and adjusted for the recuperation to run well.

In parallel, Bintan's Tourism still relies on local wisdom, such as nature, culture, sports, and maritime tourism. Bintan has enormous potential for coastal resources to be developed into marine-based tourism. Unfortunately, it has not been worked out properly. Building on the perspective of governance and the literature on public-private partnerships and tourism crisis management, this study explores the governance of post-crisis tourism recovery in Bintan Regency. The object of this study is a public-private partnership with a focus on cooperation between the Bintan Resort Company (PT) and local government Bintan Regency. More specifically, this study has two objectives: (1) Examine the role and strategies adopted by the government of Bintan (especially the city management) in reviving marine-based tourism; (2) To explore how a public-private partnership governance approach can be effectively applied in tourism recovery efforts.

## II. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative research method, based on primary and secondary data sources, including literature reviews from related journals and articles on public-private partnerships and marine-based tourism. The literature review discusses the basic concepts. The methodology is useful in identifying the positive impacts between public and partnerships for the development of sustainable marine-based tourism in Bintan Regency.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Pandemic Impact on Bintan Tourism

Bintan has grown as a world tourism destination, enriched with natural beauty, unique and diversity of culture and local wisdom. Bintan was projected from the start as a tourist and resort island because it has many beautiful beach areas that have been decorated with various luxury-class facilities, and most of them are along the coast of this island or to be precise in the northern area of Lagoi which is directly opposite Singapore and Malaysia [10].

Tourism has proven to be one of the biggest contributors to Regional Original Revenue (PAD) in Bintan and Riau Islands (Kepri) [11]. Before the pandemic, foreign tourists dominated tourism in Bintan Regency. The significant effect of the pandemic on Bintan Tourism includes a decrease in the hotel and occupancy rate, and loss of revenues. This decline directly impacted hotels, restaurants, travel agents and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Bintan. Based on data from the Bintan Regency Regional Revenue Agency,

it was recorded that from 2017-2018, the tax sector always exceeded the target. However, since 2019, the taxation sector has not reached its target realization and has decreased yearly. The low realization of this tax was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is still ongoing until 2021. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the hotel and restaurant sectors were the biggest contributors to taxes in Bintan Regency[5].

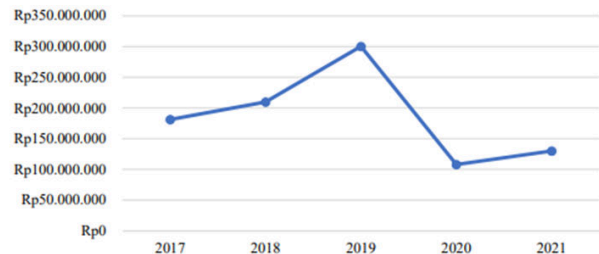


Fig 1. Bintan Regency Regional Tax Revenue 2017-2021

### B. Bintan Tourism Post-Pandemic

Even though the level of tourist visits to Bintan Regency had fallen to its lowest point at the start of the pandemic. Lagoi tourism managed by Bintan Resort still survives despite heavy losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lagoi Tourism Area also known as Bintan Beach International Resorts (BBIR), is managed by PT Bintan Resort Cakrawala and stands on an area of 23,000 hectares in Teluk Sebong District, Bintan. There are 15 premium hotels and resorts as well as several other tourist attractions which since the 1990s, were designed to attract tourists from Singapore. In 2019, visitors to Lagoi reached 1.09 million tourists. A total of 138,115 of them came from Singapore. Lagoi Tourism contributed IDR 170 billion of IDR 300 billion Regional Original Revenue (PAD) Bintan [12].

The local government had to take a different alternative approach during the pandemic. This action was initiated to keep tourism going during the pandemic by acclimating to the ongoing situation and conditions, such as offering security guarantees for tourists, giving abolition of tax sanctions, and changing the target market so that Bintan tourism can immediately rise from adversity. The optimism of the Indonesian government to revive the tourism sector, especially in Bintan, has further boosted confidence and optimism for Bintan Resort to survive [13]. Throughout 2021, there were approximately 47,000 domestic tourist visits Lagoi.

One of the public-private cooperation attempts to revive tourism in the Bintan is holding back annual activities that have been halted due to the impact of Covid-19, such as "Tour de Bintan". Tour de Bintan is Asia's biggest cycling event and part of the L'Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Grand Fondo World Series. This activity was held in October 2022 and at the same time became the 10th anniversary of the Tour De Bintan being held. Four hundred eighty-one cyclists from 33 countries attended this activity. Participants who later qualify will be able to participate in an international bicycle event in Glasgow, Scotland in August 2023 [14].

Implementing this activity has also stimulated an increase in the local community's economy, especially the Bintan SMEs. International sports activities like this are expected to boost Indonesia's positive image in the eyes of the world

[15]. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that the number of foreign tourist visits to Bintan Regency from January to December 2022 was 137,529 [16]. Hotels and restaurants are tourism-supporting facilities. The large number of hotels and tourist visits also affect hotel tax revenues. Even until mid-February 2023, local revenue from the tourism sector in Bintan reached IDR 16.2 billion. The number of visits by domestic and foreign tourists influenced the increase in PAD in the tourism sector [17]. This was achieved due to the cooperation of the public-private partnership.

TABLE 1. The Room Occupancy Rate (TPK) in Kepri

Hotel Qualification						
The Room Occupancy Rate (TPK) in Percent (%)						
Hotel Qualification	2019	2020	2021	Hotel Qualification	2022	
	Annual	Annual	Annual		Jan	Dec
Star Hotels	52,31	28,88	23,88	All star from (1-5)	26,39	62,53
Non-Star Hotels	35,73	26,67	21,86			

### C. The Role of Public-Private Partnership for the Development of Sustainable Marine-Based Tourism in Bintan Regency

In the tourism context, to accomplish harmony and sustainable tourism development, the participation of the stakeholders in this industry is a must. Besides, through partnerships, the business ecosystem likewise gets a boost and the introduction of new tourist products [18]. Before the pandemic, The tourism business partnership in Bintan actually has not been seen running maximally. The tourism industry in Bintan appears to run all alone, yet shows no collaboration between each other [19]. With the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders and local governments have begun to evaluate the tourism management model in Bintan. Reflecting on the downturn caused by depending on the international market.

The collaborative efforts between public and private partnerships in Bintan Regency have steadily increased tourist arrivals and regional revenues (PAD). Based on data from the Riau Islands Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of foreign tourist visits to Bintan in the first quarter of 2023 was 45,305. From February to March, there was an increase of 69 percent, where foreign tourist visits as of March reached 19,032 visits. Overall, Bintan contributed 13.31 percent to the total number of foreign tourist visits to the Riau Islands. Overall, until March 2023, the number of foreign tourists visiting the Riau Islands was 340,260 visits [20].

The pandemic's effects also resulted in significant shifts of tourism management. According to the tourism minister Sandiaga Uno, the changes from the pandemic have also changed the 3A concept in tourism, namely attractions, amenities, and accessibility. The new tourism economic trend is currently alongside the creative economy sector. According to him, tourism attractions are currently changing to prioritize culture and nature, offering ecological balance, adventure, and interesting experiences. Regarding amenities, luxury resorts are no longer an advantage, but what quality services can be provided to tourism service providers(6).

In parallel, Government Regulation (PP) of the Republic of Indonesia No. 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan for 2010 – 2025 has determined that tourism development in Indonesia is carried

out by optimizing the attractive potential of Indonesia's natural resources. These tourism practices are divided into three categories: 1) marine tourism, 2) ecotourism, and 3) adventure tourism.

Marine tourism is the biggest potential for tourism development in Bintan Regency. Apart from its geographical factors, Bintan has been projected as a tourist and leisure island since the beginning. Bintan is also famous for its beautiful beaches, stretches of white sand, and crystal-clear seawater. However, it has only developed in most of the Lagoi area and private islands. Tourist destinations like Pengudang Village, Berakit Tourism Village, South Toapaya Tourism Village, Mapur Tourism Village, etc., are different because the management is not carried out by multi-national companies such as Lagoi and Private Island [21].

Thus far, public and private cooperation efforts in developing marine-based tourism in Bintan are still being carried out around Lagoi. However, the Bintan government is currently optimizing tourism programs by the community by forming villages or tourist villages. This is because community-based tourism is more environmentally friendly. After all, its main orientation is not to make the highest profits but rather to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem and introduce local wisdom and local cultural uniqueness to outsiders. In addition, tourists will also benefit because traveling to destinations managed by residents will be cheaper. It is also hoped that public-private cooperation in Bintan can be further encouraged since it is can be one way to increase domestic and foreign tourists coming to Bintan.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This crisis is a chance to reexamine how the tourism industry cooperates with our society, different sectors of the economy, and our natural resources and environments to better measure and manage them. Restoring tourism in Bintan requires the cooperation of all relevant parties. Collaboration between public and private partnerships is important for the recovery of the Bintan tourism industry and for the development of marine tourism. Following their duties and functions, local governments are expected to contribute regarding regulations that make it easier for the tourism industry to develop. In addition, strategic planning for tourism development can build a positive outcome for the tourism industry in the post-pandemic period and foster sustainable tourism in Bintan Regency.

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