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## Collaborative Governance in Marine Ecotourism Development: Navigating Stakeholder Interests at Red Island Beach, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of collaborative governance in the context of developing marine ecotourism on the Pulau Merah Coast of Banyuwangi Regency, Indonesia. Specifically, it focuses on evaluating the dynamic collaboration processes among stakeholders and identifying the key elements of successful and sustainable ecotourism development through this multi-stakeholder approach. The research employed a qualitative method using a descriptive approach. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants representing government, private sector, and community groups, as well as via field observations. Secondary data was sourced from relevant documents and reports. The collected data was analyzed using an interpretive process of thematic categorization and comparison. The findings highlight that collaborative governance at Pulau Merah involves complex, non-linear dynamics. Key discussion results indicate that initial drivers like leadership, pre-history of cooperation, and perceived interdependency significantly initiate the collaboration process. However, the study identifies critical bottlenecks within the formal process itself, particularly challenges in maintaining ongoing dialogue among stakeholders with divergent interests, ensuring full commitment to shared goals, and establishing intermediate-term indicators for transparent monitoring. The results emphasize that overcoming these process-oriented challenges is crucial for transitioning from initial collaboration stages to long-term, tangible impacts.

*Keyword:*

Collaborative Governance,  
Marine Ecotourism,  
Sustainable Tourism, Pulau  
Merah Beach.

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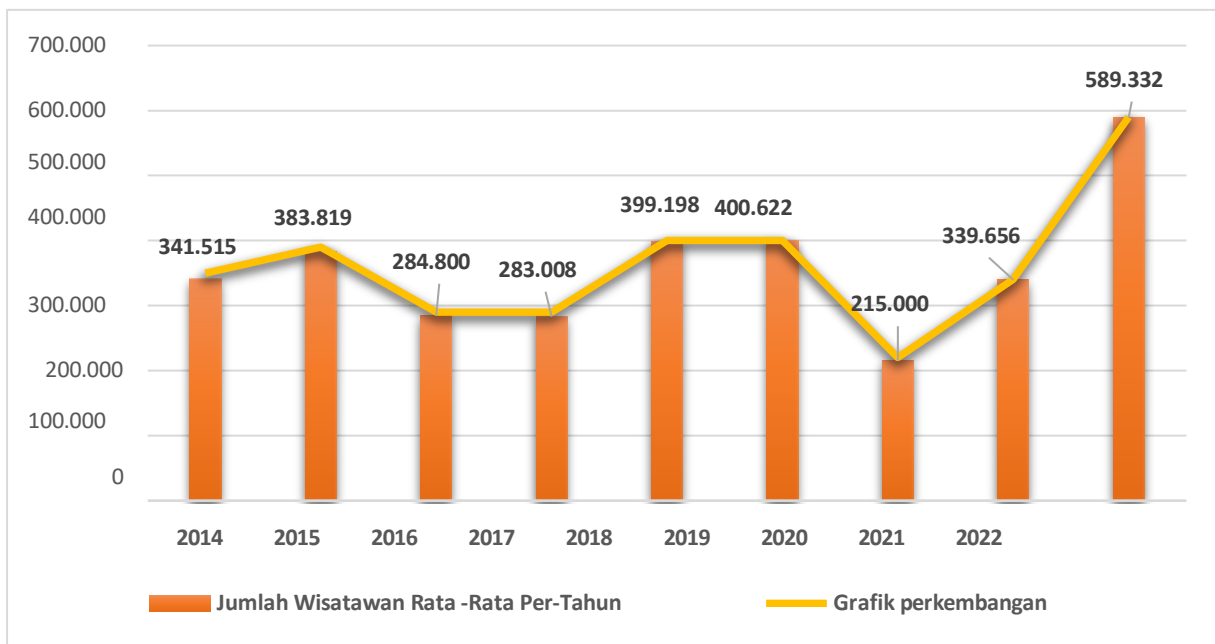
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## INTRODUCTION

The development of marine ecotourism is recognized as a strategic pillar of national economic growth in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan, in line with the mandate of Law No. 10/2009 and the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. This policy emphasis marks a paradigm shift in tourism management from a top-down approach to an inclusive and participatory model, prioritizing environmental conservation, community empowerment, and local wisdom (Rony Wirawan et al., 2023; Tamrin et al., 2023).

National tourism performance experienced a drastic decline of up to 75% due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the significant recovery in 2022-2023 confirms the urgency of a robust collaborative strategy to deal with unexpected challenges. In the regional context, East Java Province has designated tourism as a priority sector through its 2018-2038 Zoning Plan (RZWP3K), which has been effectively implemented by Banyuwangi Regency (“The Sunrise of Java”) by leveraging its natural wealth and annual cultural festivals as key pillars of development to attract millions of tourists.

Marine ecotourism emphasizes sustainable resource use and community empowerment, aligning with legal mandates for coastal conservation (Garrod & Wilson, 2003). Success extends beyond revenue to the synergistic realization of conservation and empowerment principles (Musleh et al., 2023). This report analyzes the local implementation of these policies at Pulau Merah Beach, a designated priority tourism zone in East Java.



Source: Banyuwangi Regency Culture and Tourism Office (2023)

Figure 1. Graph of Pulau Merah Beach Tourism Object Visitor Data 2014-2022

As a priority ecotourism destination and geopark in Banyuwangi, Pulau Merah Beach has strong natural charm but faces fluctuating visitor dynamics, prompting the government to reorganize the area in 2019. Management of this area involves complex interactions between multiple actors, including the government, Perhutani, and the community, which are formally bound by a 2014 Cooperation Agreement (PKS). Despite this formalization, the effectiveness of collaboration in the field is still hampered by significant coordination issues and overlapping roles among stakeholders (Fairuza, 2017).

This complexity raises a specific and profound set of issues. There are stark differences in interests among actors: local governments prioritize increasing local revenue through infrastructure development and promotion, while local communities prioritize environmental sustainability and access to coastal resources as their main livelihood. The private sector, on the other hand, is oriented towards business profits and investment. This difference in objectives leads to slow decision-making and difficulty in reaching a mutual agreement that is fair to all parties. In addition, the lack of formal mechanisms that regulate stakeholder engagement in detail, as well as the lack of transparency in budget management and benefit sharing, often leads to mistrust and potential conflicts between actors. This phenomenon shows a gap between the ideal theoretical framework of collaborative governance and its suboptimal implementation in the field.

The current discourse on global tourism governance has shifted significantly from a centralized (top-down) approach to a collaborative governance model, recognized as a crucial instrument in managing complex natural resources such as marine ecotourism (Iman et al., 2025). Conceptually, Ansell & Gash (2008) articulated that collaboration is not merely passive participation, but rather an institutional strategy in which state and non-state actors interact formally to reach a consensus on environmental conservation and economic empowerment. In the context of ecotourism, this model demands a proportional division of roles, where success is no longer measured solely by economic profitability, but by the synergy of coastal ecosystem protection and local community inclusion (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Garrod & Wilson, 2003).

While the ideal theoretical framework of collaborative governance promises inclusive synergy, contemporary academic discourse highlights various paradoxes in its implementation. Empirical studies reveal that inter-stakeholder collaboration often fails not due to the absence of formal structures, but rather due to asymmetric power dynamics, sectoral egos, and trust deficits among actors (Anwar et al., 2020; Dangles et al., 2016; Febty et al., 2021; Jatmikowati et al., 2020; Kismartini & Pujiyono, 2023; Taufik et al., 2021; Yesayabela et al., 2023). In coastal ecosystems, clashing interests between the commercial orientation of the private sector, government-driven Regional Original Revenue (PAD) targets, and the subsistence needs of local communities often distort decision-making processes, marginalizing weaker actors to non-strategic, technical roles (Ardiansyah et al., 2023; Gonzales et al., 2019; Musleh et al., 2023; Syahputra & Ma'ruf, 2020; Wu et al., 2021).

This is where a crucial research gap lies. Most previous studies tend to focus on evaluating the outcomes of collaborative governance or merely describing barriers to collaboration at a macro level. There is still a dearth of literature that examines at a micro level how these power dynamics and mistrust distort each stage of the collaboration process particularly using the comprehensive framework of Morse & Stephens (2012), which encompasses the stages of Assessment, Initiation, Deliberation, and Implementation. Therefore, this research on Pulau Merah Beach aims to fill this gap. This research offers novelty by analyzing how a formal structure (such as the 2014 Cooperation Agreement) proves inadequate to guarantee successful collaboration without transparent conflict resolution and mitigating the dominance of powerful actors over local communities.

The study aims to analyze the collaborative governance process in developing marine ecotourism at Pulau Merah Beach, Indonesia, specifically examining how power dynamics and mistrust impact collaboration despite existing formal structures. Furthermore, the analytical boundary of this research is confined to the collaborative stages as outlined theoretical framework.

## **METHODS**

This research employs a qualitative case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This approach was chosen intentionally (rather than simply a normative review) because the analysis of collaborative governance in Pulau Merah Beach involves complex social dynamics, power asymmetries, and conflicting interests among multiple actors that cannot be measured purely quantitatively. The case study design allows researchers to deeply examine how formal structures interact with contextual realities on the ground in Sumberagung Village, Pesanggaran District (Lincoln & Guba, 2007).

To avoid descriptive bias, data collection and analysis were strictly guided by Ricardo S. Morse and Jhon B. Stephens (2012) collaborative governance theoretical framework. Researchers specifically coded field data into four analytical stages: Assessment, Initiation, Deliberation, and Implementation. This analysis process employed an interactive model encompassing by Miles et al. (2014), including: Data collection, Condensation (selecting crucial field findings), Data presentation, and Conclusion drawing.

The researcher concretely carried out the following empirical steps in the field: a) Semi-Structured Interviews: The researcher did not simply distribute questionnaires but conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews to explore hidden perspectives and motivations. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on the representation of actor power, consisting of: Head of Tourism Division of the Banyuwangi Culture and Tourism Office, President Director of PT Palawi Risorsis (Perhutani), Head of Sumberagung Village, Head of Community Groups (Pokmas) in the Pulau Merah area, as well as MSMEs and tourists; b) Non-Participatory Observation: The researcher directly observed the daily operational dynamics at Pulau Merah Beach. Observations focused on the division of real roles, such as the practice of cleanliness and parking management by Pokmas, interactions between stakeholders, and infrastructure operations controlled by the private sector and the government; c) Critical Document Analysis: The researcher conducted a comprehensive document analysis, not limited to a literature review, but analyzing formal legal documents that bind the actors. The main focus is to dissect the contents of the 2014 Cooperation Agreement (PKS), Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and related media coverage to identify gaps between the written agreement and implementation.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, researchers rigorously applied source and technique triangulation. Practically, this was done by cross-checking government claims with testimonies from community groups (Pokmas) and private sector stakeholders, and matching these with documentary evidence from the PKS and physical observations in the field (Sugiyono, 2013).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Assessment Stage**

The development of marine ecotourism at Pulau Merah Beach seeks to balance sustainable resource management with the goal of increasing local revenue, supported by post-pandemic recovery efforts under the 2023 spatial planning regulation. However, despite the formal 2014 cooperation agreement, collaborative governance remains hindered by poor coordination, ambiguous roles, and an incentive structure that disproportionately benefits the private sector. These challenges are exacerbated by conflicting priorities with the government favoring investment and the community prioritizing environmental conservation which ultimately weaken stakeholder commitment. To ensure the long-term sustainability of

the area, it is essential to implement more inclusive policies, establish regular communication forums, and create clear conflict resolution mechanisms that align the interests of all parties.

Despite the Banyuwangi Regency Government's strong commitment to developing Pulau Merah Beach as a premier ecotourism destination through strategic planning and funding, effective collaborative management remains a challenge. While operational synergy theoretically involves the government as a facilitator, PT Perhutani and private investors managing land and facilities, and local Community Groups (Pokmas) handling technical tasks, this structure is undermined by overlapping authorities and unequal roles. Ultimately, the conflicting priorities among these stakeholders with the government focused on rapid development, the private sector on business profits, and the community on environmental sustainability create confusion, hinder true synergy, and result in an inequitable distribution of benefits.

The development of marine ecotourism at Pulau Merah Beach is significantly hindered by conflicting stakeholder priorities, with the government focusing on regional income, the private sector prioritizing profit, and local communities emphasizing environmental conservation. These divergent goals, exacerbated by weak coordination and poor communication, result in decision-making imbalances, eroded mutual trust, and the delayed implementation of cooperation programs. Consequently, establishing routine, inclusive discussion mechanisms is crucial to align these varied perspectives and achieve a strategic consensus for fair and sustainable ecotourism governance.

Despite initial commitments, the collaborative management of eco-tourism at Pulau Merah Beach is heavily hindered by conflicting stakeholder interests, with the local government prioritizing revenue and tourist numbers, the private sector focusing on profit and infrastructure, and the community emphasizing environmental conservation. These divergent visions complicate consensus-building, a problem further exacerbated by unclear roles, weak monitoring mechanisms, and poor coordination. Ultimately, the absence of an active communication forum leads to unresolved conflicts and slow decision-making, which undermines the effectiveness of management programs and creates imbalances in the utilization of tourism resources.

The collaborative management of marine ecotourism at Pulau Merah Beach struggles with significant coordination and transparency issues among its key stakeholders. While the local government acts as the primary facilitator, its efforts are weakened by opaque budgeting that risks unequal benefit distribution, and the private sector's profit-driven infrastructure investments frequently clash with environmental conservation needs. Consequently, local communities are marginalized into minor operational roles with minimal influence over strategic decision-making. This lack of empowerment, compounded by overlapping authorities and unclear task divisions, ultimately triggers operational conflicts and hinders effective synergy in the area's ecotourism management.

Based on this explanation, the researchers summarized the explanation related to the Assessment Stage in the form of the following matrix table:

Table 1. Matrix of the Assessment Stage in the Development of Pulau Merah Beach

No.	Sub-Indicators of Collaborative Governance	Findings	Analysis	Conclusion
1.	Understanding Conceptual Factors	The history of cooperation has been hampered by limited resources and suboptimal regulations.	Conflicts of interest arise due to sharp differences in vision between the government, local communities, and the private sector.	Stronger regulations are needed to prevent overlapping authority and conflicts of interest among stakeholders.
2.	Stakeholder Identification	Stakeholders include local governments, local communities, the tourism sector, and community organizations.	There is a difference in interests, with the government focusing on infrastructure and tourism growth, while the community prioritizes environmental sustainability.	A more inclusive participation mechanism is needed so that all parties can contribute to decision-making.
3.	General agreement on issues or common goals	Stakeholders recognize the importance of sustainability, but have different development goals and priorities.	The government's priority on economic growth conflicts with the community's focus on environmental conservation, which hinders the formulation of joint policies.	An effective communication forum is needed so that stakeholders can reach agreement on managing ecotourism in a sustainable manner.
4.	Commitment to pursuing collaborative solutions	Cooperation efforts are already in place, but participation among parties is still uneven.	The government dominates decision-making, while the community plays a minimal role in policy planning.	Community involvement in planning must be increased to ensure the sustainability of collaboration.
5.	Identification of Key Roles	The government plays the main role, the private sector acts as investors, and the community acts as operational implementers.	Unclear roles lead to inefficiencies in the implementation of ecotourism programs.	Clear role definitions and a proportional division of responsibilities are necessary for effective management.

Source: Compiled by Researchers, 2025

The assessment stage at Pulau Merah Beach reveals a critical theoretical deviation from the ideal collaborative consensus, demonstrating that the initial identification of stakeholders is fundamentally undermined by asymmetric power dynamics. While the foundational framework of collaborative governance presupposes an equitable alignment of collective goals, the empirical reality in this phase exposes stark sectoral egos: local governments aggressively prioritize economic revenue and infrastructure, whereas local communities advocate for ecological sustainability. This structural divergence directly corroborates the arguments of Wu et al. (2021); Gonzales et al. (2019) and Taufik et al. (2021), illustrating that without transparent mechanisms to mitigate power imbalances from the outset, the assessment stage functions merely as a formal administrative facade rather than a genuine foundation for building inter-actor trust.

### **Initiation Stage**

The collaborative development of marine ecotourism at Pulau Merah Beach initially aimed to manage the area's natural and economic potential but was quickly hindered by conflicting stakeholder visions. While the local government prioritized infrastructure and revenue, and the private sector focused on profits, the local community emphasized environmental sustainability. This divergence, coupled with the absence of a formal agreement defining rights and obligations, suboptimal regulations, and limited resources, led to an unequal division of roles and benefits. Furthermore, government-dominated planning marginalized active community participation, increasing the risk of conflicts and preventing a much-needed balance between economic exploitation and environmental conservation.

The initial evaluation of ecotourism development at Pulau Merah Beach highlights significant priority gaps among stakeholders, with the local government focusing on infrastructure and tourism growth, the community on environmental sustainability, and the private sector on investment. These conflicting interests are exacerbated by vague regulations, a lack of defined roles, and insufficient community empowerment programs. Although a nascent commitment to collaboration exists, the absence of a binding agreement threatens future policy support. To achieve sustainable and equitable ecotourism management, it is crucial to implement strategic measures such as drafting specific regulations, formalizing cooperation mechanisms, and enhancing community capacity through targeted training.

Setting goals and scope for managing eco-tourism on Red Island Beach faces major challenges due to a lack of alignment between the vision of local governments, which prioritize short-term economic infrastructure development, and local communities, which prioritize sustainable environmental conservation. The dominance of private interests and unclear boundaries of responsibility exacerbate this situation, creating an imbalance in roles and an uneven distribution of benefits. This condition risks triggering the exploitation of resources that ignores the needs of the community and threatens the long-term sustainability of the area.

Based on this explanation, the researchers summarized the explanation related to the Initiation Stage in the form of the following matrix table:

Table 2. Matrix of the Initiation Stage in the Development of Pulau Merah Beach

No.	Sub-Indicators of Collaborative Governance	Findings	Analysis	Conclusion
1.	Determining Ideas or Concepts	The initial idea for developing ecotourism came from stakeholders, but was hampered by sharp differences in vision between the government, the community, and the private sector.	The government focuses on infrastructure and tourist numbers, the private sector is profit-oriented, while the community prioritizes environmental sustainability.	A more intensive communication forum is needed to align visions and prevent conflicts of interest in management.
2.	Evaluation of the Initial Assessment Stage	Problem identification reveals challenges in role distribution, stakeholder readiness, and community involvement disparities.	The lack of community capacity hinders policy implementation, while unspecific regulations cause overlapping authorities.	Community empowerment and clearer regulatory revisions are needed so that every stakeholder can play an effective role.
3.	Setting Goals and Scope	The objectives and scope of ecotourism management have not been fully agreed upon by stakeholders.	Differing priorities hinder the balance between economic development and conservation, and communities feel they are not sufficiently involved in the initial planning stages.	A collaborative strategy is needed to ensure the involvement of all parties in setting more inclusive goals.

Source: Compiled by Researchers, 2025

The initiation phase at Pulau Merah Beach presents a critical juncture where the theoretical ideals of collaborative governance severely clash with empirical realities. While Ansell and Gash (2008) posit that effective initiation requires an institutional strategy aimed at genuine consensus-building, the current process is heavily distorted by what Wu et al. (2021); Febty et al. (2021); Jatmikowati et al. (2020) and Kismartini & Pujiyono (2023) identify as asymmetric power dynamics. Instead of establishing a proportional division of roles that balances economic development with ecological conservation, as emphasized by Garrod and Wilson (2003), the local government and private sector disproportionately dominate the agenda-setting. This systemic marginalization of local communities not only violates the foundational premise of inclusive participation but also demonstrates that without formal, binding mechanisms to neutralize sectoral dominance from the outset, the initiation stage fails to establish the equitable groundwork necessary for sustainable marine ecotourism.

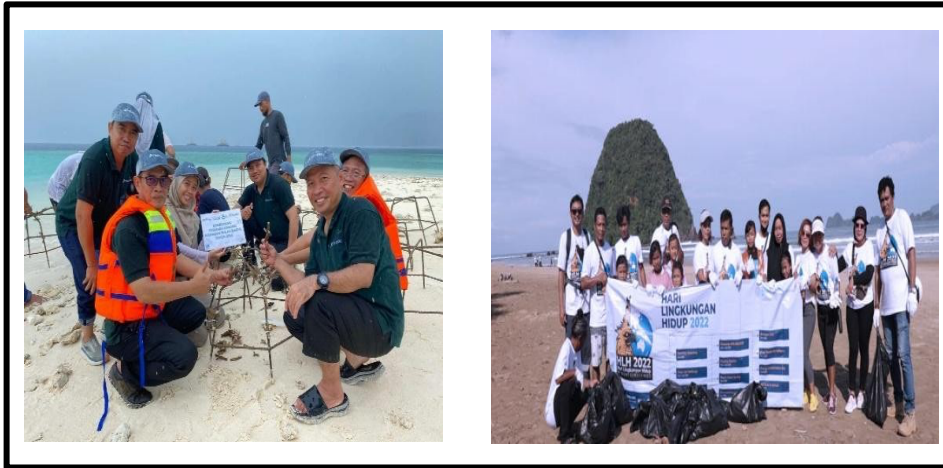
### **Deliberation Stage**

Stakeholders in the collaborative governance of Red Island Beach ecotourism understand the need for collective synergy, implementation is severely hindered by conflicting priorities: the government seeks economic growth, the private sector pursues profit, and the community prioritizes environmental sustainability. This divergence, coupled with the dominance of government and private interests during deliberations, marginalizes community participation and stalls consensus on management regulations. Furthermore, weak conflict resolution and monitoring mechanisms prevent the consistent implementation of commitments, underscoring the urgent need to formalize cooperation through written agreements, standardized dispute resolution procedures, and regular evaluations to ensure equitable benefits for all parties involved.

Collaborative governance for marine ecotourism at Pulau Merah Beach struggles to build stakeholder trust, as local communities often view development initiatives as exploitative and dominated by government and private interests. This skepticism is driven by a lack of transparency, unclear fund allocation, and minimal community involvement in decision-making. To resolve these issues and ensure sustainable cooperation, it is essential to establish inclusive communication forums, enforce effective oversight, and formalize initial commitments into binding written agreements that guarantee transparency, fairness, and active community participation.

The development of eco-tourism policies at Pulau Merah Beach is currently deadlocked due to conflicting stakeholder priorities. While the local government focuses heavily on economic revenue through infrastructure and the private sector pushes for a professional, investment-based model, local communities demand transparency, equitable benefit-sharing, and a larger role in environmental management. This sharp divergence in interests, exacerbated by the local government's dominance in decision-making, has prevented any final agreement on an ideal management model. Consequently, a comprehensive socio-environmental impact study is essential to break this impasse and formulate equitable, sustainable policies for all parties involved.

Empowering public participation in the management of Pulau Merah Beach ecotourism has shown significant progress through the active involvement of Community Groups (Pokmas) in technical operations, monitoring, and conservation, which has successfully fostered a sense of local ownership. Although strategic decision-making is still dominated by the government and the private sector, community capacity continues to be strengthened through various tourism skills and sustainable environmental management training programs initiated jointly with academics to open new economic opportunities for local residents. The following are pictures related to the waste management program, beach clean-up, and coral reef maintenance that Pokmas Pulau Merah has provided to researchers:



Source: Pulau Merah Coastal Community Group, 2024

**Figure 2. Beach Cleanup and Coral Reef Transplantation at Pulau Merah Beach**

To maximize the benefits of ecotourism, training and economic empowerment programs for communities, such as rental and culinary businesses, need to be expanded in a sustainable manner and supported by strengthened business management so that communities can become more independent. On the other hand, active community participation in environmental monitoring through security patrols needs to be strengthened with formal regulations from the government to provide greater legitimacy and authority in enforcing ecosystem conservation rules. The following is an image related to the beach cleanliness patrol program that Pokmas Pulau Merah has provided to researchers:



Source: Pulau Merah Community Group, 2024

**Figure 3. Beach Clean Patrol**

Overall, the empowerment of public participation in ecotourism management has seen positive developments but still faces challenges in terms of increasing community capacity, developing clearer regulations, and more inclusive participatory mechanisms. With stronger support from the government and private sector in terms of regulations, ongoing training, and increasing the role of communities in decision-making, it is hoped that eco-tourism at Pulau Mera Beach can develop more sustainably and provide fairer benefits for all stakeholders involved.

Conflict resolution in Red Island Beach ecotourism faces significant challenges due to clashing stakeholder interests, as the government and private sector prioritize revenue and profit, while marginalized local communities advocate for environmental sustainability and economic justice. This imbalance is worsened by top-down decision-making, poor

coordination, and the absence of standard dispute resolution and monitoring procedures, which often leads to implementation failures and increased conflict potential. To overcome these structural obstacles and achieve equitable, sustainable management, it is crucial to establish open dialogue systems, transparent conflict resolution mechanisms, and rigorous oversight that accommodate all parties.

Based on this explanation, the researchers summarized the explanation related to the Deliberation Stage in the form of the following matrix table:

**Table 3. Matrix of the Deliberation Stage in the Development of Pulau Merah Beach.**

No.	Sub-Indicators of Collaborative Governance	Findings	Analysis	Conclusion
1.	Creating Mutual Understanding	Stakeholders hold diverse perspectives on ecotourism goals.	Conflicting interests among parties hinder vision alignment.	Regular, transparent dialogue is crucial for reaching consensus.
2.	Building Trust Among Actors	Public skepticism persists regarding government and private sector transparency in ecotourism management.	Opaque regulations and benefit sharing foster low trust among stakeholders.	Clear monitoring mechanisms and community participation are essential to build trust.
3.	Exploring Policy Options and Actions	No consensus reached on proposed policies.	Government dominance limits community involvement.	Inclusive studies and negotiations are needed for equitable solutions.
4.	Empowering Public Participation	Local communities manage operations like parking, cleaning, and security.	Participation boosts ownership, yet strategic decision-making power remains limited.	Inclusive consultation mechanisms are required to enable active community policymaking.
5.	Resolving Conflicts and Differences of Opinion	Recurring stakeholder tensions persist regarding regulations, benefit sharing, and roles.	The absence of clear mechanisms hinders effective conflict resolution.	A fair, transparent system is essential to accommodate all interests.

Source: Compiled by Researchers, 2025

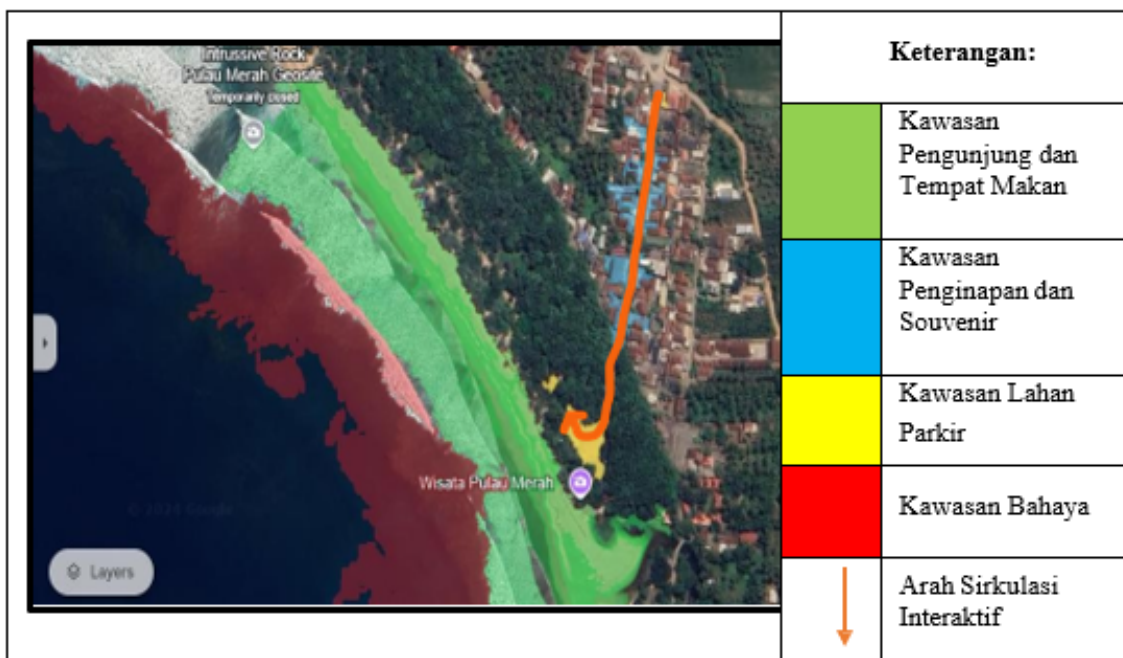
The deliberation stage at Pulau Merah Beach exposes a profound disconnect between the theoretical imperatives of collaborative governance and empirical practice. While Ansell and Gash (2008) emphasize that genuine deliberation relies on trust-building and mutual understanding as the fundamental catalysts for consensus, the reality in this case demonstrates that structured dialogue is systematically co-opted by entrenched power

asymmetries. The persistent dominance of local government and private sector actors in policy negotiation effectively marginalizes community voices, transforming deliberation from a space of equitable problem-solving into an administrative mechanism that merely reinforces existing sectoral egos. This phenomenon substantiates the theoretical assertions of Wu et al. (2021); Anwar et al. (2020); Ardiansyah et al. (2023); Yesayabela et al. (2023) and Gonzales et al. (2019), highlighting that without formalized, transparent conflict resolution protocols to explicitly neutralize power imbalances, the deliberation phase fails to generate collective ownership, thereby deepening institutional mistrust and stalling sustainable ecotourism initiatives.

**Implementation Stage**

Collaborative governance at Red Island Beach aims to balance economic, social, and environmental goals by centering the local community through a Community-Based Tourism framework, actual implementation is hindered by transparency issues and significant power imbalances. While the ideal model relies on equal synergy between the government, private sector, and community, strategic decision-making remains heavily dominated by government and private entities. Consequently, local communities are marginalized to basic operational roles rather than key policy formulation, which ultimately leads to a lack of trust and community ownership due to weak regulatory oversight.

Building constituent support in collaborative governance is a strategic step to secure the long-term commitment of all stakeholders for the sustainability of Red Island Beach ecotourism. A balance must be maintained between economically beneficial visitor growth and conservation efforts, given the high risk of environmental degradation, such as waste and land conversion, that accompanies such tourism growth.



Source: Banyuwangi Regency Culture and Tourism Office, 2022 (Processed by Researchers)

**Figure 4. Mapping of the Pulau Merah Beach Zone**

Based on the figure 5, collaborative efforts for environmental conservation and disaster mitigation on Pulau Merah Beach are implemented through mapping disaster-prone areas that are prioritized as conservation zones for the safety of tourists and the sustainability of

the ecosystem. This strategy includes environmentally friendly infrastructure planning, restrictions on permanent construction and land conversion, and the development of green areas to prevent erosion, supported by local government regulations on spatial planning, waste management, and tourism zoning.

Meanwhile, constituent support is strengthened through the establishment of a multi-stakeholder forum for transparent communication, private sector CSR contributions, and community education and empowerment to become more independent in tourism operations management. Although collaborative mechanisms are already in place, the main challenges remain strict supervision of regulatory implementation and the sustainability of training programs to ensure a balance between private economic benefits, environmental preservation, and the capacity of communities as the primary long-term managers.

Monitoring and evaluation of the management of Pulau Merah Beach ecotourism is carried out through a cooperation mechanism between the local government, the private sector, and Community Groups (Pokmas) based on a legal agreement regarding the division of tasks and conservation rules. Although data shows that an increase in tourist visits has a positive impact on the local economy, this also triggers serious environmental challenges in the form of a surge in waste and the risk of ecosystem degradation. Therefore, the results of the evaluation must be used as a basis for policy adjustments, particularly in waste and facility management, and require strict supervision to ensure that each party carries out its role in accordance with the agreement to maintain the sustainability of ecotourism.

On the other hand, although regular meetings have facilitated coordination and transparency, the implementation of cooperation is still hampered by the absence of a quick and responsive problem-solving mechanism. Urgent issues such as facility damage are often not addressed immediately, requiring a more efficient problem-handling system and flexible policies that are adaptive to changing conditions in the field. Strengthening coordination among stakeholders and improving the managerial system is crucial to ensuring more optimal and balanced tourism management that provides fair benefits to all parties.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher summarizes the explanation related to the Implementation Stage in the form of a matrix table as follows:

**Table 4. Matrix of the Implementation Stage in the Development of Pulau Merah Beach**

No.	Sub-Indicators of Collaborative Governance	Findings	Analysis	Conclusion
1.	Designing Governance Structures	The local government established a governance framework integrating public, private, and community roles in tourism management.	It aims to clarify responsibilities and coordination to prevent overlapping authorities.	Despite the structure, communication and coordination must be strengthened to ensure effective contributions from all parties.
2.	Building Constituent Support	A multi-stakeholder forum was established to	This platform fosters communication, trust, and supports	An active, sustainable forum is essential to

No.	Sub-Indicators of Collaborative Governance	Findings	Analysis	Conclusion
3.	Monitoring Agreements, Evaluating Results, and Managing Cooperation	enhance transparency and participation in decision-making. A formal agreement regulates benefits, conservation, and operations, supported by periodic impact evaluations and regular problem-solving meetings.	community-based tourism policies. While the agreement grounds sustainable management and tourism boosts the local economy, increased activity strains infrastructure and the environment, necessitating the better coordination provided by these forums.	ensure policies accommodate all stakeholder interests. Adaptive monitoring and policy adjustment mechanisms are required to ensure a balance between economic, social, and environmental management objectives.

Source: Compiled by Researchers, 2025

The implementation stage at Pulau Merah Beach starkly illustrates the theoretical paradox of collaborative governance when formalized structures lack equitable power distribution. Although the theoretical paradigm demands proportional synergy to realize genuine Community-Based Tourism, the empirical reality demonstrates that the local government and private sector heavily monopolize strategic decision-making, relegating local communities to marginalized, technical roles such as cleaning and parking. This operational asymmetry directly substantiates the arguments of Anwar et al. (2020); Dangles et al. (2016) and Musleh et al. (2023), who warn that clashing sectoral interests inevitably sideline weaker actors into non-strategic functions. Consequently, aligning with the structural critiques of Wu et al. (2021) and Syahputra & Ma'ruf (2020), this phase proves that merely possessing a formal agreement is insufficient; without rigorous oversight to neutralize ingrained power dynamics, the implementation stage devolves into a mechanism that reinforces sectoral economic dominance over sustainable, equitable community empowerment.

### Comparison and Relevance of Previous Literature

Previous studies collectively establish that collaborative governance often fails due to asymmetric power dynamics, sectoral egos, and trust deficits rather than the absence of formal structures. Researchers such as Anwar et al. (2020); Dangles et al. (2016); (Musleh et al. (2023); Febty et al. (2021); Jatmikowati et al. (2020); Kismartini & Pujiyono (2023) and Yesayabela et al. (2023), are connected by their shared observation that clashing stakeholder interests frequently marginalize weaker actors into non-strategic roles within coastal ecosystems. Similarly, scholars like Wu et al. (2021); Syahputra & Ma'ruf (2020); Taufik et al. (2021); Ardiansyah et al. (2023) and Gonzales et al. (2019), complement this by emphasizing that merely possessing formal agreements is insufficient without rigorous oversight to neutralize ingrained power dynamics. The primary comparison between these prior works and the current research lies in their analytical scope; while most previous literature focuses on evaluating outcomes or describing macro-level barriers, the current

study builds upon their findings to conduct a micro-level examination of how these power imbalances specifically distort each sequential stage of the collaboration process.

### **Theoretical and practical implications**

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on collaborative governance by confirming the gap between the ideal framework proposed by Morse & Stephens (2012) and the reality in the field, where collaboration often fails not because of a lack of structure, but due to factors such as actor dominance, mistrust, and sharp differences in vision among stakeholders. These findings reinforce the urgency of including the variables of power dynamics and trust as crucial elements in the analysis of collaboration success, rather than merely formal procedures. In practical terms, this study provides concrete recommendations for policymakers to not only focus on physical infrastructure development, but also prioritize the formalization of specific regulations, the establishment of transparent conflict resolution mechanisms, and the empowerment of local communities in strategic decision-making to ensure the sustainability of inclusive and equitable ecotourism.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the development of marine ecotourism on Pulau Merah Beach faces significant challenges at all stages of collaborative governance (Assessment, Initiation, Deliberation, and Implementation) due to sharp differences in interests among stakeholders. Although a governance structure and formal Cooperation Agreement (PKS) are in place, implementation has been less than optimal due to the dominance of the government and private sector in strategic decision-making, while local communities are marginalized to technical roles such as parking and cleaning. The main obstacles include a lack of budget transparency, minimal oversight, and the absence of clear conflict resolution mechanisms, which ultimately erode trust and create a gap between the ideal theory of collaboration and the reality on the ground. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature by confirming that collaboration failures are often not caused by a lack of structure, but rather by factors such as actor dominance, mistrust, and sharp power dynamics between stakeholders. This study emphasizes the importance of including variables of trust and power dynamics as crucial elements in the analysis of collaboration success, going beyond mere formal procedures. In addition, this study provides novelty by systematically applying the Morse & Stephens framework to analyze the unique characteristics of the socio-economic ecosystem on the Red Island Coast. To optimize collaboration, this study recommends that policymakers prioritize the formalization of specific regulations and the establishment of transparent and fair conflict resolution mechanisms. It is essential to empower local communities not only in technical operations but also in strategic decision-making to ensure inclusive development. In addition, regular inclusive communication forums are needed to align perceptions, restore trust, and balance the focus between economic growth, environmental preservation, and community welfare.

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