



How sustainable is our destination? A snap-shot from the First Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Destination Award

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Abstract

In Indonesia, tourism has appeared as an important part in development policy and economic sector. Therefore, it is important to apply a sustainability concept that focuses on the development of destinations without being harmful to them. This study explores the position of Indonesia's tourism destination sustainability according to the perception of related stakeholders through Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Award (ISTA) 2017. The instrument used to collect the data was a Self-Evaluation Form for completion by the destination as the participant. This instrument was developed based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria on destination, in compliance with the Laws of Indonesian Tourism Ministry No. 14 Year 2016 about Guidelines of Sustainable Tourism Destination and Certification. As a result, the green indicators performance in each category of measurement at 96 destinations shows that the position of sustainable tourism implementation in Indonesia's destinations are mostly still in the (red) at an average of 42.75%. The knowledge on Indonesia's destinations sustainability level will give valuable inputs to the government in developing a sharp and effective strategy for sustainable tourism principles implementation.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, destination, award, policy and economic sector.

Introduction

As it becomes a home for many beautifully natural wonders, the concept of sustainable tourism is perfectly matched with Indonesia as a developing country. Through a large number of new destinations opened up for the public in the last few years, The Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia realized that tourism has become one of the major industries that supports the country's economy. To safeguard tourism development from the negative impacts, a tourism development concept that can balance the supply and demand as well as be harmonious with the development of other sector is needed. In this regard, tourism action plans are increasingly focusing on the sustainability as the basic principles. Sustainable tourism is not a specific typology of tourism (GSTC, 2016). It is more of an approach that can be used to make all types of tourism more beneficial environmentally, socially and economically. It is emphasized that tourism activities should apply a resource management idea which is aiming at the fulfillment of tourists needs as well as the needs of the range of stakeholders in the destination while simultaneously conserving the cultural, ecological and biological diversity of an area



(Nicolaidis, 2017). This is in line with The World Tourism Organization (WTO) statement that the sustainable development of tourism should promote an optimal use of resources.

Therefore, it is important to apply sustainability concept that focuses on the development of destinations without being harmful to them. The vast tourism development must be balanced by the act to preserve and conserve the natural and cultural resources which are priceless as tourism attractions. The other important factor that motivates Indonesia to start sustainable tourism development for its destinations is the drive to contribute in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are three SDGs goals that have a direct relations with tourism sectors: 1) Goal number 8, Decent work and Economic Growth, by 2030 Indonesia is aiming to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products; 2) Goal number 12, Responsible Consumption and Production, by 2030 Indonesia increase the economic benefits of SIDS (small island developing states) and LDCs (less development country) from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism; 3) Goal number 14, Life below waters, Indonesia will develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products.

However, starting a tourism development that is aligned with sustainable principles is also very challenging for a country. One of the challenge comes from the need to know the sustainability position of its tourism destination as the baseline to start proper sustainable tourism planning. In the past 15 years there have been many studies as a response to measure both the performance and impacts of tourism sectors. The measurement result can be very insightful for the tourism planners in constructing a balanced and sustainable tourism planning drive. Moreover, there is an urgent need to develop policies and measures that can be applied in daily practice. The absence of effective means of translating ideals into action, means that sustainable tourism runs the risk of being just an ideal concept that only sounds good as a theory, but lacks in practice.

There has been a rigorous discussion and process to prepare the formal planning and development of sustainable tourism in Indonesia. One of the results was the decision to adopt and adapt the sustainable tourism destination criteria from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (Cook et al, 2014:348) as a tool to measure the performance of tourism sectors on sustainability perspectives. The criteria consisted of four main sections: 1) Demonstrate effective sustainable management; 2) Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts; 3) Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts and 4) Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts. These four main sections were adapted according to the condition of Indonesia and elaborated into 41 criterias and 104 indicators that can help the government to start a development program that is aligned with needed sustainable tourism requirements.

To strengthen the position of the sustainable tourism destination criteria, Indonesia has formed and formalized the sustainable tourism concept in the form of a decree called the Regulation of Tourism Ministry No. 14 Year 2016 On Guidelines For Sustainable Tourism Destination. In this decree, the GSTC criteria were adapted to the condition of Indonesia so the aspect of local wisdom can be accommodated. After the decree was issued, the next step taken by the Indonesian government was to get baseline data regarding the sustainability of Indonesia's tourism destinations. In order to collect the data, The Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia then conducted Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Award (ISTA), where the criteria and indicators to measure the sustainability of the destination were based on the Regulation of Tourism Ministry No. 14 Year 2016 On Guidelines For Sustainable Tourism Destination [6]. Besides being a mean for data collection, Indonesia's Sustainable Tourism Award (ISTA) is also an embodiment of additional bonus of the assessment process for sustainable tourism destination certification. It is a way to show appreciation for destinations that have implemented principles



of sustainable tourism, encouraged more new innovations in sustainable tourism products and participation, and also promoted awareness for a destination to apply sustainable tourism as promotional and branding ideas.

By looking at the outlook for Indonesia Travel and Tourism sector in 2017, it shows that as one of the world's largest economic sectors, Travel and Tourism creates jobs, drives exports, and generates prosperity across the nation even the world. The role of Travel and Tourism becomes even more significant, as an engine of economic development and as a vehicle for sharing cultures, creating peace, and building mutual understanding. The United Nations designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. Over the longer term, the growth of the Travel and Tourism sector will continue to be strong as long as the investment and development takes place in an open and sustainable manner. We should bear in mind that tourists are mostly satisfied with facilities, natural attractions and relaxation facilities provided by any destination and basically nature and adventure are experienced very positively. In contrast, tourists are often disappointed with facilities such as local transport services, cleanliness and safety and security (Grobler & Nicolaidis, 2016). Enacting pro-growth travel policies that share benefits more equitably can foster a talent and business environment that is necessary to enable Travel and Tourism sector to realize its potential. In doing so, the tourism sector is not only expected to support over 380 million jobs by 2027, but it will continue to grow its economic contribution, providing the rationale for the further protection of nature, habitats, and biodiversity (Bramwell & Lane, 2008).

The main purpose of this study was to share the experience of Indonesia in initiating a data collection regarding the level of sustainability of its destination by using the GSTC Destination criterias. This study also explains more about how the destinations in Indonesia perceived their sustainability level. In summary, the contributions of this work are described as follows:

- a. We present findings which give valuable inputs to the government in developing a strategy for sustainable tourism principles implementation.
- b. We explore the position of Indonesia's tourism destination sustainability according to the related stakeholders.
- c. We propose a method of data collection regarding the sustainability level of the destination that may inspire other countries who have intentions to initiate sustainable tourism development implementation plans.

Sustainable Tourism

The rapid growth of tourism industry in this decade is an inevitable consequence of the advancement in the transportation industry (Font & McCabe, 2017). The flourishing tourism industry can give a rise to economic prosperity in many involved countries. However, it can also bring about problems that often come with economic benefit. Therefore, adequate planning is required to safeguard against potential negative impacts from tourism development. This situation leads to many tourism planning processes which are aimed to balance the development of competitive tourism activities with the conservation of the natural and cultural resources, and become very significant components in the tourism sector.

According to the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism is considered as a leading management of resources regarding economic, social, and aesthetic needs. Such needs can be fulfilled through maintaining four things which are: cultural integration, ecological manner, biological diversity, and also life support systems. The sustainable tourism concept focuses on balancing tourism development with community, habits and various environmental concerns (Hall & Lew, 1998) . Furthermore, sustainable tourism also considered as a form of tourism development that takes full account of its current



and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (Saarinen, 2006; Nicolaidis, 2015).

Sustainability gives a long-term view of the future that focuses on the attention on a set of ethical values and principles that enables the tourism stakeholders to act in a responsible and in a harmonious way, to incorporate the environment and societal consequences of actions as well as economic goals (Nicolaidis, 2017; Bramwell & Lane, 2008). It is an act to balance the present needs without compromising the provision of the future needs. At first, there were demands for the sustainability concept to focus more on environmental exercises, which has emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Delgado & Saarinen, 2014; Delgado & Palomeque, 2014). But then, in the beginning of the 1990s, the sustainability issue had been established as a major paradigm in tourism policies, planning, management, and research rather than focusing on environmental exercises (Sharpley, 2009; Bunakov et al, 2015; David, 2011). As a result, the awareness regarding sustainability issues—which referred not only to natural environment but also social, economic, and cultural scope as well — has also developed significantly over the years.

According to the World Economic Forum in 2013, one of the key of a destination's competitiveness lies on its sustainability. However, it is not easy for a destination to apply the concept of sustainable tourism since there is a vague definition of the concept that made it difficult to be accepted generally (Bramwell and Lane, 2011) . Thus, many destinations claim that they have practiced sustainable tourism without sufficient knowledge of the concept. This condition result in a poor and limited sustainable tourism implementation and practices. Nicolaidis (2015) argues that stakeholder consideration and engagement is important for all organizations and especially the tourism sector and he stresses that local communities should be considered as important stakeholders. In essence, tourism can be regarded as a form of capitalistic endeavour manifested in the market-led production and consumption of tourism products, services and experiences (Byrd, 2007). This 'destination capitals' perspective provides the most appropriate framework for gaining the most economic benefits of tourism to the destination. In other words, it can be said that like any business operating within a capitalist system, destinations seek to exploit their resources or assets to make a 'profit'. However, the exploitation of those assets should reflect and respects local needs and meets the demands of potential tourists.

As a concept that is mostly applied to destinations and has also become a key element of tourist destinations, sustainable tourism development should meet the needs of both the hosts and the visitors (tourists), and also protect all of the resources for future use. The resources should also be managed well in a way where economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be achieved without interrupting cultural integrity and ecological manners (Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

Also, according to UNWTO, there are some problems related to sustainable tourism development such as development of rural areas with the impact, culture heritage, municipal development, alternative tourism development, and also wildlife conservation and national parks (Bunakov et al., 2015). Thus, it would be best if the visitors or tourists could participate in environmental protection within a destination. This is important as the interaction between the tourists and destination environmental protection could result as a great outcome for tourism ecology and economy, which is called as responsible sustainable tourism (Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012). Moreover, sustainable tourism in a destination is an important concept that is more than just a commercial product. This concept fits well with the universal concern to enhance and maintain quality of life and the environment. In addition to that, this concept can contribute positively to economic, socio-cultural, aesthetic and environmental development, promote a fair and impartial development, improve the hosts' quality of life, and also provide quality personal experiences to the visitors / tourists (Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012).



Sustainable tourism may be regarded most basically as the application of the sustainable development idea to the tourism sector (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). The initiation of sustainable tourism development in Indonesia itself began seriously after the release of the Tourism Act Law no.10/2009, stating that sustainability must encompass the natural, social, economic and cultural environment implying that: 1). Tourism destination development must be based on sustainability, 2). Social and economic benefits may have derived from a tourism area without destructing the environment and local cultures, 3). Tourist behaviour and codes of ethics of tourism, form an integral part in the realization of sustainable development. To enforce that law, the government has taken sustainable tourism into serious consideration for the development of Tourism in Indonesia.

In order to realize the development of sustainable tourism, it requires active participation from the stakeholders. The first step to sustainable tourism development in a community is the identification of stakeholders (Nicolaidis, 2015; 2017). Once the stakeholders are identified, they can be included in the tourism development process. Only then will the tourism development have its best chance to be truly sustainable . Franzoni (2015) in his research, identified four distinct tourism stakeholder groups by combining the WTO's definition with the two identified in the WCED's definition of sustainability, namely: 1). **The present tourist** who are the present visitors can be described as any individuals or groups that are current tourists in a community. Through their visit to the host community, they will infuse the local economy with economic resources. The present visitors consume many of the services that the tourism industry offers, (e.g. hotels, restaurants, etc.), and resources in the community, (e.g. water, transportation, cultural resources, etc.). 2). **The present host community** is described as residents, business owners, and government officials, 3). **The future tourist** are visitors, those individuals or groups that will, in the future, visit the area. Similar to the present visitors, the future visitors will consume many of the resources (natural, built, and social) in a community. The future visitors will learn about the community through marketing, media, and the present visitors. 4). **The future host community** can be described as those individuals and groups that will become residents, business owners, or governmental officials in the future. This stakeholder group includes individuals that either move into the community or are born into the community. These individuals are the future consumers of the future resources in the community.

Without stakeholder's involvement, the term sustainable development would just be a marketing slogan or, at best, a topic for theoretical debate. Sustainable tourism development would only be a utopian concept that will never be realized unless it is supported by the awareness from all stakeholders (Nicolaidis, 2015). The destinations stakeholders play an important part to develop the tourism activities which can bring economic benefit to the community and safeguard the resources used for the activities for present and future importance.

Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue that "In the field of tourism, those who speak of sustainable development almost always include participation of the destination communities as one essential element or principle of that sustainability". Sustainable tourism also usually requires effective governance processes, adjusted to specific purposes and contexts, if it is to make progress towards securing the economic, socio-cultural and environmental goals of sustainable development. Such effective governance usually entails a need for appropriate institutions, decision-making rules and established practices. Tailored and effective governance is a key requirement for furthering the objectives of sustainable tourism participation by a diverse range of actors in tourism decision-making and may potentially enhance the democratic processes and ownership widely associated with sustainable development (Pizzitutti et al., 2017).



In order to be sure that the implementation of sustainable tourism has been done properly, it is important to have indicators that can measure it. Sustainable tourism is being consolidated at an international level as an approach that should be used to make all types of tourism more environmentally, socially and economically beneficial (Holden, 2003). Thus, a useful tool that allow tourism managers to diagnose the situation of the destination, and to identify and evaluate issues that require addressing to improve the level of sustainability of the tourist activities is needed. In some research, an indicator system for designing and implementing tourism models that focuses on the sustainability approach is used to evaluate sustainable tourism at cultural destinations.

A study by Torres-Delgado and Palomeque (2014) regarding a scientifically sound, applicable method for studying tourism sustainability at the local level was conducted. This was done by developing an indicator system based on an initial literature search that serves to compile a preliminary list of indicators, which are then verified and scientifically validated by conducting a Delphi survey. The results confirmed the proposed system is an effective tool for planning and managing tourism at municipal level.

Pizzitutti, et al., (2017) also shared a study regarding a decision-support system based on a system dynamics model designed to examine tourism management in the Galapagos Islands (Wheeler, 1993). A participatory approach was used to integrate the views of multiple stakeholders in the Galapagos Islands and to build an understandable, graphical representation of the impacts of tourism and residential population growth. Measuring sustainability can be seen from three things, which are performance of local community, performance of tourist destinations, and performance of autonomous organizations (Franzoni, 2015). Performance of local community refers to social, competitive and economic indicators. A community needs to measure and evaluate the return on its own investment (ROI) in tourism. It should aim to increase the local residents quality of life without being harmful to the environment, maximizing local economic results and also providing best experience/service for visitors (Nicolaidis, 2015) as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Indicators to measure the performance of local community

Dimensions			Several Example of Indicators
A.	Social indicators of local community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction level of the hosts or local residents along with their numbers of complaints, • Number of residents who are proud of their culture and participate in the traditional customs, • Energy, waste production and water usage per capita.
B.	Competitive indicators of local community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tourists arrivals in daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. • The percentage of tourists attracted to visit the area and tourists satisfaction levels. • Accessibility such as number of local transportation
C.	Economic indicators of local community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local GDP and how many percentage generated by tourism. • Income of the residents per capita, number of local residents working in tourism industry (both part time and full time) with average income, • Unemployment rate in the area, • Occupancy rates from all accomodations in the area, • Annual expenditures on tourism, • Revenue from income tax

Source: Franzoni, 2015

The second one is performance of tourist destinations. This measurement emphasizes the destination services and products. By controlling and evaluating of the performance of a tourist destination, it can help to make sure that the social, competitive and economic balance and



serve as a bridge between the performance among organisations and local communities (see Table 2).

Table 2. Indicators to measure the performance of tourist destinations

Dimensions	Several Example of Indicators
A. Social indicators of local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage from energy saving and its consumption on renewable sources, • Water saving and its consumption, • Number of waste collected • Number of recycled waste • Degree of employee satisfaction and disatisfaction • Numbers of workplace accidents
B. Competitive indicators of tourists destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tourists arrivals of the current year compared to the previous year • Number of complaints of the tourists from each destination • Number of tourists accidents in a destination • Level of tourists satisfactions • Level of overcoming seasonality • Accessibilities of transportations
C. Economic indicators of tourists destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average index of operating profitability, stability, and liquidity of firms in a destinations • Percentage of employment in both high seasons and low seasons • Turnover level of tourism firms

Source: Franzoni, 2015

The last one is performance of autonomous organisations which includes everything in hospitality and tourism industry which is related, such as travel agencies, tour operators, and local public authorities. This should follow the social, competitive and economic aspects as well as give contribution to the destination and its community. The performance of autonomous organisations is subject to not only the competences of the organisations but also the tourists demand to the destinations (see Table 3).

Table 3. Indicators to measure the performance of autonomous organisations

Dimensions	Several Example of Indicators
A. Social indicators of autonomous organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of satisfaction (can be seen from number of complaints) of key stakeholders • Level of techniques used to reduce water, energy, and waste consumption • Level of environmental management and certification applied in a firm • Number of organizations that publish sustainability reports.
B. Competitive indicators of autonomous organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourists arrivals in daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly terms and compare them to the previous year, number of tourists that return to the destinations more than once • Number of tourists that repurchase the service in the destinations • How long the tourists stay in a destination
C. Economic indicators of autonomous organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue growth, salary and services costs, GDP, average index of growth rate in sales and invested capital • Level of employment including high and low season workers, part time and full time, and new recruitments of workers in tourism industry.

Source: Franzoni, 2015



In most countries, tourism has appeared as an important part in development policy and in the economic sector. With the sustainability concept added to the industry, the focus is mainly aimed on how to balance the economic, social, and cultural development without being harmful to the environment. Sustainability allows development process without having basic resources degradation. It can be achieved through the renewal of used resources for extensive use which is termed resource management. Thus, a sustainable tourism concept which is based on four basic principles that are similar with GSTC criterias is proposed:

- Environmental sustainability, which aims to balance the development with the maintenance of biological and ecological issues.
- Social sustainability, which focuses on developing and strengthening the identity and values of a community.
- Cultural sustainability, which provides cultural developments that aims to be well matched with the community's values.
- Economic sustainability, which plans to conduct an effective cost and resource management to be used for the long term.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) provides a set of standards in tourism that are applicable in a worldwide scope. As supported by UNWTO, GSTC's set of standards helps to promote and support sustainable development in tourism and destinations operations. There's a program in GSTC which is called Destinations Program. The Destinations Program offers professional assessments of the destinations according to the GSTC Criteria. This is to let the destinations know about their sustainability status based on analysis of their current policies and law enforcement in five areas which are overall governance, economic and investment climate, culture and heritage, energy and environment.

Research Methods

This research was conducted parallel with the Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Award (ISTA) 2017. Using a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative, this research was exploratory in nature. The call for participants to join ISTA 2017 had been started since March 2017 and it was closed on June 2017. The call for participants and socialization of ISTA registration was conducted through an announcement in a website, a formal letter to the Tourism Offices of the 33 provinces in Indonesia and also by visiting some provinces. During the visit to some provinces, the ISTA secretariat also gave a mentoring session to the participants to fill in the registration and the self-evaluation forms.

The instrument used to collect the data was a Self-Evaluation Form that had to be filled in by the destination as the ISTA 2017 participant. This instrument was developed based on the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) criteria on destination, and it complies with the Laws of Tourism Ministry No. 14 Year 2016 about Guidelines of Sustainable Tourism Destination and Certification. For ISTA Instruments, the criteria are called categories. In order to test the validity of the self-evaluation method, The Indonesia Ministry of Tourism conducted several snapshot assessments in four destinations: Pangandaran (West Java), Sleman (Jogjakarta), Wakatobi (Southeast Sulawesi) and Kelimutu (East Nusa Tenggara). The four destinations were selected because they were representing three main regions of Indonesia: Pangandaran and Sleman are from Western Part of Indonesia, Wakatobi is in the Central Part of Indonesia and East Nusa Tenggara is in the Eastern Part of Indonesia. The result of the snapshot had shown that the counting method is valid, can be understood and is applicable in those destinations.

Every indicator's current achievement/performance was evaluated and ascribed an overall rating: Green (excellent), score = 4; Blue (good), score = 3; Yellow (fair), score = 2 and Red (poor), score = 1. Every participant was asked to fill in the Self-Evaluation Form by grading their own performance and achievement in each indicator. To guarantee the consistent



procedure for ISTA, a guideline book with its appendixes was provided. This guideline contained the terms of reference for ISTA which could be referred to by all participants. In this guideline the procedure of self-evaluation was also described in as much detail as possible.

The data set came from the Self-Evaluation Form ISTA's 2017 participants. The self-evaluation instrument was published in the Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism website under the ISTA 2017 program, together with the application form. There were some steps taken for the data collection:

1. The Indonesia Ministry of Tourism announced the ISTA 2017 event through several channels: website, letters to the tourism offices in Indonesia, and through social media.
2. Since ISTA was conducted for the first time with the ISTA 2017 team following up the announcement by visiting some tourism offices that gave a positive response or the tourism office from areas that were considered as having potential candidates.
3. During the visit, the team presented and explained the ISTA programs as well as the rules of the awards, which included the self-evaluation process.
4. In some provinces, the tourism offices invited several destination managers at one event to meet the team and told them to bring necessary documents to support the self-evaluation process. The team then assisted the destinations in doing the self-evaluation.
5. Due to the time and resource limitations, the self-evaluation process was also assisted by using communication technology such as video conference by Whatsapp Application or Skype.

On the deadline of the ISTA 2017 registration, there were 96 participants who submitted their registration and Self-Evaluation form. To give more description about the validity of the self-reporting and justification of how standardized the counting was, an example of the instrument and the process of counting was provided in the appendix section.

The entities of destinations participating in ISTA 2017 were quite varied, such as tourism villages, museums, annual festivals, and resorts. However, each participant was eligible to participate because they met the following requirements: 1) Geographical Requirements: a. The destination is in Republic of Indonesia; b. The provisions concerning tourism destinations are tourist destinations, hereinafter referred to tourism destinations, are geographical areas within one or more administrative areas which there are tourist attractions, public facilities, tourism facilities, accessibility, and interconnected communities and complement the realization of tourism therein; 2) Technical Requirements: a. Participant is a group of people/ an organizational entity which represents a destination in order to propose a participation in ISTA competition; b. participant could be in a form of an entity (Model of governance in Indonesia, which has been recognized, for example: in the form of foundations, local technical implementation unit, Tourism Destination Centre, Tourism Village, Destination Management Organization (DMO), and many others); c. Participant could be a team / consortium which consisted of public stakeholders and private organization which propose tourism product together. The bigger the number of team members, the greater the opportunity to win; d. The destination that proposed an application must have had adequate public facilities (as requested on ASEAN Tourism Standard).

The score of Self-Evaluation form was determined by giving a predicate for each category. The predicates are as follows:

Category A: Sustainable Tourism Destination Management

Excellent Progress : 34 – 43 green criteria
Good Progress : 24 – 33 green criteria



Limited Progress : 15 – 23 green criteria
Planned Initiatives : 1 – 14 green criteria

Category B: The Economic Benefits for Local Community

Excellent Progress : 16 – 21 green criteria
Good Progress : 13 – 15 green criteria
Limited Progress : 9 – 12 green criteria
Planned Initiatives : 1 – 8 green criteria

Category C: Cultural Conservation for Communities and Visitors

Excellent Progress : 10 – 13 green criteria
Good Progress : 6 – 9 green criteria
Limited Progress : 4 – 5 green criteria
Planned Initiatives : 1 – 3 green criteria

Category D: Environment Conservation

Excellent Progress : 23– 27 green criteria
Good Progress : 16 – 22 green green criteria
Limited Progress : 9 – 21 green criteria
Planned Initiatives : 1 – 8 green criteria

In this study, The Self-Assessment that had been completed by all participants was regarded as a report of performance on Sustainable Tourism perceived by each destination.

Results and Discussion

Based on the self-assessment administered by 96 destinations who participated in ISTA 2017; the data were collected, reviewed and then translated into quantitative measures. There are 41 criteria and 104 indicators used to measure the performance of destinations' sustainable practice. The measures for sustainable tourism management practice are reflected from the number of green indicators achieved by the destination. There is a total of 43 indicators in standard A; and the measurement of the performance are divided into 4 in a scale of 1 – 14 (red) or categorized as Planned Initiatives, 15 – 23 (Yellow) Limited Progress; 24 – 33 (blue) Good, 34 – 43 (green) Excellent Progress. Destinations were required to measure the performance of how the stakeholders were involved such as cross sectoral – government or public institution, private sectors, business units, community organizations, tourism operators and others implement their practice in managing sustainable tourism development management. For the 96 destination who participated in ISTA, the result of rank and total number of green indicators are described as follows.

Category or standard A in sustainable management, 14% or 14 out of 96 destination who participated on ISTA, has shown a quite remarkable performance in managing their destinations. It is shown from 43 indicators measured for standard A, that 14 destinations has managed to gain the average of 34 to 43 green scores from the indicators. The 17 (18%) destination resulted in good performance (blue) with an average range of green indicators from 24 – 33. While 18 (19%) destinations are in the area of limited progress and 47 (49%) destination is still in the early stage of planned initiatives of implementing sustainable tourism practices.

The result shows that only 14% from 96 destinations were confident to claim that they had managed to achieve an excellent performance in their sustainable tourism management practices. This indicates certain factors influencing the result; if we see it from the maturity stage of the destination, duration/ time in practice or its existence; destination such as Bali-Nusa Dua International Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has implement its



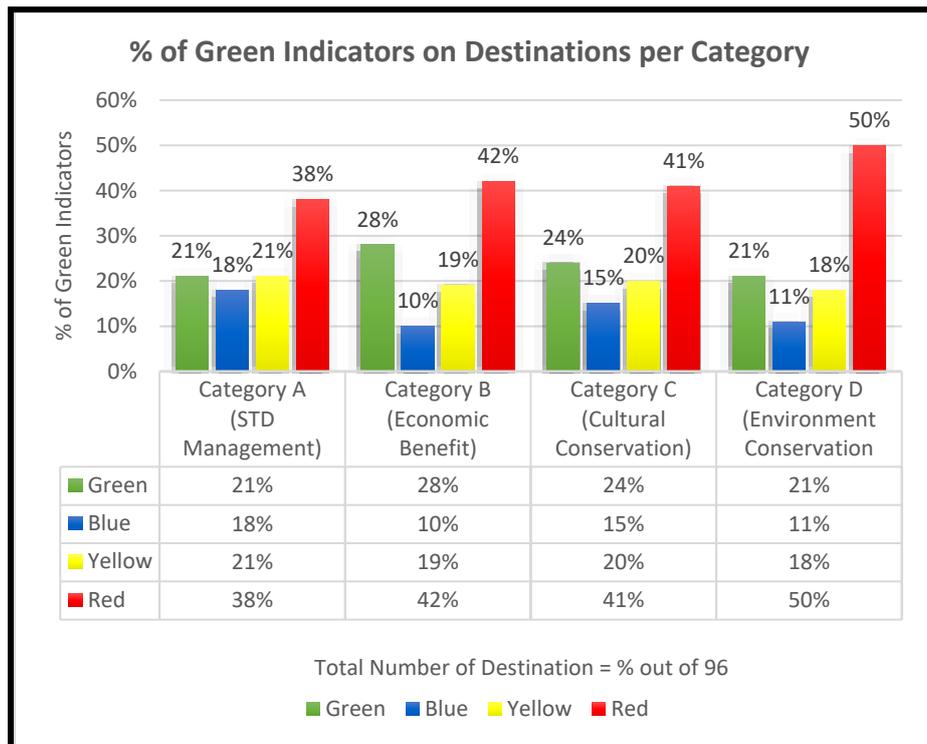
sustainable practice way longer before other recent destinations who just started to implement sustainable tourism development in their area. Perhaps this could be some of the reason why destinations are performing well with excellent progress in their sustainability practices.

From the above result, it is also shown that 49% from the total of 96 destinations, received a total number of green indicators in sustainable management in the range from 0 – 10. This means, either the destinations are still on the early stage of planned initiatives of arranging/adapting and adopting their management system according to the sustainable development plan/strategy. The measures of economic benefit for local communities practice are also measured and reflected from the number of green indicators achieved by the destination. A total of 21 indicators are listed in standard B ; and the measurement of the performance were divided into 4, in a scale of 1 - 8 (red) or categorized as Planned Initiatives, 9 - 12 (Yellow) Limited Progress; 13 - 15 (blue) Good, 16 - 21 (green) Excellent Progress.

Category B measures how the practice of sustainability can impact the economic prosperity for the local community as described in Table 8. For category B, it shows that 27 destinations (28%) has shown to bring an excellent positive impact for the destination. 5 destinations (5%) has performed good progress in impacting the economic growth, while 12 (13%) destination still in limited progress to develop economic impact to the community and 52 (54%) destinations are lack behind in bringing or developing economic impact to their destinations. The measures of Cultural Conservation for Local Communities practice were also identified and reflected from the number of green indicators achieved by the destination. There were total of 13 indicators in standard C; and the measurement of the performance were divided into 4 in a scale of 0-3 (red) or categorized as Planned Initiatives, 4-6 (Yellow) Limited Progress; 7-9 (blue) Good, 10-13 (green) Excellent.

Category C measures how destination practices are used to conserve cultural conservation for local communities and visitors. For this category, it shows that 24 destinations (25%) have shown to implement an excellent practice to conserve its cultural heritage in the destination and 17 destinations (18%) have performed good progress in doing it, while 16 destinations (17%) still in limited progress and 39 destinations (40%) are in the early stage of plan initiative to develop and implement programs related to cultural conservation. The measures of environment conservation practice of the destinations were also identified and reflected from the number of green indicators achieved by the destination. There are total of 27 indicators in category D; and the measurement of the performance were divided into 4 in a scale of 0-6 (red) or categorized as Planned Initiatives, 7-12 (Yellow) Limited Progress; 13-18 (blue) Good, 19-27 (green) Excellent.

Category D measures how destination practices are used to conserve the environment. For this category, it shows that 20 destinations (21%) have been shown to implement an excellent practice to conserve the environment and 11 Destinations (11%) had performed with good progress in doing it, while 17 Destinations (18%) are still in limited progress and 48 Destinations (50%) are in the early stage of planning initiatives to develop and implement programs related to environmental conservation.



Source: ISTA 2017 Destination Self-Assessment Recapitulation Data – Ministry of Tourism Indonesia

Figure 1: Destination Self-Assessment Recapitulation Data

From Figure 1 above, the report of green indicators performance in each category of measurement on 96 destination shows that the position of sustainable tourism implementation in Indonesia’s destinations are mostly still on the (red) at an average 42.75%. This calls for serious action to shift and improve the early plan initiatives and move it to the next phase/level or step of action. Therefore, the result of this study should address the following implications that should be considered by all tourism stakeholders of the destination. As an explorative study, this finding will be used as a baseline or big data of sustainable tourism dashboard, covering not only for 96 destinations but will eventually be greater number of future sustainable tourism destinations all over Indonesia.

The results from ISTA 2017 give insights regarding the application of sustainable tourism concept in Indonesia. Related to the findings there are some points that should be discussed further as the implications:

1. Sustainable tourism development

A sustainable tourism development framework for Indonesia is needed and the establishment of Minister’s Regulation No 14 year 2016 about the Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Destination standard is currently the most appropriate formula as a starting point to implement the practice. (1) It is designed specifically as a standard for tourism destinations in 34 provinces in Indonesia, (2) it encompasses the principles outlined by UNWTO’s policy framework and recognized standard of Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and (3). It is a baseline/foundation in attempts to foster the sustainable tourism program in Indonesia by the establishment of Sustainable Tourism Destination (STD) standard, Sustainable Tourism Observatory (STO) and Sustainable Tourism Certification (STC) following the regulation. Other than that, to serve the commitment of the Government of Indonesia to play a vital role as a sustainable tourism hub in Asia Pacific, a number of policies in the following areas should be determined for future consideration on the development of Indonesia’s sustainable tourism



- The formulation of rules and regulation of STD, STO and STC in 4 areas of criteria/standard; (1). Sustainable Tourism Management, (2). Economic Benefit for the community, (3). Cultural Conservation, (4). Environmental Conservation.
- The facilitation, to connect with the tourism stakeholders in the destinations to give support in terms of funding and capacity building.
- The intervention to create a prototype model for sustainable tourism destination that will enhance the overall performance of Indonesia's STD.

Sustainable tourism should exist by focusing a lot more on local community benefits, and thus, local stakeholders can be engaged by creating incentive based policies. Partnering with the private sector will lessen the financial burden, while non-profit partnerships may encourage more public participation and awareness of sustainable practices. The community-based approach, like other traditions of sustainability, is currently challenged by globalization and global environmental ethics. Therefore, support from tourism stakeholders is greatly needed.

2. Business Model

- To develop the right business model for each destination without affecting or destroying the cultural and environmental aspects.
- To produce economic and financial stability for the community as a positive impact that tourism should bring to the society.

3. Information Technology (IT) - Digital Tourism

- To foster and to form the acceleration of information, as well as giving ease on access for visitors to find things on destinations.
- To improve the service or process in tourism destination product delivery.
- To promote the initiation of sustainable tourism practices in the destination.

4. Marketing

- To improve the sustainability of the marketing mix, considering emerging global market trends and increasing competition. Key objectives outline the need to capture and to analyze market intelligence data, provide an enabling sustainable environment for investment in the tourism destination product and ensure that international standards are achieved and maintained in all tourism cross sectors and sub-sectors. To create the tagline for the Indonesia Sustainable tourism industry's marketing campaign umbrella that shows different Indonesian tourism products such as sustainable nature, culture and heritage, and social community, among others. Indonesia has many advantages that can attract visitors, from its environment and culture to its public safety and undoubtedly beautiful nature, however, there is a need for a unified marketing message that showcases the country's competitive advantages on sustainability over its South East Asian neighbors (Sustainable Tourism Destinations... for a more wonderful Indonesia).

5. Destination Capacity Building and Development

- To improve tourism human resources and to perform professional services well with an attitude towards the implementation of sustainable practices in the destination.
- To create more awareness and to educate the community and visitors about the importance of practicing sustainability. Together with the Indonesia Ministry of Education there should be efforts to incorporate sustainability in the curriculum from pre-school to the university level.
- The Certificate of Sustainability could also be implemented in the hotel and tour operator industries by the Ministry of Tourism who should enforce participation.
- To enhance the engagement of interaction between visitors and community to create a meaningful tourism experience.



6. *Cultural Conservation*

In relation to cultural conservation, Indonesia is blessed to be such a rich country in cultural and heritage sites. Indonesia has several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, a number of which are cultural, and biosphere reserves. Restoration of these sites must be driven by the sustainable policy and reinvestment of tourism revenue in addition to foreign investment. To ensure that several implications such as below can be considered the following is needed:

- Construct a prime example of cultural heritage with a focus on educational experiences and appreciation of local customs and hospitality.
- The government could examine communities that are rich in cultural heritage inventory, for example, food heritage, art and craft heritage, buildings, songs and musics and that are also geographically located with the goal of reproducing the models of “visitors journey” based on a comprehensive destination plan that benefits local communities.

7. *Environment Conservation*

The issue of environmental conservation usually has a link with carrying capacity of the tourism destination. Usually, to set the standard of carrying capacity, every destination will depend on the variables and indicators chosen. However, many of the variables and indicators have not yet been properly developed for the evaluation of tourism impacts. Some other matters that must be followed up by Indonesia are serious health system issues related to other Asia nations. However, problems persist with the quality of drinking water, waste management and food safety, particularly with street vendors.

- Conduct some studies regarding carrying capacity that accommodates the characteristic tourism destinations in Indonesia.
- Partnering with the international private sector could provide updated technology or increased investment, allowing Indonesia to manage air and water pollution issues more effectively.
- The Indonesian government could also strengthen food safety regulations for restaurants and other food service outlets. Although there are general food regulation policies already in place, it is important to focus specifically in the regulation of private restaurants and street vendors that can be difficult to monitor and enforce.
- The government should continue monitoring and improving health, safety and security issues in addition to enforcing cleaner production and better waste management.

Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

This study has presented the position of Indonesia’s tourism destination sustainability according to the related stakeholders. The Indonesia Ministry of Tourism initiatives to conduct ISTA as a means of collecting data regarding the level of sustainability of Indonesia’s destination was a first step. Now, it has resulted in a very valuable data even though it was based on the destination’s own perspective. Through the self-evaluation process in ISTA, many destinations have now realised their actual condition when viewed from the perspective of sustainability. Moreover, the detailed measurement method which contains guidelines regarding destination sustainable criteria have become a useful tool for them in the future planning. For example, the tourism stakeholders in Toraja Utara (Northern Toraja) have given serious attention to each of the color predicates: red, yellow, blue and green. They are highly determined to erase the red and yellow color predicates from their destination and are now focusing on how to obtain green in all criteria. Thus, their tourism planning has been highly influenced by this goal.

Thus, it can be concluded that the ISTA Framework provides the foundation on which Indonesia can develop an effective and efficient sustainable tourism development plan and activities that encourage relevant stakeholder participation. The initiation of the Minister’s regulation no 14 year 2016 on Standard for applying Sustainable Tourism Destination in Indonesia has taken significant steps toward sustainable tourism development, as proven from



the first step on ISTA's purpose of being held to appreciate destination stakeholders who have joined the community hand-in-hand in cooperation to develop and take part to implement sustainable practices in managing their destinations by preserving their cultural and environmental aspects with respect to bringing needed harmony and to benefit the prosperity of the community as tourism has a positive social economic impact. However more can be done, while the nature (land, sea and sand tourism) product currently dominates the tourism industry, Indonesia is in the position to formulate a sustainable tourism development strategy that presents and preserves the country's rich cultural and natural heritage, attracts visitors in search of meaningful experiences and creates a wonderful experience for the visitors. Tourism destination products that benefits local communities and conserves cultural and natural resources should be the focus of sustainable tourism implementation in the country. At the same time, Indonesian tourism areas must become places where tourists can find authenticity as they look to find themselves (Nicolaidis, 2014).

There are some limitations in this study: (1) there were qualitative variations in the level of application in each destination that might have affected the self-evaluation; (2) The entity of the ISTA participants considered was limited as destinations are quite varied in terms of size and location; the self-evaluation conducted may depend on the perception of each destination (3) the framework and measurement indicators that are still new to the destinations in Indonesia and still open for improvement and refinement, (4) this study is a snap-shot, and based on the destination perception about themselves regarding sustainability. As an implication, generalizing the results to a larger set of Indonesian destinations has to be done carefully since there might be different points of view on how destinations comprehend the assessment tools; even though they were assisted by the team of authors who also acted as assessors for ISTA 2017; (5) Complementary external analysis such as a SWOT for example; were not indicated in the analysis, since this article was intended only to portray the result of the destination's self- assessment on how they have implemented the sustainable act at their destination measured by the standards given from the Regulation of Tourism Ministry No. 14 Year 2016.

There are some recommendations proposed for possible related future studies: (1) The level of sustainability of the destination needs to be considered in order to maintain objectivity; (2) The entity of the ISTA participants must be carefully considered as destinations are quite varied. Therefore, it is recommended that there will be a refined procedure and mechanism for the next ISTA to get more accurate data; (3) A clear criteria of participants should be set; (4) The future studies should include a complementary external analysis so that the studies can be more beneficial to the tourism stakeholders in general.

Acknowledgments: Herewith we would like to express our sincere gratitude to The Tourism Ministry of Republic of Indonesia for their assistance during the fieldwork periods during ISTA and for their permission to publish ISTA results on a journal. Thanks go to Mr. I Gede Ardika (the former Minister of Tourism of The Republic of Indonesia), for his insightful ideas regarding sustainable tourism in Indonesia.

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