



## Analysis of the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area

Muhammad Yusuf Nasution<sup>1</sup>, Cut Nuraini<sup>2\*</sup>, Abdi Sugiarto<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student, Magister of Regional & City Planning, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Architecture Program and Magister of Regional & City Planning, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Magister of Regional & City Planning, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

Address: 4, Jl. Gatot Subroto No.km, Simpang Tj., Medan Sunggal District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20122

Corresponding author: [cutnuraini@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id](mailto:cutnuraini@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id)

**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the Analysis of the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area. This type of research uses qualitative descriptive research. The data collection techniques in this study are interviews and observations. Data collection is data obtained from research sources that are still raw and have not been processed by researchers. Data reduction, data presentation, the process of drawing conclusions involves the researcher interpreting the data that has been displayed. The methods carried out include comparisons, grouping, making patterns, and triangulating. The results of tourism development research are carried out with the aim of making tourism advanced and developing in a better direction in terms of the quality of facilities, facilitating access anywhere, becoming a desired destination, and making good economic benefits for the surrounding community. Tourism planning and development is not a stand-alone system, but is closely related to other development planning systems intra-sectoral and intra-regional. Then the development of tourist destinations requires good and appropriate planning techniques. The development technique must combine several aspects to support the success of tourism. These aspects are accessibility aspects (transportation and marketing channels), characteristics of tourism infrastructure, level of social interaction, linkage/compatibility with other sectors, resilience to tourism impacts, level of resistance of local communities, and so on.

**Keywords:** Development of Tourism, Tourism Areas in Tangkahan, Qualitative Descriptive Research

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area of North Sumatra is located in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, the Tangkahan Ecotourism Area offers a unique and unforgettable natural tourism experience. Surrounded by a panoramic view of dense tropical rainforests and crystal-clear rivers, Tangkahan is a paradise for nature and adventure lovers. The Tangkahan area was designated as an Ecotourism Area by the world's first Ecotourism Organization, TIES (*The International Ecotourism Society*). Ecotourism or *ecotourism* is a natural tourist destination in order to conserve or save the environment and provide livelihoods for local residents. The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area is located in an inch of the Gunung Leuser National Park area. The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area was opened in 2001 and inaugurated in February 2004. This ecotourism area is a clear example of the participation of local communities in contributing to environmental conservation efforts, namely through the development of ecotourism covering an area of 17,000 hectares from the Gunung Leuser National Park area (Yusnikusumah & Sulystiawati, 2016). The

Tangkahan Ecotourism Area not only brings in Indonesian tourists, but also foreign tourists. There are a number of tourist activities that can be done in this ecotourism, such as river walking, trekking, trekking using elephants, elephant bathing, cave exploration, *camping*, and swimming. The existing tourist support facilities are quite complete, namely there are 11 lodgings, 10 of which are lodging owned by the local community. Other facilities include *a visitor center*, interpretation boards, trail walks, and local food stalls. The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area can be accessed via the Medan-Binjai toll road with an average travel time from the center of Medan City of about 3 to 4 hours.

One of the components mentioned in the concept of ecotourism according to Fennell (2015) explains the existence of sustainability in conservation and community participation that can provide local benefits. Indonesia as a country that has potential and natural wealth has 54 National Parks spread across various regions in Indonesia as protected areas and nature conservation efforts. Gunung Leuser National Park is the area where Tangkahan develops. Tangkahan, also known as Ecotourism Tangkahan, is one of the 88 National Tourism Strategic Areas (KSPN) listed in Government Regulation Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARNAS). The Tangkahan Ecotourism area is under the management of Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL). Administratively, Tangkahan is located in two villages, namely Namo Sialang Village and Sei Serdang Village, Langkat Regency. Tangkahan Ecotourism has a history that was once known as one of the areas of exploitation of forest products or illegal logging as a livelihood for the community from Namo Sialang and Sei Serdang Villages. Tangkahan There is a phenomenon of changing behavior and mindset by the surrounding village community, namely by making Tangkahan a sustainable conservation area. The management of the Tangkahan Ecotourism area is carried out by the surrounding community by preserving the forest land. There has been a change in actions and mindsets by the youth since the 2000s so that the next generation can feel and see the forest and fauna in the Tangkahan area. With a change in mindset and the transition from illegal logging habits, the people from the two villages agreed to develop tourism known as the Tangkahan Ecotourism Area and form the Tangkahan Tourism Institute (LPT). According to the official website of Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL), Tangkahan as part of TNGL is under the rules and conservation interests that have an economic impact on the region, in this case the villages around the Tangkahan Ecotourism Area.

One of the tourist attractions that has a lot of interest is tangkahan tourism. Tangkahan is a tropical forest area in Langkat district, North Sumatra which is popular for hundreds of

elephants that are very friendly with humans. Tangkahan itself is still included in the shade of Gunung Leuser National Park. So, traveling to Tangkahan is certainly safe and fun. Various efforts are made by the local government through the tourism office in order to advance the object of this tourist location by providing satisfaction to tourists. It is hoped that satisfied tourists will have an impact on increasing the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists. So that it has an impact on improving the economy of the community in the Langkat area. The following is the number of visitors in the last 5 years:

**Table 1.** Data on the Number of Tourist Visits for the Last 5 Years

Year	Local Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Sum
2019	29.640	7.890	37.530
2020	26.100	5.720	33.450
2021	24.880	7.350	31.200
2022	17.600	1.200	18.800
2023	31.200	10.540	41.740

*Source: Tourism Office (2024)*

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the number of tourist visits to the Tangkahan tourist attraction has seen a surge in the number of tourists in 2023 where the number of tourists reaches 31,200 for local tourists and 10,540 for foreign tourists, the surge in tourists in the last 5 years is very volatile where the lowest number for tourist visits occurred in 2022 for local tourists as many as 17,600 and foreign tourists as many as 1,200 with a total of 18,800. The decrease in the number of visitors occurred in 2020 which was the peak condition of the Covid 19 Pandemic so that the risk of making tourist visits was very high so that tourist attractions were also closed. However, in 2023 the number of visits will increase drastically in 2023 even though the cost of entrance tickets in 2023 is also getting more expensive. The costs incurred can vary depending on the object to be chosen. In general, the main fee that must be paid is the entrance ticket of Rp. 25,000, - The elephant bathing object is Rp. 50,000, - But it can be seen that so many people are interested in this elephant bathing object.

By seeing the large number of Tangkahan Ecotourism tourist visits, the government is collaborating with the community around Tangkahan Ecotourism through the Tangkahan Tourism Institution (LPT) to continue to develop Tangkahan Ecotourism by carrying out several programs such as the construction and improvement of infrastructure, especially road access, and the construction of supporting facilities in Tangkahan Ecotourism. This is done as an effort to develop Tangkahan Ecotourism which will later be able to increase the number of tourist visits which will have an impact on increasing the income of the

community around Tangkahan Ecotourism and will also increase the PAD of Langkat Regency. The activity started from participatory planning with local communities in 2 villages in ecotourism management in the utilization zone of Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL), Tangkahan area. Then followed up with the establishment and strengthening of local institutions in the form of LPT through an MoU between the community, the TNGL Center, Indecon Company, and the government. Furthermore, LPT prepares master plans, business plans and capacity building, including planning for ecotourism development, making tracking routes and guiding tours (*community tour operators/CTO*). In terms of tourism management rules, there has been an agreement on a visitor code of ethics and *standard operating procedures* (SOPs). Finally, the local community played a role in securing the Tangkahan Area by forming a ranger unit.

Regional tourism development has an impact that can be seen from the influence of tourism development on tourist destinations. This can be seen from three aspects, namely socio-economic, socio-cultural, and environmental (UNWTO). This research focuses on one of the pillars, namely sustainable socio-economy through indicators issued by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The Sustainable Development Goals or known as the Sustainable Development Goals were issued in 2015 and consist of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This research will later look at sustainable development goals or goals that intersect with the socio-economic pillars of sustainable tourism. The goals related to the socio-economic pillars consist of SDG's No. 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth and No. 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. The existence of ecotourism is actually able to change people's behavior for the better. People who used to actively encroach on forests are now turning to preserving forests. With ecotourism, of course, conservation areas are increasingly maintained because their use also leads to sustainable and sustainable principles. Tangkahan Ecotourism is a portrait of the success of cooperation with many parties to support the protection of national park areas. This provides a *multiplier effect* on increasing public awareness, and the surrounding forest area. Tangkahan ecotourism is now not only known by the local community, but has become a *prima donna* for local and foreign tourists. More than 40,000 local tourists visit Tangkahan every year while the number of foreign tourists has touched 6000 people every year (Wiratno, 2013). A search on the Google engine shows 30,300 results within 0.40 seconds so that Tangkahan Ecotourism deserves the title "*The Hidden Paradise of North Sumatra*".

## **2. THEORETICAL BASIS**

### **Tangkahan Tourism Area**

Tangkahan is located in Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. Tangkahan is adjacent to Gunung Leuser National Park. Its location at the confluence of the Buluh River and the Batang Serangan River makes the area feel cool and calm because tourists can enjoy the sound of rushing water. Tangkahan Ecotourism is located in Lalat Regency, North Sumatra Province. Tangkahan got the nickname The Hidden Paradise in Sumatra because it is located in the middle of the tropical forests of North Sumatra. Not only that, the Tangkahan ecotourism area borders Gunung Leuser National Park. Tangkahan has many attractions, from Tangkahan waterfall, river tubing, trekking, Batang River, Buluh River, and the flagship is the tour of bathing and riding elephants from the wild elephant conservation center or Elephant Sanctuary in Tangkahan.

### **Tourism**

According to the World Trade Organization in Ismayanti (2015), tourism can be interpreted as human activities that travel to and live in destination areas outside their daily environment. These trips last for a period of no more than one year in a row for fun, business, and other purposes. Tourism according to (Norval, 2013) is a whole activity, which is related to the entry, stay, and movement of foreign residents within or outside a certain country, city or region. Meanwhile, according to (Kraf, 2013) defines tourism as a whole of relationships and symptoms or events that arise from the travel and residence of foreigners, where the trip is not for a permanent residence and there is no relationship with activities to earn a living. Tourism is the temporary and short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they usually live and work and their activities while staying in those destinations (Medik, 2014).

### **Development of Tourism Areas**

Development is a strategy carried out in order to improve, improve, and advance tourist attractions so that the number of tourists increases so that the community and the government can feel the positive impact (Paturusi, 2017). According to Yoeti (2001 in Suwarti and Yuliamir (2017) explained that tourism development is an effort made to improve and develop a product or add to the type of tourism product. The tourism development strategy is something that is done so that existing tourism will develop even better in the future. The availability of complete facilities and supports the development of tourism according to Suwantoro (2014 in Aziizah, dkk 2024). Wibowo (2017 in Alfiiyah, 2023) stated that development is an effort to advance an object to be better and have results

for the common good. According to Anindita (2015), tourism development is an effort to develop or advance tourist attractions to be better and more attractive in terms of places and everything in them to be able to attract tourists to visit them.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD(S)**

This type of research uses qualitative descriptive research. According to Sugiyono (2018 in Nuraini, 2024; Aris et al, 2024a), descriptive research is research conducted to determine the value of independent variables, either one or more variables (independent) without making comparisons, or connecting with other variables. According to Sugiyono (2018 in Pasaribu, 2023; Aris et al, 2024b) the qualitative research method is a research method used to research on the natural condition of the object, where the researcher is the key instrument, the data collection technique is carried out in a triangulation (combined) manner, data analysis is inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Yin, 2001 in Nuraini, 2009; Nuraini, 2015). After the data is obtained, it is then presented using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques (Moleong, 2000 in Sugiarto & Ramadania, 2023; Sugiarto et al, 2024; Sugiarto & Ramadhan, 2021) which are analytical techniques in the form of describing or revealing the characteristics of variables that are the focus of the researcher, namely revealing things related to the Analysis of the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area.

The data collection techniques in this study are interviews and observations. Interviews are a way of collecting data by asking questions directly (Siswanto, 2011; Pohan et al, 2024) here the researcher holds a question and answer session with the informants to obtain data on matters to be discussed in the discussion. Observation is a research conducted directly to see how the Analysis of the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area is.

To answer the formulation of the problem of the Analysis of the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area, the triangulation technique was used. Data collection is data obtained from research sources that are still raw and have not been processed by researchers. Data reduction is defined as the selection process, focusing on simplification and coarse data information that emerges from written records in the field. Data presentation is defined as organizing, combining information, which makes it easier for researchers to draw conclusions. The process of drawing conclusions involves the researcher interpreting the data that has been displayed. The methods carried out include comparisons, grouping, making patterns, and triangulating.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DUSCUSSION

##### **Community Participatory Collaboration in the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area**

The participatory collaboration of local communities in the management of the Tangkahan Ecotourism area is an added value compared to other ecotourism areas. According to Wall (1997 in Nuraini, 2019), an ecotourism area must be able to contribute to the economic development of the local community, create jobs for the local community, and provide profit value for the local community. In addition, *sociocultural sustainability* is one of the main goals in ecotourism. To achieve this, ecotourism activities must be able to involve local communities both in planning, development and management activities. Burhanudin (2012 in Purba et al, 2024) and Widiyanti et al., (2017 in Hartini et al, 2023) also revealed that community involvement in planning, management, and monitoring of ecotourism can more or less affect the stability of the area.

Aspects of involvement in the management of Tangkahan ecotourism include various parties that synergize with each other, namely the government, community, and non-government to support the development of ecotourism. The mapping of synergy and involvement was obtained after combining data on influence, interests and parties or figures involved in the development of Tangkahan ecotourism, then translated into the form of a stakeholder grid image, then an illustration related to the level of interest and influence for all stakeholders at the same time was obtained which described the position and role of stakeholders in the development of ecotourism in Tangkahan.

- a. The subject is a party with very high interests, but has low influence. The parties that belong to the subject group are rangers, CTO Sumatra, and CTO Bukit Lawang. These parties are not much involved in decision-making and policy-making, but are definitely involved in the implementation of the program. Therefore, special efforts are needed so that these parties become convinced that their needs are in line with the development of Tangkahan Ecotourism management. CTO Sumatra and CTO Bukit Lawang were formed by LPT to facilitate the provision of accommodation, interpreters for visitors, and attractive tour packages. This is in connection with the ranger which is divided into three divisions, namely the conservation, interpretation and SAR divisions. The ranger conservation division is tasked with preserving the environment, one of which is through a waste bank and socialization to the surrounding community related to environmental cleanliness. Therefore, people living in Tangkahan have a routine

schedule to clean up waste in the Ecotourism area. The ranger interpretation division is in charge of overseeing tour guides and tour guides.

- b. Key players are stakeholders who have high influence and importance. Key player group stakeholders are the most critical group because they have important values and high influence on the success of management and management. The BBTNGL institution, the Langkat Regency Disbupar, and LPT have the highest level of influence and importance so that they are positioned as key players. This group plays an active role, as well as a key role in the influence and development of Tangkahan Ecotourism. BBTNGL plays the role of the most important nature-based tourism manager in Langkat Regency, along with the Langkat Disbupar which also plays a role in creating economic dependence and independence for local communities and the private sector involved in tourism.
- c. Crowd is a stakeholder with low interest and influence.  
These stakeholders require little supervision and evaluation, but with low priority. Namosialang Village, Sei Serdang Village, PTPN II, and community leaders are included in the crowd category which means that these parties play a supporting role in the development of Tangkahan Ecotourism. The existence of supporters in the management and development of Tangkahan Ecotourism is important because it is a support system and a liaison for community collaboration carried out by key players. Community collaboration is carried out to empower the surrounding community through community capacity building and providing access to the use of Nature Reserve Areas (KSA) or Nature Conservation Areas (KPA).
- d. Context setters are parties that have high influence, but have low interests. The party that belongs to the context setter group is the CRU. Its presence together with the community can quickly respond to conflicts in critical areas. CRU plays an important role as one of the conservation programs to protect and maintain community-based forest areas, support conservation at the mukim level and help expand local conservation capacity, as well as be a link between ex-situ and in-situ conservation concepts. Therefore, the context setter group is very likely to intervene in the development and management of Tangkahan Ecotourism. Parties at that level are still given special treatment, at least in the context of involvement and discussion roles for the development of Tangkahan Ecotourism management.



### **Tangkahan Tourism Area Development Techniques**

The development of a tourism requires good and appropriate planning techniques. The development technique must combine several aspects to support the success of tourism. These aspects are aspects of accessibility, characteristics of tourism infrastructure, level of social interaction, linkage/compatibility with other sectors, resilience to tourism impacts, level of resistance of local communities, and others. Some of the tourism development techniques are as follows:

- a. Carrying Capacity
- b. Recreational Carrying Capacity
- c. Recreational Opportunity Spectrum
- d. Limit of Acceptable Change
- e. Visitor Impact Management Model
- f. Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Model
- g. Visitor Activity Management Program
- h. Tourism Opportunity Spectrum

Based on the results of the study, the technique used by Langkat Regency for tourism development is using the Carrying Capacity technique. Carrying Capacity is a technique for developing tourist destinations by looking at the carrying capacity of tourist areas.

Langkat Regency develops its tourism by looking at the carrying capacity of each tourist area, such as looking at what are the things that can support the tourism activities of its prospective tourists by considering that the tourist activities that will be carried out by its prospective tourists can be enjoyed by all groups, women or men, all ages, all religions, and then tourists can really enjoy their tourist activities. This is in accordance with the concept of regional tourism development with the concept of a market product suitability approach, namely developing tourism in accordance with market needs and considering the capabilities of existing resources. Of course, in developing its tourism, Langkat Regency also pays attention to the impact on the environment and the economic condition of the local community by thinking about how the tourism that will be developed will also contribute to the economy of the local community. However, the development of tourism in Langkat Regency can be said to be very slow, this is because to develop a tourist attraction certainly requires a lot of money, moreover, the private sector has not looked at tourism in this Langkat regency.

### **Planning in the Management of the Development of the Tangkahan Tourism Area**

Planning means considering everything to meet future needs. Planning in tourism management aims to meet the welfare of the community in the future. Therefore, the trends in population growth, reserve land supply, facility growth, and technological advances with their application must be included in a plan. In planning tourism management, everything that can support the tourism activities of prospective tourists must be considered. These considerations include:

a. Management that will manage tourism.

In tourism management, of course, it requires managers who have expertise and experience in the field of tourism in order to have a good influence on the tourism industry. The management carried out by Langkat Regency in developing its tourism is by recruiting professional workers in the field of tourism within the local government, Langkat Regency does not want any people who manage tourism, of course they must be responsible and competent in their fields. In this case, the Langkat Regency Government is restructuring the organization so that management is getting better from time to time.

b. Facilities and Facilities.

In tourism, what must be considered is what infrastructure and facilities will be provided to prospective tourists to support the tourism activities of prospective tourists. Building special tourism facilities and public infrastructure to support the pilot development of tourism areas by providing clean water, electricity, drainage, dirty waterways, telecommunications. Improving the quality and quantity of public infrastructure, transportation and tourism facilities to encourage the growth of the competitiveness of tourism development areas whose goal is to meet the needs of tourists and provide comfort during tourism.

c. Tourist attraction planning

Tourist attractions are everything that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of a diversity of natural wealth, culture, man-made products that are the target or destination of tourist visits. A tourist destination must certainly have an attraction to attract tourists and encourage the flow of visits. Langkat Regency in planning tourist attractions by developing new tourist attractions that have potential and are in demand by tourists by holding regional art performances and developing tourism products based on local wisdom or local culture.

### **Basic Principles of Management of Tangkahan Tourism Area Development**

- a. The development and development of tourism must be based on local wisdom and special local sense that reflects the uniqueness of cultural heritage and the uniqueness of the environment. From the data obtained from Langkat Regency, Tangkahan tourism management is also based on the development and development of tourism based on local wisdom and the peculiarities of the region by optimizing tourist attractions that are most in demand by tourists based on local wisdom, if viewed from the history of Langkat Regency, we can see that Langkat Regency has a previous civilization so that the historical relics from the past are very many. This is what is used as a catchment as a tourism potential that is developed in the development and development of tourism.
- b. Preserving, protecting, and improving the quality of resources that are the basis for the development of tourist areas. In every tourist destination that will be developed by the Langkat Regency Government, the thing they pay close attention to is the state of the resources, so in this case the government always pays attention, maintains the existing resources and improves its quality from the previous state so that a tourist area can provide more value for tourism but still pay attention to the balance of the existing ecosystem in the developed tourist area.
- c. Develop additional tourist attractions rooted in local cultural treasures. Langkat Regency also does the same thing, Tangkahan develops tourism and cultural attractions in increasing product competitiveness, carries out tourism management by developing diversification or diversity of tourist attractions by adding and developing tourism products based on local wisdom and local culture, strengthening the uniqueness of tourist attractions that are not owned by other tourist objects also carrying out activities that raise each tourist areas.
- d. Services to tourists based on the uniqueness of local culture and environment. In Langkat Regency, the government as a tourism management always highlights the characteristics of the local area in each tourist destination by developing tourism and cultural attractions, the establishment of a tourism main market based on local wisdom, and the use of products that have uniqueness and local peculiarities that are characteristic of Langkat Regency.
- e. Provide support and legitimacy to the development and development of tourism if it provides positive benefits. In Langkat Regency, the Government always supports all forms of business in developing each tourist destination it has. This support is provided by seeking capital or funding for the development of tangkahan tourism. The

government develops tourism capital both from within and outside the country in the tourism industry. The support provided by the government is used to develop facilities, infrastructure, and transportation systems in tourist areas. However, in terms of capital efforts, until now, only capital from local governments has been obtained for tourism development, but capital from the private sector has not been obtained.

Based on the data obtained, Langkat Regency in the tangkahan tourism management method does the following:

- a. Consultation with all stakeholders by building synergy and developing a pattern of cooperation between stakeholders by conducting joint work programs.
- b. Integrating the development of regional tourism areas with spatial planning and regional infrastructure development in creating a comfortable environment for the community and tourists.
- c. The formulation of policies carried out by the West Lampung Regency Government in its tourism management is clearly seen in the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPDA).
- d. The provision of special funds and also supporting facilities for research and development of West Lampung tourism, this task is carried out by the establishment of a tourism research, development and innovation (R&D) sub-unit on the development of the tourism industry, tourism destinations, tourism marketing, tourism institutions and human resources.
- e. The government builds special tourism facilities and public infrastructure to support the development of tourism area pilots; and improving the quality and quantity of public infrastructure and tourism facilities to encourage the growth of competitiveness in tourism development areas.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded as follows:

Tourism development is carried out with the aim of making tourism advanced and developing in a better direction in terms of the quality of facilities, facilitating access anywhere, becoming a desired destination, and making good economic benefits for the surrounding community. Tourism planning and development is not a stand-alone system, but is closely related to other development planning systems intra-sectoral and intra-regional. Tourism planning must be based on conditions and carrying capacity with the

intention of creating long-term interactions that are mutually beneficial between the achievement of tourism development goals, the improvement of the welfare of local communities, and the sustainability of environmental carrying capacity in the future. Then the development of tourist destinations requires good and appropriate planning techniques. The development technique must combine several aspects to support the success of tourism. These aspects are accessibility aspects (transportation and marketing channels), characteristics of tourism infrastructure, level of social interaction, linkage/compatibility with other sectors, resilience to tourism impacts, level of resistance of local communities, and so on.

The management and development of Tangkahan Ecotourism is dynamic supported by natural tourism development regulations and implementation procedures. This refers to Government Regulation No. 36 of 2010 concerning Nature Tourism Undertakings in Wildlife Reserves, National Parks, Forest Parks, and Nature Tourism Parks. In this case, the government has facilitated the use of KSA and KPA with special permits (based on government regulations and regulations of the Ministry of Forestry) such as IUPJWA (Natural Tourism Service Business License) and/or IUPSWA (Natural Tourism Facilities Business Permit). Community empowerment aims to encourage the independence and welfare of people who live next to the area in supporting the sustainability of KSA and KPA. Community empowerment is preceded by community capacity building which is carried out to increase knowledge, skills, institutional strengthening, and behaviour change.

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