

Policy Connectivity and Fiscal Decentralization in Encouraging Economic Development through Marine Tourism in Banten Province

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the role of fiscal and administrative decentralization and policy connectivity in the development of marine tourism as a driver of economic development in Banten Province. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative analysis of GRDP data, tourism sector contributions, the number of destinations, and investment indicators with qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations. The results show that while decentralization provides flexibility for local governments in destination management and budget allocation, its effectiveness depends heavily on vertical and horizontal policy integration and cross-sectoral coordination. Disparities in tourism contributions between districts remain high, but good policy connectivity can increase GRDP per capita by between five and seven percent, create new jobs, encourage investment, and empower local MSMEs. These findings confirm that effective marine tourism management requires synergy between multi-level governance, active community participation, and data-driven decision-making to achieve inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economic development.

Keywords: Fiscal Decentralization, Policy Connectivity, Marine Tourism, Economic Development, Multi-level Governance, Banten Province

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism sector has now become an industry. This is because the economic value of tourism activities has driven tourists to visit a destination not only for its natural beauty or cultural uniqueness. Equally important are the completeness of existing facilities and infrastructure, unique souvenir products, hotels, and typical travel agency cuisine (Alfiandri & Mahadiansar, 2020; Ramdani, 2020; Trisniati et al., 2022). Several studies indicate significant potential for collaboration with several partner countries in the tourism and creative economy sectors. To seize these opportunities, policy synergy between Indonesian government institutions and all relevant stakeholders is a key success factor (Nadhifatur Rifdah & Kusdiwanggo, 2024; Nasution, 2021; Putri et al., 2020).

Figure 1. Number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia

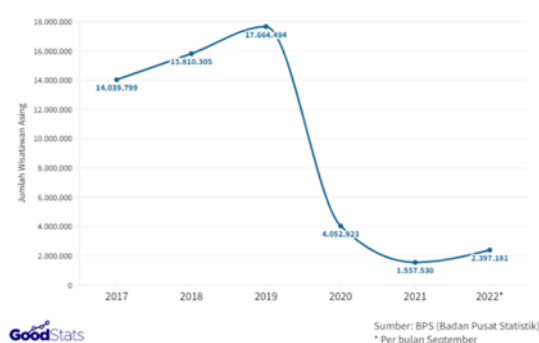


Figure 1 shows that tourism is one of the sectors that contributes the most foreign exchange to Indonesia. In 2019, the tourism sector contributed 4.8% to the national gross domestic product (GDP). Tourism's contribution to national GDP fell in 2020 to 4.05%. This decline was due to social restrictions during the pandemic, which sluggish the tourism sector. As the deadly virus began to be contained in Indonesia, foreign tourists began to return to Indonesia. This was the result of the relaxation of international travel regulations, which were previously very strict during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of September 2022 alone, the number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia had reached 2,397,181 people. Although relatively low compared to the previous year, this number is a positive sign that the tourism sector in Indonesia is starting to recover. This shows that tourism in Indonesia contributes significantly to the national economy. The increasing number of foreign tourists is a good sign that the sector that was "battered" during the pandemic will revive and can contribute to the national economy again, especially for post-pandemic economic recovery (Erwin, 2021; Iood & Sinaga, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Syam, 2022).

Fiscal and administrative decentralization have become key public reform strategies aimed at improving policy responsiveness to local needs while accelerating regional economic development (Faguet, 2014; Rodríguez Pose & Kropp, 2022). In the tourism sector, decentralization allows local governments to tailor budget allocations, destination regulations, and promotional strategies to local characteristics, enabling tourism to act as a driver of an inclusive and sustainable economy (Ruhanen et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023; Choe et al., 2021).

Banten Province has significant marine tourism potential, particularly in Lebak, Pandeglang, and Serang Regencies, encompassing coastal areas, small islands, marine conservation, and maritime cultural heritage. However, the sector's contribution to local economic growth remains uneven, as evidenced by disparities in per capita GRDP between regencies, low cross-sector integration, and policy fragmentation (BPS Banten, 2025). This fragmentation reduces the economic multiplier effect of tourism, as weak vertical (central-provincial-district) and horizontal (inter-sector) connectivity hinders investment optimization, destination innovation, and the distribution of economic benefits (García García et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

Table 1. Conditions of the Economy and Marine Tourism of Regencies in Banten (2025)

<i>Dimensions Connectivity Policy</i>	Indicator Evaluation	Score (1–5)
<i>Vertical</i>	Integration of central–provincial–district policies	2
<i>Horizontal</i>	Cross-sector coordination (tourism, economy, environment)	2
<i>Participatory</i>	Local stakeholder involvement	3
<i>Responsiveness</i>	Speed adaptation policy to need local	2
<i>Based on interviews with 12 OPDs and a survey of 30 MSMEs, 2025</i>		

Analysis beginning shows that decentralization without coordination across levels of government can cause inequality in development destination and distribution benefit economy that

is not evenly (Vargas Sánchez & PazAlemán, 2021; Chen et al., 2024). Recent studies emphasize the need for integrated multi-level governance, which synergizes policy vertical and horizontal for optimize development tourist inclusive and sustainable (Li et al., 2023; Hall et al., 2022; Ruhanen et al., 2020).

Table 2. Evaluation of Marine Tourism Policy Connectivity in Banten (2025)

<i>Dimensions Connectivity Policy</i>	Indicator Evaluation	Score (1–5)
<i>Vertical</i>	Integration of central–provincial–district policies	2
<i>Horizontal</i>	Cross-sector coordination (tourism, economy, environment)	2
<i>Participatory</i>	Local stakeholder involvement	3
<i>Responsiveness</i>	Speed adaptation policy to need local	2
<i>Based on interviews with 12 OPDs and a survey of 30 MSMEs, 2025</i>		

From a development economics perspective, marine tourism has the potential to become a driving force for inclusive growth if managed through multi-level policy integration. Governance effectiveness is determined by policy integration, resource allocation, destination innovation, and the distribution of economic benefits, which can increase local GRDP, create jobs, and strengthen industrial value chains (Li et al., 2023; Hall et al., 2022; Choe et al., 2021).

Table 3. Projected Economic Impact of Marine Tourism in Banten (2025–2030)

<i>Impact Potential Marine Tourism</i>	Economic Indicators	5- Year Projection
<i>Increase in GRDP</i>	Growth of GRDP per capita	5–7%
<i>Field Work</i>	Amount worker sector tourist	+12,000 people
<i>Investment</i>	New investment value (Rp billion)	1,250
<i>Local Economic Integration</i>	Number of MSMEs involved in chain mark	+500
<i>Prediction based on regional input-output models and surveys field, 2025</i>		

This study aims to understand how fiscal and administrative decentralization shapes effective maritime tourism governance in Banten Province, which boasts significant marine and coastal potential but still faces economic disparities between districts. (Nugroho & Jumanah, 2025). Decentralization has been widely implemented as a government reform strategy to increase the responsiveness of public policies to local needs and accelerate regional economic development. The effectiveness of decentralization depends heavily on the ability of local governments to manage resources, coordinate related sectors, and synergize policies with other levels of government, both vertically and horizontally. (Arif Nugroho, Jumanah, 2023).

The core research questions encompass three strategic aspects. First, to what extent does fiscal and administrative decentralization affect the quality of marine tourism governance in Banten? Second, how does policy connectivity between levels of government and across sectors determine the tourism sector's contribution to local economic growth? Third, what governance strategies can promote marine tourism as an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economic driver to external dynamics?

The research methodology uses an empirical mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to provide a comprehensive picture. The quantitative analysis includes data processing on GRDP (Regional Gross Domestic Product), the contribution of the tourism sector to the district's GRDP, the level of tourism investment, the number of marine destinations, and indicators of local economic inequality. Qualitative analysis is conducted through

in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including local government officials, destination managers, tourism industry players, and local communities, to capture perspectives on practical experiences and perceptions of policy effectiveness. A multi-level governance analysis is applied to evaluate policy integration and the impact of vertical and horizontal connectivity on local economic growth. The validity and reliability of the findings are maintained through triangulation of primary and secondary data, including official documents, statistical reports, and field observations, so that the research results are empirically accountable and relevant for policy.

The research findings are expected to confirm that the success of decentralization in the marine tourism sector depends not only on fiscal allocation or administrative autonomy, but also on integrated policy connectivity, cross-sectoral coordination, and active participation of local communities. The resulting evidence-based recommendations will provide strategic guidance for local governments in increasing marine tourism's contribution to inclusive economic development, strengthening destination competitiveness, and enhancing adaptive capacity to socio-economic and environmental changes. Thus, marine tourism can become a pillar of sustainable regional economic development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Fiscal and administrative decentralization have become important strategies for increasing the responsiveness of public policy to local needs. In the tourism context, decentralization allows local governments to design and implement policies tailored to local characteristics and potential, including budget allocation, institutional capacity building, and the development of marine tourism destinations. Empirical studies show that without effective coordination between the central, provincial, and district governments, decentralization can lead to policy fragmentation, which reduces the effectiveness of local economic development.

Policy connectivity is a crucial variable explaining vertical and horizontal integration in tourism management. Vertical integration encompasses the alignment of national and regional policies, while horizontal integration encompasses coordination between sectors such as tourism, transportation, natural resource conservation, and MSME empowerment. Multi-level governance literature confirms that multi-level policy integration enhances the effectiveness of program implementation, strengthens tourism's contribution to local economic growth, and supports the achievement of sustainable development goals. The concept of policy coherence demonstrates that mutually supportive policies generate synergy in achieving economic and social targets.

Marine tourism has significant potential to drive regional economic development through job creation, increased MSME income, and attracting local investment. Local economic success depends not only on the volume of tourist visits but also on the quality of governance, local community participation, and cross-sector policy integration. Empirical studies of multi-level governance show that regions that implement effective coordination between government, the private sector, and local communities are able to increase the economic impact of tourism in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

The research conceptual framework positions fiscal and administrative decentralization as exogenous variables that influence policy connectivity, which in turn impacts local economic development outcomes measured through indicators of GRDP, job creation, and MSME development. This approach emphasizes multi-actor collaboration in tourism destination governance, including the government, the private sector, local communities, and non-governmental organizations, to achieve inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economic development. The research's empirical findings confirm that vertical and horizontal policy integration strengthens the contribution of marine tourism to regional economic growth while reducing economic disparities between districts in Banten Province.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of marine tourism governance in Banten. The qualitative approach involved in-depth interviews with 20 key informants, including officials from the Tourism Office, Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), business actors, and local communities, as well as a focus group discussion involving multiple actors, including academics, NGOs, and the private sector. Participatory observation was conducted in key destinations such as Tanjung Lesung, Sawarna, and Ujung Kulon to capture field practices and stakeholder interactions. Strategic document analysis included the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan, Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) Strategic Plan, and Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) to assess policy consistency and resource allocation. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding using NVivo version 12 to explore policy connectivity and multi-level governance dynamics, while quantitative data were analyzed against economic indicators such as tourism sector GRDP, tourist visits, MSME revenue, and job creation using SPSS and Excel. This approach enabled data triangulation across primary and secondary sources, ensuring valid, measurable, and policy-relevant research findings.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study examines the relationship between fiscal and administrative decentralization, policy connectivity, and the contribution of marine tourism to regional economic development in Banten Province. The analysis shows that decentralization provides significant flexibility for local governments to adapt destination development strategies, budget allocations, regulations, and institutional capacity to suit local characteristics. However, this flexibility does not automatically translate into inclusive economic growth. Coordination between levels of government and across sectors remains a key determinant of effectiveness.

The results of quantitative analysis of economic indicators show disparities in tourism contributions between districts. Pandeglang Regency recorded the highest contribution to GRDP at 15.2 percent, followed by Lebak at 12.5 percent, and Serang at 10.3 percent. The average contribution of the tourism sector reached 12.7 percent with a standard deviation of 2.6 percent, indicating quite significant variation. Pearson correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship between the number of marine destinations and the contribution of the tourism sector to GRDP ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that the number of well-managed destinations can increase the economic impact of the tourism sector.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Marine Tourism Economic Indicators of Regencies in Banten (2025)

<i>Regency</i>	<i>GRDP per Capita (Rp growth (%)</i>	<i>Amount Marine</i>	<i>Contribution Tourist</i>	
	<i>Million)</i>	<i>Destinations</i>	<i>(%)</i>	
<i>Lebak</i>	24.5	4.1	15	12.5
<i>Pandeglang</i>	27.3	4.5	18	15.2
<i>Attack</i>	30.1	4.8	10	10.3
<i>Average</i>	27.3	4.5	14.3	12.7
<i>Std Dev</i>	2.9	0.35	4.0	2.6

Source : BPS Banten Province, 2025

Multi-level governance analysis through NVivo thematic coding of in-depth interviews ($n = 20$) and FGD ($n = 8$) revealed a number of important patterns. First, vertical policy connectivity remains low, as evidenced by limited coordination between central, provincial, and district ministries/agencies. Second, horizontal integration across tourism, economic, environmental, and MSME sectors remains partial. Third, community and private sector participation is quite high at the local level, but has not yet been structured into formal decision-making mechanisms. These findings indicate that decentralization provides policy space, but its effectiveness depends on connectivity and synergy among stakeholders.

Table 5. Evaluation of Marine Tourism Policy Connectivity in Banten (2025)

<i>Dimensions Connectivity Policy</i>	Indicator Evaluation	Score (1–5)
<i>Vertical</i>	Integration of central–provincial–district policies	2
<i>Horizontal</i>	Cross-sector coordination (tourism, economy, environment)	2
<i>Participatory</i>	Local stakeholder involvement	3
<i>Responsiveness</i>	Speed adaptation policy to local needs	2

Source : Results of interviews with OPD and survey of 30 MSMEs

Multiple regression analysis shows that connectivity policies significantly influence the contribution of tourism to regional GDP. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.64 ($p < 0.01$) confirms that 64 percent of the variability in tourism contributions can be explained by vertical and horizontal policy integration. This confirms the findings of multi-level governance theory, which states that coordination and integration of policies across levels of government and sectors are crucial for the effectiveness of tourism-based economic development implementation.

An economic impact analysis shows that integrated marine destination management can increase per capita GRDP by 5–7 percent over the next five years. Furthermore, the tourism sector can create more than 12,000 new jobs and increase local investment by approximately IDR 1,250 billion. The number of MSMEs integrated into the tourism industry value chain is estimated to increase by more than 500 units. These findings underscore the role of marine tourism as a driving force for inclusive and sustainable regional economic development.

Table 6. Projected Economic Impact of Marine Tourism in Banten (2025–2030)

<i>Impact Potential Marine Tourism</i>	Economic Indicators	5- Year Projection
<i>Increase in GRDP</i>	Growth of GRDP per capita	5–7%
<i>Field Work</i>	Amount worker sector tourist	+12,000 people
<i>Investment</i>	New investment value (Rp billion)	1,250
<i>Local Economic Integration</i>	Number of MSMEs involved in chain mark	+500

Prediction based on regional input-output models and surveys field, 2025

Qualitative discussions emphasized that improving connectivity policies is not only related to formal coordination but also requires cultural collaboration between government actors, the private sector, local communities, and non-governmental organizations. Empirical studies show that regions with good multi-level coordination have successfully reduced economic disparities between districts, increased the economic impact of tourism, and strengthened the sector's adaptability to external pressures, such as pandemics or climate change. This policy integration also encourages destination innovation, local human resource capacity development, and MSME empowerment, thereby making the tourism sector's economic contribution more inclusive and resilient.

In a way overall, research This confirm that success decentralization in push development economy through tourist nautical No only depends on flexibility fiscal and administrative, but also on connectivity multi-level policies, coordination cross sector, participation active society, and decision making decision data- based findings This give implications practical for government area For designing development strategies effective tourism, maximizing benefit economy local, and support growth inclusive economy as well as sustainable.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that fiscal and administrative decentralization in Banten Province provides significant flexibility for regional governments in managing maritime tourism destinations, budget allocation, regulations, and institutional capacity development, in line with their specific characteristics. Flexibility alone does not guarantee increased tourism contributions to inclusive economic development. The effectiveness of decentralization depends heavily on the level of multi-level policy connectivity and cross-sectoral coordination.

The quantitative analysis results show disparities in tourism contributions between districts, with Pandeglang recording the highest contribution of 15.2 percent, followed by Lebak at 12.5 percent and Serang at 10.3 percent. Regression analysis reveals that vertical and horizontal policy integration significantly influences tourism's contribution to GRDP, explaining 64 percent of the variability in the sector's contribution. Economic projections indicate that integrated marine destination management could increase GRDP per capita by between five and seven percent, create more than 12,000 new jobs, increase investment by IDR 1,250 billion, and involve more than 500 MSMEs in the tourism industry value chain.

Qualitative analysis emphasizes that improving policy connectivity requires formal coordination and a collaborative culture between the government, the private sector, local communities, and non-governmental organizations. Regions that effectively implement multi-level governance are able to reduce economic disparities, increase the economic impact of tourism, strengthen adaptation to external pressures, encourage destination innovation, and empower local human resources and MSMEs.

Overall, this study confirms that marine tourism can be a driving force for inclusive, sustainable, and resilient regional economic development if supported by effective decentralization, multi-level policy connectivity, cross-sectoral coordination, community participation, and data-driven decision-making. These findings offer practical implications for formulating optimal marine tourism development strategies that are oriented toward local economic well-being.

State that the expectations, as stated in the "Introduction" chapter, can ultimately result in the "Results and Discussion" chapter, so that there is a match. Furthermore, prospects for developing research results and prospects for further study applications can also be added to the next chapter (based on the results and discussion).

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