

Coastal Tourism Development Strategy at Arar White Sand Beach, Sorong Regency, to Encourage Tourist Interest

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Abstract

Arar White Sand Beach is a coastal tourist destination renowned for its natural beauty and strategic value for tourism development in Sorong Regency. Despite its significant potential, the management of this tourist area still faces various challenges, such as limited facilities, low promotional intensity, and a lack of local community involvement in tourism activities. This study aims to identify existing conditions, analyse management strategies, and formulate a direction for coastal tourism development at Arar White Sand Beach to increase visitor interest. The research method employed was a descriptive qualitative approach that included field observations, interviews with managers, local residents, and tourists, as well as a literature review on sustainable tourism management. The results indicate that management aspects remain ineffective, particularly in terms of area management, infrastructure provision, and promotional governance. Furthermore, the involvement of the local community remains limited to informal activities, which fail to significantly contribute to economic development. Recommended development strategies include: (1) improving basic infrastructure and tourism facilities, such as road access, rest areas, sanitation areas, and information centres; (2) digital promotion based on social media and tourism networks; and (3) community empowerment through the development of creative economic enterprises based on marine products and handicrafts. and (4) the application of ecotourism principles oriented toward environmental sustainability and active community participation. Implementation of this strategy is expected to strengthen the tourist appeal of Arar White Sand Beach, increase tourist visits, and positively impact the well-being of coastal communities. With proper management and development, Arar White Sand Beach has the potential to become a leading coastal tourism destination in Southwest Papua, providing not only a recreational experience but also supporting sustainable tourism development in Sorong Regency.

Keywords: Arar White Sand Beach, Ecotourism, Tourism Management.

INTRODUCTION

Coastal tourism is a strategic sector in the development of Indonesia's coastal areas, given its geographical characteristics as an archipelagic nation with a coastline of approximately 81,000 km. The richness of coastal and marine resources gives this region significant economic and ecological potential, particularly in supporting natural resource-based sustainable development. Coastal tourism development not only serves as a driver of economic growth but also as a means of environmental conservation and the preservation of local culture. However, the success of coastal tourism depends heavily on the balance between ecological, economic, and social aspects.

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Indonesia (Kasih et al., 2024). Tourism is no longer a secondary need but has become a vital necessity. The primary reasons for tourism development are closely linked to the economic, social, and cultural progress of a region. The quality of a tourist attraction can be assessed not only by its condition (Marques et al., 2021), but also by the destination's image, attractions,

facilities, accessibility, promotion, and word of mouth, which contribute significantly to national economic development in the era of globalisation. One factor that can attract visitors to a tourist attraction is its attractiveness (Chi & Giao, 2024; Salmah & Rizal, 2022). Tourist attractions typically possess unique characteristics that attract tourists (Hernández, 2021; Pratama et al., 2023; Satyarini et al., 2017).

Sorong Regency is a region in Southwest Papua with abundant coastal and marine resources that offer significant potential for development as a tourist destination. Among these areas, Arar White Sand Beach occupies a strategic position due to its natural beauty, fine white sand, and proximity to Sorong City Centre. This potential offers significant opportunities to develop the area into a leading destination for marine tourism and coastal ecotourism. However, this potential has not been fully utilised due to various management challenges, such as limited basic facilities, minimal tourism promotion, and suboptimal local community involvement in tourism activities.

This situation indicates that the management and governance of tourism at Arar White Sand Beach still require serious attention. Based on field observations and interviews, area management has not been effectively coordinated, either in terms of spatial planning, infrastructure provision, or tourism promotion strategies. Local communities are only informally involved in tourism activities, such as boat rentals or food sales, so their contribution to economic development remains limited. This indicates the need for a participatory and sustainable management approach that synergistically involves local governments, communities, and the private sector.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, coastal tourism development is not only oriented towards increasing the number of visitors but must also consider the ecological, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability of the local community (Upé et al., 2024; Tuyen, 2025). As stated by Musaddun et al. (2013), the concept of sustainable coastal tourism demands a balance between the exploitation of natural potential and environmental preservation through the principles of conservation, community participation, and integrated management. Therefore, the coastal tourism development strategy at Pasir Putih Arar Beach must be designed with a multidimensional approach that integrates environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects so that this destination can develop without causing ecological degradation.

The recommended development strategy encompasses four main pillars. First, improving basic infrastructure and tourism facilities, such as road access, sanitation areas, rest areas, and information centres, will enhance tourist comfort and safety. Second, strengthening digital promotion through social media, tourism websites, and tourism networks to increase the destination's image. Third, empowering local communities by encouraging the development of creative economic enterprises based on seafood, traditional culinary delights, and coastal handicrafts. Fourth, the implementation of ecotourism principles is crucial, emphasising environmental preservation and active community involvement in the preservation of the coast and its ecosystem.

This approach aligns with the principles of interest-based tourism development and decisions regarding revisits, as previous research has shown that factors such as destination image, attractions, facilities, accessibility, promotion, and electronic word of mouth

(e-WOM) are important determinants of increased tourist interest. By strengthening these factors, Arar White Sand Beach has a significant opportunity to enhance its tourist appeal, build a positive image, and create memorable tourism experiences that foster tourist loyalty.

With adaptive management, creative promotional strategies, and planned community empowerment, Arar White Sand Beach has the potential to become a leading coastal tourism destination in Southwest Papua. Development that prioritises a balance between ecological, economic, and social aspects will not only provide economic benefits for the local community but also support sustainable tourism goals in Sorong Regency. Thus, this area can serve as a concrete example of the implementation of competitive and environmentally equitable coastal tourism management.

METHODS

This research was conducted at Pasir Putih Arar Beach, located in Sorong District, Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua Province. This area was selected purposively because it has significant potential as a developing coastal tourism destination but faces various challenges in management, promotion, and empowerment of the local community. Furthermore, Pasir Putih Arar Beach holds strategic value as a tourist area adjacent to the economic growth centre of Sorong City, making it a potential model for sustainable coastal tourism development in eastern Indonesia. This research was conducted over three months, from July to September 2025, and included field observations, primary and secondary data collection, in-depth interviews with informants, and analysis and report preparation.

The data collection method used was descriptive qualitative, combining participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies. The data types used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from field observations and interviews with key informants, including tourism managers, coastal communities, and tourists visiting Pasir Putih Arar Beach. This primary data includes information on the condition of infrastructure, facilities, tourism management, tourist perceptions of the destination's attractiveness, and the level of community participation. Secondary data was obtained from

various institutional sources and scientific literature, such as reports from the Sorong Regency Tourism Office, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPPDA) document, scientific journals, and articles relevant to coastal tourism management and sustainable tourism strategies.

The collected data were analysed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The analysis process involved three main stages: (a) Data reduction, which involved selecting, categorising, and simplifying field data to focus on information relevant to the research objectives, such as attractiveness factors, facilities, promotion, and community participation; (b) Data presentation, which involved narratives, tables, and conceptual maps to facilitate understanding of the relationships between variables and field conditions; and (c) Conclusion drawing and verification, which involved interpreting the findings to formulate a coastal tourism development strategy that aligns with the potential and challenges of Pasir Putih Arar Beach. Furthermore, to strengthen the validity of the findings, triangulation of sources and methods was conducted by comparing interview results with observational and documentary data. This analysis is used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) as a basis for formulating the direction of developing a sustainable coastal tourism strategy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arar White Sand Beach is located in the Sorong District, Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua Province, approximately a 20-minute drive from the centre of Sorong City. This area boasts coastal natural features, including a white sandy shoreline, clear waters, and serene ocean views. This potential makes it a popular tourist destination for both locals and domestic tourists. However, observations indicate that supporting facilities are still limited, such as the lack of shower

facilities, adequate public restrooms, and a lack of shade and well-maintained parking areas.

In addition to the physical conditions, the socio-economic aspects of the surrounding community also influence tourism dynamics in this area. Most of the Arar coastal residents work as fishermen and small traders selling seafood and snacks to visitors. Community involvement in tourism activities remains informal and uncoordinated through formal institutions such as Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis). This results in the economic potential of tourism activities not being optimally utilised to improve local community welfare.

Interviews with village managers and officials indicate that the management of Arar White Sand Beach is still rudimentary and not based on a long-term plan. The lack of an official ticketing system and spatial planning regulations means that tourism activities are conducted without adequate oversight. Cleanliness management still relies on local community initiatives, while oversight of tourist activities is relatively weak. In terms of promotion, the area lacks a strong brand identity in digital media. Information about Arar White Sand Beach is generally limited to personal posts on social media.

Another problem lies in infrastructure and accessibility. Access to the tourist site is relatively easy due to its land access, but the road to the beach remains poorly maintained. Parking areas have not been permanently designated, and there are no informative signs. Public facilities such as restrooms, trash cans, and gazebos are still very limited. This situation has the potential to reduce tourist comfort and hinder the increase in visitation.

A SWOT analysis was used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting tourism development at Arar White Sand Beach. The results of the analysis are shown in the following table:

Aspects	Internal/External Factor
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The natural beauty of the beach with clean white sand and clear seawater. - Strategic location close to the centre of Sorong City. - Easy accessibility by land and sea transportation. - The friendly character of the local community towards tourists. - Potential marine resources and a unique coastal culture.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism facilities and infrastructure are inadequate. - Area management is unstructured, and there is minimal coordination between parties. - Digital promotion and destination image are still weak. - Community involvement in tourism activities is not optimal. - There is no official management institution.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support from local government policies for coastal tourism development. - The increasing trend of nature-based tourism and ecotourism. - Potential for developing a local community-based creative economy. - Ease of promotion through social media and digital platforms. - Potential for collaboration with tourism communities and MSMEs.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental degradation due to uncontrolled tourism activities. - Competition with other tourist destinations in Southwest Papua. - Dependence on the visiting season (holiday season). - Lack of tourist awareness of environmental cleanliness and conservation. - Climate change can impact coastal ecosystems.

Source: Analysis Results, 2025

Based on the SWOT analysis, four main alternative strategies were formulated as follows:

1. SO Strategy (Strengths– Opportunities)

We can leverage the natural beauty and strategic location of Arar White Sand Beach to attract tourists by strengthening digital promotion and developing tourism content based on local culture. Strengthening the destination's image can be achieved through the creation of an official website, social media promotions, and collaboration with tourism stakeholders and creative communities in Sorong.

2. WO Strategy (Weaknesses – Opportunities)

Overcoming limited facilities and management by leveraging opportunities for local government support and potential private sector collaboration. For example, through the development of basic tourism facilities (toilets, clean areas, parking lots, gazebos) and community training in sustainable tourism management.

3. ST (Strengths – Threats) Strategy

Optimising the strengths of local natural and cultural resources to address the threat of environmental degradation. The strategy is to

implement an ecotourism concept that prioritises conservation principles, environmental education, and limiting visitor capacity to maintain coastal sustainability.

4. WT (Weaknesses – Threats) Strategy

Reducing weaknesses and anticipating threats by establishing an official management institution (Pokdarwis) responsible for cleanliness management, monitoring tourism activities, and controlling environmental impacts. This institution also serves as a coordination forum between the community, government, and business actors.

The research results indicate that coastal tourism development at Pasir Putih Arar Beach is still in its early stages and requires targeted strategic intervention. In general, the beach's natural attractions have been a major factor in attracting tourists, but weaknesses in management and promotion have prevented this potential from being fully utilised. This finding aligns with the theory of sustainable tourism management (5), which emphasises the importance of balancing economic, social, and environmental dimensions in coastal tourism development.

Local community involvement is a key factor in the success of the development strategy. Active community participation in tourism activities not only increases a sense of ownership of the destination but also contributes to local economic development. With training and institutional support, communities can participate in various tourism activities, such as providing marine transportation services, culinary experiences, and coastal handicrafts. This approach also reinforces the concept of sustainable community-based tourism.

In terms of promotion, the use of digital media and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) needs to be a primary focus to expand the reach of destination information. Promotion based on visual content, local narratives, and digital interactions has proven effective in enhancing the destination's image and attracting millennial tourists, who now dominate the tourism market. With this strategy, Pasir Putih Arar Beach can build a positive image as a natural, environmentally friendly, and easily accessible coastal destination.

Overall, the analysis shows that the coastal tourism development strategy at Pasir Putih Arar Beach must focus on improving facilities, creative promotion, community empowerment, and the application of ecotourism principles. These four aspects are interconnected and form a sustainable development system. If implemented consistently and collaboratively, this area has the potential to become a leading coastal tourism model that can improve community welfare and strengthen Sorong Regency's tourism image at the regional and national levels.

Therefore, the main recommendation for coastal tourism development at Pasir Putih Arar Beach is the need to focus on strategies to strengthen the destination's image through the management of innovative, memorable, and authentic tourist attractions that reflect the local cultural character and natural uniqueness. Creating a positive image requires support from a consistent branding narrative, experience-based

tourism packaging, and highlighting local identity that can differentiate it from other coastal destinations in Southwest Papua. Furthermore, digital promotion should be optimised through integrated campaigns across various social media platforms and interactive tourism websites, leveraging the power of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) derived from previous traveller experiences as an effective organic promotional tool to increase the destination's reach and reputation.

Furthermore, tourist area accessibility remains a crucial component in building initial tourist interest. While its influence may not always directly influence the decision to revisit, ease of access, regular transportation, and travel safety are prerequisites for forming a positive impression of the destination. Improving basic tourist facilities and amenities, such as environmental cleanliness and the availability of rest areas, information centres, and additional recreational facilities, is also crucial to enhancing tourists' comfort and satisfaction during their visit. Given that research indicates that intention to visit serves as a key mediating variable between destination image, promotion, and the decision to revisit, all development strategies need to be directed at creating high-quality, memorable tourism experiences that meet visitor expectations.

Thus, synergy between destination management, digital promotion, facility improvement, and active community participation is a crucial foundation for building sustainable coastal tourism. Cross-sector collaboration between local governments, local communities, and tourism industry players will strengthen the competitiveness of Arar White Sand Beach as a leading destination that is not only visually appealing but also provides a profound emotional and social experience for tourists. This comprehensive strategy is expected to increase tourist loyalty and ensure the economic and ecological sustainability of the coastal area of Sorong Regency.

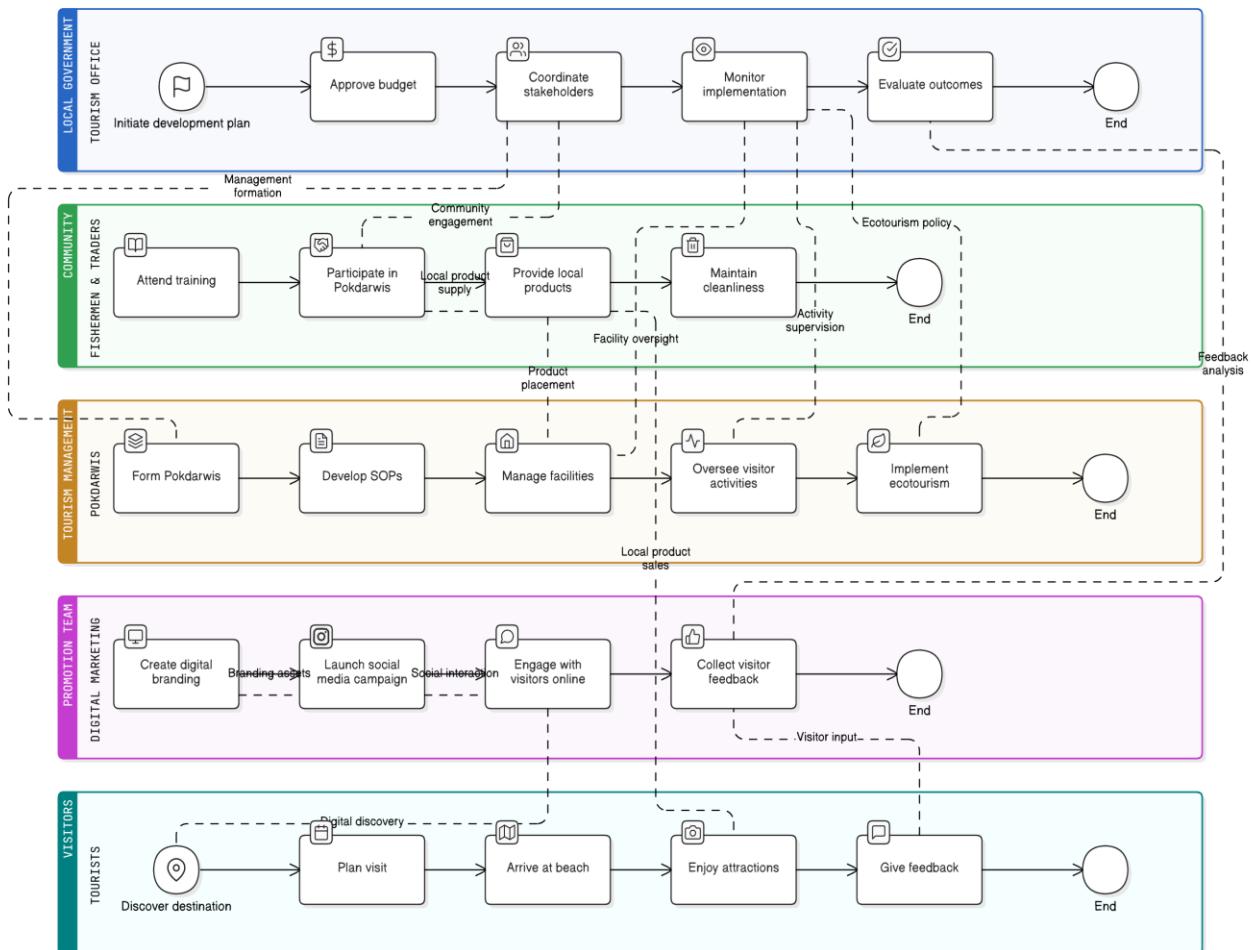


Figure 1. Coastal Tourism Development Strategy at Pasir Putih Arar Beach, Sorong Regency, to Encourage Tourist Interest in Visits

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Arar White Sand Beach has great potential as a leading coastal tourism destination in Sorong Regency in terms of its natural beauty, easy accessibility, and social support from the local community. However, the management of this tourist area still faces various obstacles, such as limited facilities, low digital promotion, and less than optimal community participation. Therefore, an effective development strategy needs to be directed towards improving basic infrastructure, strengthening digital media-based promotion, empowering the community through the creative economy, and implementing ecotourism principles that emphasise environmental sustainability and active community participation. With the implementation of these strategies in an integrated and sustainable manner, Arar White Sand Beach has the potential to become a model for sustainable coastal

tourism development that can increase tourist interest while providing economic and social benefits to the coastal communities of Sorong Regency.

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