



STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION IN EMPOWERING LOCAL POTENTIAL-BASED TOURISM AWARENESS GROUPS IN PANGARENGAN, SAMPANG

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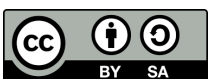
Abstract :

This research examines the dynamics of stakeholder collaboration in empowering the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) based on local potential in Pangarengan, Sampang Regency. The study is motivated by the shift in public administration toward collaborative governance to optimize coastal resources such as salt ponds and mangrove ecosystems. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through interviews with representatives from the tourism department, village governments, Pokdarwis members, academics, and the private sector. The results indicate that collaboration remains in a transitional phase characterized by "pseudo-collaboration," where top-down patterns from the district government and institutional egos regarding coastal land-use permits hinder Pokdarwis autonomy. Findings reveal that empowerment efforts often prioritize ceremonial physical assistance, such as providing uniforms, while neglecting substantive needs like technical training in digital marketing and product branding. However, a significant indicator of effectiveness is observed in the strengthening of social capital through independent youth initiatives in mangrove conservation. The study concludes that the sustainability of Pokdarwis empowerment depends on transitioning toward a clear collaborative framework, integrated funding through village budgets (APBDes), and facilitative leadership. Synchronized cooperation between the government, private sector (CSR), and the community is essential to transform local assets into a competitive and accountable engine for regional economic growth.

Keywords : Collaborative Governance, Empowerment, Pokdarwis, Local Potential, Sustainable Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Modern public administration has experienced a paradigm shift from a centralized bureaucratic model to collaborative governance that emphasizes the involvement of various actors in achieving development goals, including in community empowerment efforts at the local level. (Fatin et al., 2024) In this context, empowerment is no longer simply the provision of top-down assistance, but rather a process of strengthening the capacity of communities to recognize, manage, and develop their potential independently through synergy between the government, the private sector, and civil society. (Diwyarthi et al., 2025) This is in line with the concept of empowerment in coastal areas, which emphasizes that the success of tourism development is highly dependent on the active participation of local communities in recognizing the potential of their environment. (Suherman et al., 2024) One of the important instruments in



regional development that is currently a major focus is the community-based tourism sector, facilitated by the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), where its success is highly dependent on the effectiveness of coordination and division of roles between stakeholders.(Sabaruddin et al., 2024)Pangarengan District in Sampang Regency is a region with unique geographical characteristics and extraordinary coastal potential, ranging from iconic salt ponds to pristine mangrove ecosystems, which, if managed with proper administrative management, can become a driving force for the regional economy.(Setiawati et al., 2024).

This is reinforced by the fact that the development of culture-based tourism in the Madura region has been proven to be able to create new economic opportunities and increase community income by up to fifteen percent.(Wahyudi et al., 2024)However, the reality on the ground shows that managing local potential often faces classic public administration obstacles, such as sectoral egos between government agencies, a lack of active participation from local communities, and minimal integrated investment support from the private sector. In Pangarengan, the existence of Pokdarwis as a representative of the local community in managing tourism has not been able to function optimally because the communication and collaboration patterns that have been established are still partial and have not addressed long-term strategic aspects.(Sadat et al., 2023)The main problem that arises from a public administration perspective is the lack of a clear collaborative framework that regulates who does what, how responsibilities are divided, and how accountability mechanisms are established for developing local potential. Empowerment programs often stop at the ceremonial level without ongoing support, making it difficult for Pokdarwis (Tourism Groups) to innovate tourism products and digital marketing.(Sadad et al., 2023). Furthermore, a heavy reliance on district government instructions without local initiatives supported by village-level regulations slows down the empowerment process. The role of stakeholders, such as the Sampang Regency Youth, Sports, Culture, and Tourism Office, must be synergized with Village Government policies in Pangarengan, as well as involving academics for knowledge transfer and business actors for access to capital. If this collaboration is not managed with the principles of good governance, Pangarengan's immense potential as a salt tourism or mangrove ecotourism destination will remain a narrative without realizing the welfare of its people.(Afif & Muhtadi, 2021).Maiwa et al. (2025), research on stakeholder collaboration in empowering Pokdarwis in Pangarengan District is very crucial and has novelty value because it dissects bureaucratic obstacles and seeks the most effective partnership model to be applied to the characteristics of coastal communities in Madura. The focus of this study ultimately aims not only to describe the empowerment process technically, but further to analyze how the governance of relationships between these actors can create program sustainability (program sustainability) through strengthening independent and competitive Pokdarwis institutions. Thus, this background emphasizes that the main key to the success of empowerment in

Pangarengan lies in the extent to which government administration is able to orchestrate various stakeholder interests into a single vision of inclusive and accountable local potential-based tourism development for all levels of society in Sampang Regency.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is a scientific approach that focuses on an in-depth understanding of social phenomena through the interpretation of meaning and the exploration of the reality behind human interactions, which in public administration studies is very effective in dissecting the complexity of relationships between actors in governance. (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023) This approach allows researchers to look beyond statistical data and understand how policies are implemented, how power is negotiated, and how collaboration between stakeholders is formed at the grassroots level. In the context of research on stakeholder collaboration in empowering Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) in Pangarengan District, qualitative methods were used to capture the dynamics of cooperation between the Sampang Regency Tourism Office, the Village Government, and the local community in a natural and in-depth manner. The type of research used was descriptive qualitative, which aims to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate picture of the facts and relationships between the phenomena being investigated. The research location was determined purposively in Pangarengan District, Sampang Regency, considering that this area has unique characteristics as a center for salt and mangrove ecosystems that require a special development administration pattern. (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023). The determination of informants in this study was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, in which the researcher selected individuals who were considered to have the best understanding of collaboration and empowerment issues, namely the Head of Tourism at the Sampang Disporabudpar, Village Heads in the Pangarengan area, Pokdarwis administrators, and representatives of coastal communities who were directly involved in managing local potential.

The primary data in this study consists of primary data obtained through in-depth interviews and passive participant observation, as well as secondary data derived from official documents such as the Strategic Plan (Renstra) of the department, village budget documents, and Pokdarwis annual reports. The research instrument is the researcher himself as a human instrument, whose function is to determine the focus, select informants, conduct data collection, assess data quality, and draw conclusions based on findings in the field. Observations were conducted by directly observing how formal and informal interactions occur between the department and the community in tourism development coordination forums. Solovyda (2022) Interviews were conducted using semi-structured guidelines to explore bureaucratic barriers, actor commitment, and role-sharing mechanisms in the utilization of salt and mangrove potential. To ensure the validity and legitimacy of the data, researchers used triangulation techniques, specifically source triangulation by

comparing information from the district government, village government, and community, as well as technical triangulation by matching interview results with documentary evidence and field observations. The data analysis process was conducted inductively, following the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the condensation stage, the researcher sorted and summarized the interview results and field notes that were most relevant to the theory of stakeholder collaboration and empowerment. The data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives and a matrix of inter-actor relationships to facilitate mapping the roles of each stakeholder in the development bureaucracy. Finally, the researcher verified by re-examining the findings to obtain credible conclusions regarding the effectiveness of collaboration in Pangarengan. This qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to accommodate the dynamic nature of public administration in Madura, which is heavily influenced by sociocultural factors. This allows the researcher to produce recommendations for a collaboration model that is not only theoretically sound but also applicable for the Sampang Regency Government in advancing tourism based on local potential in a sustainable and accountable manner.(Firera et al., 2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Collaborative governance is a public management model that places non-state stakeholders, such as the private sector and civil society, directly alongside government institutions in a collective, formal, and consensus-oriented decision-making forum. This model emerged in response to the limitations of traditional bureaucracy in handling increasingly complex and cross-sectoral public issues, thus requiring synergy of knowledge, resources, and authority from various parties.(Mirajani et al., 2023)The key dynamic in this process is not simply administrative coordination, but rather a transformation of relationships based on the principle of equality, where the government no longer acts as a single authority governing hierarchically (top-down), but rather plays the role of facilitator and catalyst in an inclusive network of cooperation. The success of this model depends heavily on an institutional design that allows for the creation of open dialogue, where every actor has equal access to information and the opportunity to influence the final outcome of policies in order to achieve common goals that cannot be achieved by one party alone.(Kaharap et al., 2024).

The dynamics of relationships between actors within this collaborative framework are heavily influenced by interrelated process variables, starting with trust-building as the primary foundation for breaking down sectoral egos and inter-institutional suspicions that often hinder cooperation. In these interactions, an intense and ongoing communication process known as face-to-face dialogue occurs, which serves to build a shared understanding of the nature of the problem and identify agreed-upon values.(Astutiningsih et al., 2024). During this process, power dynamics become crucial. If there is a

significant imbalance in capacity or resources between actors, the collaboration process risks becoming manipulative or dominated by the stronger party. Facilitative leadership that ensures a balance of roles is required. Commitment to the process is also crucial, as each actor must be willing to transcend their organization's narrow interests for the sake of "mutual gains," which often involve complex negotiations and compromises. Muallim et al. (2024) A shared understanding of the mission and strategic objectives is crucial to ensuring that collaboration does not stop at the discussion level, but rather progresses to concrete actions and the achievement of small wins that can strengthen the motivation of actors to continue their involvement. This dynamic is cyclical and non-linear, where each small success strengthens trust and commitment, while failures in transparency or communication can undermine the entire collaborative structure. Therefore, the relationships between actors in collaborative governance are a fragile yet robust ecosystem, continually evolving along with increasing interdependence, the capacity for shared learning, and the strengthening of collective legitimacy in the eyes of the public. (Purnawati, 2021). To provide a real picture of the dynamics of the relationship between these actors, the following is a summary of the results of qualitative interviews regarding stakeholder collaboration practices in empowering Pokdarwis in Pangarengan, Sampang.

TABLE 1: Identification of Stakeholder Views in Collaboration to Empower Pangarengan Tourism Awareness Groups

No	Informant	Code	Position/Role	Interview Results
1	Informant A	INF-01	Head of Tourism Division (Sampang Disporabudpar)	"We are focused on strengthening the legality of the Pokdarwis (Tourism Group). The main obstacle currently is the limited regional budget (APBD) for physical infrastructure development at the salt pond tourist sites, so we are encouraging collaboration with the private sector."
2	Informant B	INF-02	Head of the Pangarengan Tourism Awareness Group	"The community is actually ready to manage the salt educational tourism, but we need technical training on tourism storytelling and ticket management. So far, assistance has been limited to uniforms and information boards."
3	Informant C	INF-03	Head of Pangarengan Village	"The Village Government has allocated Village Funds for road access to the mangrove forest, but coordination with the Environmental Agency still

				overlaps regarding coastal land use permits."
4	Informant D	INF-04	Community Leaders / Local Clerics	"We fully support this tourism as long as it is Sharia-based and upholds local wisdom. We must avoid any activities that violate religious norms. Empowerment must prioritize local youth to prevent them from leaving the country."
5	Informant E	INF-05	Academic (Community Empowerment Expert)	"The collaboration model in Pangarengan is still pseudo-collaboration. The government remains overly dominant (top-down), while the private sector and tourism groups (Pokdarwis) have not been given ample creative space in strategic decision-making."
6	Informant F	INF-06	Representatives of Salt Business Actors	"We can integrate our salt ponds as an educational tourism destination, as long as there is a guarantee that tourist activities will not disrupt the salt production process, which is our primary source of income."

(Research Source 2025)

Based on Table 1 it can be concluded that The study on stakeholder collaboration in empowering the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in Pangarengan, Sampang, shows that the dynamics of relationships between actors are still in the transition stage from traditional bureaucratic patterns to true collaboration. Although there is a shared macro vision to advance local potential such as salt and mangrove tourism, the interactions that are established are still trapped in classic capacity imbalances and institutional barriers. From the government side (Disporabudpar), the overly heavy focus on formal legality and dependence on the APBD budget indicates that the state's role is still dominant but financially limited, so that efforts to encourage the private sector appear as pragmatic solutions rather than planned strategic choices. (Syahputra & Taqiyah, 2025) This is exacerbated by internal fragmentation within the bureaucracy, where overlapping authority between the Village Government and the Environmental Agency regarding coastal land permits reflects the weak horizontal coordination that is an absolute requirement for collaborative governance. Paudi et al. (2025) While Pokdarwis, as grassroots actors, demonstrates a high level of mental preparedness, they are trapped in a "symbolic collaboration" where government support only addresses superficial aspects such as physical attributes (uniforms and information boards), while substantial needs such as human resource capacity

building through storytelling and management training remain neglected. This imbalance creates a gap between local actors' expectations and the reality of the program being implemented. The perspectives of community leaders and local religious leaders add a crucial dimension of local wisdom, where support for tourism is conditional on adherence to sharia values and religious norms. This means that collaboration in Pangarengan must integrate religiosity as part of the tourism identity. However, sharp criticism from academics, who call this pattern pseudo-collaboration, highlights a fundamental problem in power sharing. The dominance of top-down patterns has resulted in the private sector and civil society being viewed solely as implementers or budget supporters, rather than as equal partners in strategic decision-making. The interdependence, which should be mutually beneficial, remains flawed, as salt businesses, as the primary asset owners, feel the need for security guarantees to ensure their production processes are not disrupted by tourism activities. (Fransisco et al., 2024) Overall, the dynamics of inter-actor relationships in Pangarengan require stronger facilitative leadership to bridge sectoral egos, harmonize overlapping regulations, and transform from merely providing physical assistance to empowering sustainable human resource capacity. Without a more inclusive and honest dialogue space to address technical obstacles in the field, this collaboration risks losing the trust of local actors and becoming merely an administrative program with no long-term impact on the welfare of the Pangarengan community. Therefore, the key to the sustainability of this empowerment lies in the ability of stakeholders to build a deeper shared understanding, oriented not only towards immediate economic results, but also towards preserving local ecosystems and strengthening social cohesion through a fair and transparent division of roles. However Empowering Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) based on optimizing local potential is a tourism development strategy that emphasizes strengthening the capacity of local communities to recognize, manage, and preserve the unique assets within their region. In general, the effectiveness of this empowerment model is measured by the extent to which local communities are able to transform from mere objects into subjects or key actors in sustainable tourism development. (Harjo et al., 2025) In the context of Pangarengan, Sampang, the main focus of local potential is the integration of the mangrove ecosystem and the community salt production sector, which is processed into an educational and recreational tourism destination. The success of this empowerment depends heavily on the integration of three main pillars: the availability of supporting regulations, strengthening community technical skills, and synergy between stakeholders through a healthy collaborative framework. Without optimizing the region's original potential, tourism tends to be generic and easily faltering. However, by emphasizing local uniqueness, Pokdarwis has a high bargaining power that can attract tourists while maintaining the economic sovereignty of village communities from dependence on exploitative external capital.

The dynamics of Pokdarwis empowerment effectiveness in Pangarengan reflect the complex relationship between local aspirations and policy interventions from both the regional government and the private sector. Effective empowerment cannot be achieved solely through the provision of physical assistance or infrastructure facilities; it must also address the development of human and social capital, enabling Pokdarwis members to achieve managerial independence. In practice, this effectiveness is often hampered by the phenomenon of unequal collaboration, where government dominance in determining policy direction remains so strong that creative initiatives from grassroots communities are often hampered by administrative constraints. (Nathaniel et al., 2024) Optimizing local potential, such as salt ponds, into educational tourism requires a profound transformation of knowledge regarding tourism product packaging and digital marketing, skills that the current Pokdarwis (Tourism Group) management has not yet fully mastered. Furthermore, effectiveness is also tested through the resilience of collaboration in dealing with conflicts of interest, such as the lack of synchronization of permits between environmental and tourism agencies, which often confuses communities at the grassroots level. Stakeholder commitment to fair sharing of roles is a determining factor. The government, as legal facilitator, academics as technical assistance providers, and the private sector as market access providers, must all work together with a unified vision. True effectiveness will be seen when Pokdarwis is no longer entirely dependent on government funding but is instead able to create an independent economic cycle from the sustainable management of local potential. The major challenge going forward is how to maintain community consistency to avoid collective burnout, which requires a system of appreciation and regular evaluation from stakeholders. If this collaboration succeeds in maximizing the potential of salt and mangroves in innovative ways, empowering the Pokdarwis (tourism groups) in Pangarengan will not only increase tourist arrivals but also strengthen social cohesion and local economic well-being, rooted in Sampang's cultural and environmental identity. Ultimately, the empowerment of Pokdarwis reflects the success of the collaboration, which balances economic interests, environmental conservation, and the preservation of local wisdom within the community.

TABLE 2 :Interview Findings Matrix of Indicators of Effectiveness and Optimization of Local Potential in Pangarengan

No	Informant	Code	Position/Role	Interview Results
1	Informant G	INF-07	Representative of Bappeda Sampang Regency	"The effectiveness of empowerment is measured by the fiscal independence of tourism villages. We are currently developing a roadmap to include Pangarengan's salt potential in the Regional Tourism Development Master

				Plan (RIPPDA) to ensure more targeted budget interventions."
2	Informant H	INF-08	Secretary of the Pangarengan Tourism Awareness Group	"We feel the empowerment program hasn't been 100% effective because the training provided is often not sustainable. We have the potential to produce crystal salt for souvenirs, but we haven't been taught how to package it (brand it) so it's suitable for sale at hotels or airports."
3	Informant I	INF-09	Environmental Activist (Mangrove)	"Optimizing local potential must go hand in hand with conservation. The effectiveness of empowerment was seen when the youth of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) began replanting mangrove areas without government direction. This is a sign that social capital has been established."
4	Informant J	INF-10	CSR Manager of Salt Company	"We see an opportunity for operational synchronization to be effective. We are ready to lend production equipment for educational tourism demonstrations for students, provided there is a clear division of roles regarding the maintenance of these assets by the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis).
5	Informant K	INF-11	Local Tourists / Visitors	"Pangarengan has unique potential found nowhere else: white salt flats. However, its services are still lacking; digital information access is difficult, and supporting facilities like toilets are still very limited."
6	Informant L	INF-12	Village Companion (P3MD)	"The problem of effectiveness lies in the integration of Village Funds. Pokdarwis often operate independently without full support from the Village Budget (APBDes) because they are considered not to have made a real contribution to the Village's PADes."

(Research Source 2025)

Table 2 shows that despite significant progress in identifying regional assets, implementation still faces significant challenges in terms of sustainability and policy synchronization. Administratively, the government, through the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), is attempting to integrate salt potential into formal regulations such as the Regional Development Planning Agency (RIPPDA) to ensure accurate budget targeting. However, at

the grassroots level, this effectiveness is hampered by sporadic or unsustainable mentoring. This is confirmed by complaints from Pokdarwis (Tourism Group) administrators who feel that the training they receive has not addressed downstream aspects of product processing, such as packaging and branding techniques that can increase the selling value of crystal salt. On the other hand, the most authentic indicator of success emerges from the strengthening of social capital, where independent youth initiatives in mangrove conservation demonstrate that empowerment has successfully instilled a sense of ownership in the community without complete dependence on government instructions. However, the effectiveness of this collaboration is still hampered by funding integration issues at the village level, where overlapping priorities in the Village Budget (APBDes) often leave Pokdarwis operating without stable financial support. Opportunities for optimization through CSR schemes from the salt industry are substantial, particularly in the provision of educational facilities. However, this requires a clear division of roles and concrete asset maintenance between actors. Furthermore, from a visitor perspective, service effectiveness remains a weak point due to the lack of basic infrastructure and access to digital information, which, if not addressed immediately, could undermine the unique competitiveness of Pangarengan's salt flats. Overall, the effectiveness of empowerment in Pangarengan depends heavily on the ability of stakeholders to shift from mere paper planning to ongoing technical assistance, strengthening contributions to village original income, and synchronizing operations to ensure that tourism not only preserves local ecosystems but also provides tangible and measurable economic impacts on the well-being of local communities. (Syuldairi & Febrina, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The success of developing tourism based on local potential depends heavily on the maturity of collaboration between stakeholders. Although this region boasts unique geographic riches in the form of iconic salt ponds and mangrove ecosystems, the empowerment process is still in the transition phase from a traditional bureaucratic model to true collaborative governance. The dynamics of relationships between actors are currently characterized by several classic public administration obstacles, such as sectoral egos, overlapping authority regarding coastal land permits, and government dominance that creates a pattern of pseudo-collaboration. High dependence on district government instructions and a lack of local initiatives supported by village regulations have caused the empowerment process to be slow and often merely ceremonial without ongoing support. As a result, Pokdarwis still faces difficulties in product innovation, packaging (branding), and digital marketing. The effectiveness of empowerment is measured not only by physical assistance, but also by the transformation of the community into a managerially independent subject. Indicators of success are beginning to be seen in the strengthening of social capital, such as independent youth initiatives in mangrove conservation. However, overall, this effectiveness is still hampered

by issues of funding integration within the Village Budget (APBDes) and a lack of operational synchronization with the private sector through CSR schemes. The key to sustainable tourism in Pangarengan lies in the government's ability to orchestrate diverse interests into a single, inclusive vision. Strong facilitative leadership is needed to bridge differences, harmonize regulations, and transform relationships into equal partnerships. Only through a fair and transparent division of roles can the potential of salt and mangroves be optimized to become economic drivers that provide real and accountable welfare impacts for the people of Sampang Regency.

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