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## Aligning Local Tourism Development with the Sustainable Development Goals: A Qualitative Documentary Analysis of Tourism Policies in Isabela Province

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### Abstract:

*This paper analyzed the alignment of tourism development in Isabela Province with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Tourism development in Isabela Province is vital because of the need for environmentally sound tourism practices that support local communities. As Isabela Province has large quantities of natural resources and a significant cultural heritage, the potential for tourism to produce a significant positive economic impact on the province while resolving both the province's social and environmental issues is the two sides of the coin that must be examined. In recent years, there has been much more focus on the sustainability of local tourism policy. A primary emphasis of this analysis is the relationship between regional initiatives and the SDGs, and the progress the province has made in community welfare, conservation of natural resources, and the promotion of cultural heritage preservation. The analysis indicates progress in several areas; however, challenges persist in providing equal access to educational and health services. Putra et al (2024). Cooperation between local stakeholders, such as the government and community organizations, is critical for the effective implementation of these policies. This research advocates greater collaboration and coordinated efforts among these stakeholders to promote an environment where sustainable tourism can thrive. Specific tourism policies were discussed in more detail in this paper with respect to their contribution to the SDGs and the areas where additional investment and development are needed to achieve these objectives. The analysis will further clarify how the tourism industry can be a force for good in promoting sustainable economic growth and resiliency within a community.*

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### Introduction

To determine how Isabela Province can begin to align its tourism policies with the SDGs through effective methods, a qualitative documentary analysis is necessary. A qualitative documentary analysis will provide an overview of the Province's current tourism policies, sustainable tourism practices employed, and an assessment of how these practices align with the SDGs (Pratomo & Krisna, 2023). The following literature review presents an overview of the literature and frameworks developed by scholars and authors on sustainable tourism practices. The review of sustainable tourism development has demonstrated that an effective framework is necessary to develop policies that align local tourism practices with the SDGs. Historically, numerous studies have shown that tourism can play a vital role in the economic development of communities while simultaneously addressing the social and environmental issues

present in those same communities. Research findings indicate that through sustainable tourism development, local economies can benefit, the environment and natural resources can be improved, and cultural heritage can be preserved. However, developing sustainable tourism practices and policies requires strong policy frameworks that guide tourism development. The review of the literature highlights how policies shape the development of tourism in local communities. If effective policies are created and maintained within a local tourism framework, these policies will create an environment that supports sustainable tourism practices through the promotion of responsible tourism, the encouragement of community involvement, and the recognition and support of the fair distribution of revenue generated by tourism activities. To develop a framework that supports the sustainable development of local tourism, local governments must partner with a variety of external and local stakeholders. While the benefits of aligning tourism with the SDGs are clear, several challenges remain in aligning tourism practices with the SDGs. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient education and training for local stakeholders, and limited awareness of sustainable tourism practices. Studies show that unless these challenges are addressed, the balance between the community's economic development and its commitment to sustainability will remain lacking (Bhandari et al., 2024). As noted above, the qualitative documentary analysis that we will conduct will be the next logical step in evaluating the existing tourism policies in Isabela Province. This document analysis will help identify any missing components in current practices and recommend aligning local tourism development with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a future step towards creating sustainable tourism in Isabela Province (Bhandari et al., 2024). Tourism's potential for transformation through responsible actions, such as fostering community engagement and promoting sustainable environmental practices, underscores its importance for both local and global impacts, especially in developing nations such as Uttarakhand (Bhandari et al., 2024).

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## Methods

Qualitative research methods are used in this study, with an emphasis on a qualitative documentary analysis of tourism policy for Isabela Province. The qualitative analysis focuses on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of existing documents on tourism strategy, tourism regulations and practices, and sustainability efforts. The most common data collection methods are governmental publication reviews, policy document reviews, and reports from local tourism-related businesses. The results of the qualitative analysis will provide insight into the degree to which tourism development in Isabela Province is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and provide recommendations for where improvements can be made. We will be selecting several documents to analyze for this study. Documents selected for our analysis will be produced and maintained either by government entities or by community or NGO-based organizations. This provides a comprehensive perspective on the various components affecting tourism policy in Isabela Province. The framework for analyzing these documents will identify gaps in current policies that will be impediments to sustainability. The findings will be categorized according to themes identified through thematic analysis, including community involvement and stakeholder engagement, environmental impact assessments, and community involvement. Through an examination of the tourism policies of Isabela Province, this analysis identified several strengths in these policies regarding support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A significant portion of the research indicates that many of the Province's tourism-related policies directly support SDG 8 by promoting decent work and economic growth through fostering local entrepreneurship and stimulating employment in the tourism industry. Additionally, programs related to eco-tourism and community-based tourism directly align with SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, as they recognize the significance of sustainable tourism in creating sustainable communities. Additionally, the findings identify several areas where tourism policies do not currently adequately support the SDGs. For example, while policies mention ways in which tourism-related policies either protect or enhance environmental protections, few strategies exist for how tourism policies may help mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change—

SDG 13. This void creates a valuable opportunity to enhance tourism policies in Isabela Province by developing appropriate climate change adaptation strategies to ensure that increased tourism development does not negatively impact local ecosystems (Achig et al., 2024).

In addition, there are currently no policies in place that promote Gender Equality in Tourism, which aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). If policy initiatives were created to support women's empowerment in the tourism sector workforce, this could foster greater social equity and support the communities in which tourism operators and businesses operate. However, there are still several opportunities for improvement to develop a more sustainable tourism practice in addition to the findings of the analysis, including discerning the areas where there are currently gaps to creating sustainable tourism opportunities; consequently, the information provided above indicates potential areas for future discussions on how these outputs can help inform future tourism strategy and policy development.

## Discussion

The results of the analysis of the tourism policy of the province of Isabela have many implications for both local stakeholders and, by extension, local people, businesses, and government agencies, and specifically point to a need for collaboration among these three groups to develop sustainable tourism practices in supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The relationship between SDG 8 (promoting economic growth by creating jobs) suggests an opportunity for all local stakeholders to leverage tourism to enhance livelihoods. Similarly, alignment with SDG 11, regarding building sustainable cities and communities, indicates that eco-tourism and community-based Sustainable Tourism Initiatives must be made a Greater Priority Among Local Governments in fostering a sense of ownership among Residents of their Communities.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the following policy recommendations emerge: 1) Local community/stakeholder engagement should be a primary focus for all groups to ensure that local voices are

heard regarding Tourism Planning & Development and, thus, the policies that result from the collaboration will be more inclusive of the Community Needs/Aspirations, 2) Local Entrepreneurship Capability Building and Training Programmes must focus on supporting Sustainable Tourism Practices and, 3) Ongoing Assessments of tourism policies must be conducted to ensure continued alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which will support timely revisions in response to changing Economic Conditions and Challenges. Thus, the discussions above may provide fertile ground to foster a more comprehensive reflection on the impact of sustainable development tourism on Isabela's future. Understanding and fully utilizing the information in the policies, indicating how these policies can change/develop, will be a key factor in creating a reality for a robust tourism sector that will positively affect the community and local economy, while preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage.

## Conclusion

This study offers insights into the extent to which local tourism aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report provides evidence that current approaches to encouraging ecotourism-based community engagement, job creation, and sustainable growth are successfully boosting economic growth and job creation. Furthermore, by promoting healthy lifestyles, these policies demonstrate a dedication to sustainability and to enhancing the quality of life for residents of Isabela Province.

Future research could look at how tourism-related policies affect the local economy and environment over the long run. Further investigation of specific programs, such as community-based tourism initiatives, would improve knowledge and inform future policies. Furthermore, assessing how local stakeholders—such as the public and commercial sectors—contribute to the execution and maintenance of these policies is essential to their effectiveness.

In conclusion, constant adaptation will be required as the tourism industry continues to develop and supports the people of Isabela Province through economic growth, using the SDGs as a framework. Stakeholders must collaborate creatively to optimize growth prospects for Isabela Province's sustainable tourism industry. We can design a sustainable tourism development model for Isabela that protects the local community and its natural and cultural heritage while also generating new economic growth prospects by coordinating tourism policy with the SDGs. These results thereby prepared the ground for the following consideration of the consequences of tourism policy for Isabela's development. To lay the groundwork for a more successful development of Isabela's tourist policy, the following section summarizes the study's findings and conclusions.

### In Isabela Province, Tourism Policies and the Function of Efficient Local Governance

In Isabela Province, an efficient local government is necessary to implement tourism-related policies aligned with the SDGs. Strategies for Community Engagement Involve Residents By including community involvement tactics in the tourism development strategy, local authorities can adopt a more inclusive stance.



## Involved Decision-Making

Residents are more accountable for implementing sustainable practices and take ownership of them when they are involved in decision-making processes that impact their daily lives.

## Development of Metrics

Local governments will be able to monitor the success of their tourism programs by creating transparent sustainability metrics. In addition to financial gains, sustainability indicators should also account for social justice and environmental health. To assess the performance of their tourism programs and improve their tactics, policymakers can focus on creating metrics for local employment in the tourism industry, cultural site preservation, and other specific indicators of success.

## Cooperation

All parties involved will also be able to create a shared vision for tourism that represents the needs and values of the people of Isabela Province through continued cooperation between local governments, local companies, and community-based organizations. This partnership will enable the creation of fresh, creative solutions that balance sustainability and growth. Additionally, it is critical to acknowledge that difficulties will arise when all parties collaborate to develop a single, coherent vision; as a result, there are time constraints on aligning disparate interests.

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## Limitations

As all stakeholders strive to improve sustainable tourism in Isabela Province, it is critical to acknowledge limitations in order to identify and overcome impediments. Although the list may not be all-inclusive, the restrictions noted are crucial to consider as stakeholders begin the conversation about tourism in Isabela Province. The study's understanding of how these policies can be implemented is limited because its scope is focused on a documentation analysis. Due to their exclusive focus on the documented, documentary analyses fail to provide insight into the challenges and constraints that local communities and other interested parties may encounter, such as cultural and economic barriers to new kinds of tourism.

Furthermore, potential biases in the document analysis approach could affect the outcomes. The documents chosen for examination could present a skewed picture of the policies implemented by institutions and/or governments, highlighting their advantages while downplaying their drawbacks. As a result, there can be an overly optimistic view of how tourist development aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To provide a more thorough picture of the effects and challenges of tourism, further study would benefit from incorporating interviews or surveys with residents and businesses.



Local stakeholders should collaborate to create a more sustainable tourism strategy by acknowledging these constraints, especially in the instance of Isabela Province. All participants will be able to contribute to the creation of more sustainable practices that will actually help local communities through cooperation, research, and partnership development. As part of the ongoing evolution of the Sustainable Development Goals, the references analyzed in the following review will illustrate the necessity of continued study and the subsequent application of the research-based conclusions.

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