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Ecotourism: A Key Strategy For Realizing Golden Indonesia 2045

Gusti Lanang Putu Tantra[1]*, Ngurah Wisnu Murthi[2], Muslim Khadri[3], I Gusti Made Riko Hendrajana[4], Feri Supriyanto[5]
[1]Universitas Warmadewa, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Tabanan, Indonesia
[3]Universitas Islam Kebangsaan Indonesia
[4]Insitut Pariwisata dan Bisnis Internasional Denpasar, Indonesia
[5]Institut Rahmaniyah Sekayu, Indonesia
E-mail: lanangtantra1@gmail.com
*Corresponding Author
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ABSTRACT

Inisiatif Indonesia Emas 2045 bertujuan untuk mentransformasi Indonesia menjadi negara maju yang berdaya saing global, inklusif, dan berkelanjutan pada saat satu abad kemerdekaannya. Namun, berbagai tantangan seperti degradasi lingkungan, perubahan iklim, dan ketimpangan ekonomi antarwilayah menuntut reorientasi paradigma pembangunan nasional—dari model yang bersifat ekstraktif menuju ekonomi hijau. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis ekowisata sebagai strategi kunci dalam mendukung pencapaian empat pilar utama Visi Indonesia Emas 2045. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang didasarkan pada tinjauan pustaka komprehensif, studi ini mengkaji interaksi antara konservasi keanekaragaman hayati, pemberdayaan masyarakat lokal melalui Ekowisata Berbasis Masyarakat (Community-Based Ecotourism/CBE), serta pertumbuhan ekonomi hijau nasional. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa ekowisata tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai instrumen diversifikasi ekonomi berbasis sumber daya alam yang bersifat non-ekstraktif, tetapi juga sebagai katalisator dalam melestarikan ekosistem makro, meningkatkan pendapatan per kapita masyarakat perdesaan, dan memperkuat identitas budaya lokal. Integrasi kebijakan penataan ruang yang berkelanjutan, investasi pada infrastruktur ramah lingkungan, serta skema pendanaan inovatif—seperti pembayaran untuk jasa ekosistem (Payment for Ecosystem Services/PES)—menjadi faktor penentu keberhasilan transisi ini. Dengan demikian, ekowisata terbukti memiliki nilai strategis multidimensi yang mampu menjembatani pertumbuhan ekonomi tinggi tanpa mengorbankan daya dukung lingkungan, sehingga layak untuk dijadikan arus utama dalam perencanaan pembangunan jangka panjang Indonesia menuju tahun 2045.

The Golden Indonesia 2045 initiative aims to transform Indonesia into a globally competitive, inclusive, and sustainable developed nation by the centenary of its independence. However, challenges such as environmental degradation, climate change, and interregional economic inequality demand a reorientation of the national development paradigm from extractive modalities to a green economy. This article aims to analyze ecotourism as a key strategy in supporting the achievement of the four main pillars of the Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision. Using a qualitative approach based on a comprehensive literature review, this study examines the interaction between biodiversity conservation, local community empowerment through Community-Based Ecotourism (CBE), and national green economic growth. The study results show that ecotourism not only functions as an instrument for non-extractive natural resource-based economic diversification but also as a catalyst for preserving macro-ecosystems, increasing per capita income of rural communities, and strengthening local cultural identity. The integration of sustainable spatial planning policies, investment in environmentally friendly infrastructure, and innovative funding schemes such as payment for ecosystem services (PES) are found to be determining factors for the success of this transition. Thus, ecotourism has been proven to have a multi-dimensional strategic value that is capable of bridging high economic growth without sacrificing environmental carrying capacity, so it is worthy

of being made the mainstream in Indonesia's long-term development planning towards 2045.

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INTRODUCTION

The Golden Indonesia 2045 vision, launched by the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, represents the noble ideals of the Indonesian nation to escape the middle - income trap and transform into one of the world's five largest economic powers by 2045 (Bappenas, 2019). In the 2025 -2045 RPJPN, this national transformation is supported by key pillars that include human development and mastery of science and technology, sustainable economic development, equitable development, and strengthening national resilience and governance (Bappenas, 2023). However, achieving high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capita income targets often clashes with the reality of excessive exploitation of natural resources if the development paradigm applied is still conventional (Suharto & Rahid, 2022). According to the World Bank report (2021), the expansion of extractive sectors such as mining and massive land conversion in the past has contributed to short-term economic growth, but triggered long-term ecological losses that impose very high socio-economic costs on society.

The dilemma between pursuing high economic growth and preserving the environment is now a fundamental challenge that must be resolved by the Indonesian government (Nugroho et al., 2020). The phenomenon of global climate change, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, sea level rise, and the threat of a biodiversity crisis further reinforces the urgency for Indonesia to immediately transition from a linear economic growth paradigm to a green economy framework *(*OECD, 2020). Within a green economy framework, economic activity is directed at improving human well-being and social justice, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity (UNEP, 2011). Therefore, Indonesia needs new leading sectors that are high in value-added, inclusive, and based on the principles of environmental sustainability (Sukmana, 2023).

Amidst the search for a sustainable development model, the tourism sector—specifically ecotourism emerges as a strategic answer with high potential for acceleration (Wearing & Neil, 2019). Ecotourism is defined by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, supports the well-being of local communities, and involves environmental interpretation and education (TIES, 2015). Unlike mass tourism, which tends to trigger habitat destruction, increase waste, and diminish local cultures, ecotourism offers a quality tourism approach *that* balances economic benefits with ecosystem protection (Fennell, 2020). Given Indonesia's status as one of the world's largest mega-biodiversity countries, *with* dozens of national parks, nature reserves, marine conservation areas, and abundant cultural richness, the basic modalities for ecotourism development in the country are considered highly superior at the global level (Prasetyo & Hidayat, 2022).

Comprehensive ecotourism development aligns with the pillars of sustainable economic development in the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045 (Uhai, 2025). Commercially, the ecotourism sector has been shown to have a broad multiplier effect *on* the local and national economy through the provision of new jobs, community-based entrepreneurial opportunities, and foreign exchange earnings (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2022). Based on an analysis by Stronza et al. (2019), ecotourism creates a direct economic incentive mechanism for local communities to maintain the integrity of forests and coastal ecosystems, because the economic value of intact nature (*living nature*) far exceeds the economic value of nature if extracted or converted (*dead resources*). Thus, ecotourism transforms the value of biodiversity (*existence value*) into direct economic value (*direct use value*) without having to destroy these ecological assets (Dixon & Sherman, 2018).

In addition to its contribution to economic growth and conservation, ecotourism plays a vital role in supporting the pillars of equitable development and poverty alleviation (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Most potential ecotourism areas in Indonesia are located in rural areas, underdeveloped areas, outermost, and disadvantaged (3T) regions, and around conservation areas that have historically had limited

economic accessibility (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). Through the implementation of the *Community-Based Ecotourism* (CBE) concept, revenue from tourism activities can be distributed directly to rural households through guide services, local chain accommodations (*homestays*), souvenir makers, and local culinary providers (Cater & Lowman, 2023). This significantly contributes to reducing regional income disparities, which have historically been concentrated in urban areas or centers of extractive industries (Purnomo et al., 2020).

Ecologically, ecotourism also serves as an instrument for ecosystem-based climate change adaptation and mitigation, which is urgently needed by Indonesia towards 2045 (Lestari, 2024). Ecotourism management based on mangrove vegetation, coral reefs, and tropical rainforests indirectly safeguards natural carbon stocks (*blue carbon* and *green carbon*) from the threats of deforestation and land degradation (Dharmawan et al., 2021). Research conducted by Sukmana (2023) indicates that protecting coastal ecosystems through coral reef and mangrove ecotourism activities can fortify coastal areas from the threat of abrasion and storms, while maintaining the availability of fishery resources for traditional fishermen. By promoting integrated *Payment for Ecosystem Services* (PES) schemes within ecotourism packages, funding for conservation area management can be strengthened independently without relying entirely on the state budget (APBN) or regional budgets (APBD) (Wunder et al., 2020).

However, the implementation of ecotourism as a national strategy towards Golden Indonesia 2045 still faces various complex structural and operational obstacles (Utama, 2021). These obstacles include limited human resource capacity at the grassroots level, minimal accessibility and supporting infrastructure in remote areas, suboptimal law enforcement against spatial planning violations, and the risk of shifting ecotourism governance to mass tourism disguised as greenwashing *(* Gretzel et al., 2020). Furthermore, overlapping regulations between ministries and agencies in managing conservation areas often hinder responsible ecotourism investment (Nurhidayah & Lipman, 2019). Without an integrated, adaptive, and science-based governance framework, this extraordinary ecotourism potential could be degraded into an exploratory tourism commodity that damages the environment and perpetuates social marginalization (Duffy, 2022).

The socio-cultural perspective also positions ecotourism as a means of preserving local wisdom (*indigenous knowledge*) and the nation's cultural identity, which are essential requirements for national resilience as outlined in Vision 2045 (Setiawan et al., 2022). Local wisdom such as the *Sasi* system in Maluku and Papua, *Subak* in Bali, and the Baduy customary area in Banten demonstrate the effectiveness of traditional cultural values in safeguarding environmental sustainability (Sirtha et al., 2020). Ecotourism provides a platform for global appreciation of these traditional practices, which ultimately strengthens national pride *and* motivates young generations in the regions to preserve their cultural and natural heritage amidst the massive wave of modernization and globalization (Cole, 2021).

To address the gap between potential and operational reality, a holistic scientific study is needed on how to formulate ecotourism as a mainstream strategy *in* national development policies towards 2045 (Buhalis et al., 2023). Alignment between the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) and regional ecotourism development strategies must be mapped in a measurable manner to be able to provide balanced economic, ecological, and social impacts (Supriatna, 2022). Therefore, this scientific article seeks to analyze in depth the role of ecotourism as a key strategy in realizing the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. This research examines how strengthening regulations, green financing schemes, increasing local community capacity, and utilizing digital technology can be synergized to make ecotourism a key pillar of Indonesia's economic transformation that is resilient, equitable, and sustainable.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review design *to* analyze the potential and strategies for ecotourism integration in achieving the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045 (Snyder, 2019). The choice of this qualitative-descriptive approach is based on the need to deeply analyze policy dynamics, socio-ecological linkages, and green economy mechanisms that are multidimensional and comprehensive (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The data used are secondary data collected through searching official government documents, such as the 2025–2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) and the performance reports of Bappenas and the Ministry of Tourism and

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Creative Economy, combined with indexed scientific articles of national and international repute from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar (Page et al., 2021).

The data collection process was carried out through a step-by-step sorting scheme based on *the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) protocol to ensure the validity and accountability of the information obtained (Moher et al., 2015). Data processing began with a literature screening stage *based* on inclusion and exclusion criteria, where the inclusion criteria focused on publications from 2015–2025 that examined ecotourism, sustainable development, the green economy, and the strategic planning of Indonesia Emas 2045 (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Documents that passed the selection were then categorized into several main themes, namely the economic contribution of ecotourism, environmental conservation and climate adaptation, community-*based ecotourism*, and national policy governance (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020).

The data analysis technique applied is interactive thematic analysis *which* includes data reduction, data presentation, and inductive-deductive conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). To maintain the validity and reliability of the findings (*trustworthiness*), this study applies data source triangulation techniques by comparing government macro policy projections and the results of empirical field studies in Indonesian ecotourism areas (Denzin, 2017). The results of this comprehensive synthesis are then mapped into a SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*) analysis framework and a strategic planning matrix to formulate concrete, adaptive, and effective policy recommendations for achieving the target of Indonesia Emas 2045 (Helms & Nixon, 2010).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Integration of Ecotourism in the Pillars of Indonesia's Golden Green Economy 2045

The transformation of Indonesia's economic structure towards a developed nation by 2045 requires a reorientation of growth modalities from destructive extractive industries to a knowledge-based service sector and environmental sustainability (Bappenas, 2023). Literature synthesis shows that ecotourism serves as a key catalyst in accelerating *the green economy* because it is capable of generating high economic added value without eroding natural capital stocks *(* Sukmana, 2023). The environmentally based tourism sector creates diversification of national income through service exports, foreign exchange earnings, and employment absorption in the informal and professional sectors (WTTC, 2022). By shifting the dependence of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the fossil commodity sector and massive land clearing to the ecotourism sector, Indonesia can maintain an average annual economic growth of 6–7% as targeted by Vision 2045 without sacrificing ecological carrying capacity (Suharto & Rahid, 2022).

Within the macroeconomic landscape, ecotourism's efficiency lies in its broad multiplier effect *and* its driving force for regional financial inclusiveness (Purnomo et al., 2020). Unlike investments in the extractive sector, which tend to be capital-intensive and divert foreign exchange to corporate entities outside the region, ecotourism activities channel capital flows directly to the grassroots level (Cater & Lowman, 2023). Each unit of investment in ecotourism infrastructure stimulates the growth of local supply chains, from organic agriculture and environmentally friendly transportation to guide services and even local wisdom-based handicraft industries (Rahmawati et al., 2021). The integration of ecotourism within the Green GDP framework *accurately* accounts for natural resource depreciation, ensuring that the resulting economic activity truly represents clean and sustainable growth (OECD, 2020).

The ecotourism funding strategy towards 2045 also utilizes innovative green financing schemes, such as *Payment for Ecosystem Services* (PES) and green bonds *(*Wunder et al., 2020). PES mechanisms enable tourism businesses and tourists to pay financial incentives directly to communities managing conservation areas in exchange for maintaining ecosystem services, such as clean water availability and carbon sequestration (Dixon & Sherman, 2018). This approach transforms the paradox of conservation financing, which has historically relied on limited government budgets, into a self-sustaining *conservation* finance model (Supriatna, 2022). This commitment strengthens Indonesia's position in the international carbon market and attracts foreign investment based on *Environmental, Social, and Governance* (ESG), which is increasingly dominating global investment trends (UNEP, 2011).

Table

Key Economic Indicators	**Conventional Mass Tourism**	**Sustainable Ecotourism**	**Impact on Vision 2045**
Growth Model	Extractive and exploitative	Non-extractive and regenerative	Maintaining long-term environmental carrying capacity
Revenue Retention	Dominated by big actors/agencies (high *leakage*)	Flows directly to local communities (low *leakage*)	Reducing the Gini ratio and regional inequality
Funding Sources	APBN/APBD and standard private investment	PES, *Green Bonds*, and Carbon Credits	Efficiency of national conservation financing
Key Economic Indicators	Conventional Mass Tourism	Sustainable Ecotourism	Impact on Vision 2045
Growth Model	Extractive and exploitative	Non-extractive and regenerative	Maintaining long-term environmental carrying capacity
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Key Economic Indicators	Conventional Mass Tourism	Sustainable Ecotourism	Impact on Vision 2045

Biodiversity Conservation, Carbon Sink, and Climate Change Adaptation

As one of the world's largest *megadiverse* countries, Indonesia has a global responsibility to protect biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with *its Nationally Determined Contributions* (NDC) (Prasetyo & Hidayat, 2022). Studies have shown that ecotourism is the most effective instrument for protecting conservation areas because it can neutralize the threats of forest encroachment, illegal logging, and hunting of protected animals through conservation-based economic incentives (Stronza et al., 2019). When local communities experience tangible financial benefits from the presence of endangered species and intact forests as non-extractive tourism commodities, community policing *of* protected areas increases significantly (Duffy, 2022). Therefore, the establishment of ecotourism zoning in national parks and nature reserves serves as a strong ecological defense (Nurhidayah & Lipman, 2019).

In addition to protecting terrestrial biodiversity, marine ecotourism *plays* a key role in safeguarding blue carbon stocks *in* Indonesia's coastal areas (Dharmawan et al., 2021). Mangrove ecosystems, seagrass meadows, and coral reefs are highly effective carbon sinks, with the capacity to store carbon several times higher than terrestrial tropical forests per hectare (Sukmana, 2023). Mangrove-based ecotourism management not only maintains the national carbon sequestration capacity for climate change mitigation but also provides physical protection for coastal areas from extreme waves, erosion, and sea level rise (Lestari, 2024). Thus, ecotourism acts as an ecosystem-based climate adaptation (*EbA*) strategy that harmoniously integrates environmental protection and economic development agendas (World Bank, 2021).

The use of digital technology and science-based monitoring (*smart ecotourism*) has also increased the reliability of ecological carrying *capacity* management in natural tourism areas (Gretzel et al., 2020). The use of a sensor-based tourist quota system, digital carbon footprint mapping, and interactive app-based education enable area managers to limit the threshold of disturbance to ecosystems (Buhalis et al., 2023). The implementation of Limits *of* Acceptable Change (LAC) thresholds ensures that tourist activities do not exceed nature's regenerative capacity (Fennell, 2020). This integration of science and technology ensures that Indonesia's biodiversity assets remain sustainable beyond the 2045 threshold for future generations to enjoy (Utama, 2021).

Empowerment of Local Communities (*Community-Based Ecotourism*) and Equitable Development

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Equitable development and poverty alleviation in rural areas and the 3T (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged) regions are fundamental pillars in realizing an inclusive Golden Indonesia 2045 (Bappenas, 2019). *The Community-Based Ecotourism* (CBE) approach positions local communities not merely as spectators or low-wage laborers, but as owners, managers, and key decision-makers in the tourism value chain (Nugroho et al., 2020). This community-based governance model encourages direct income redistribution at the village level through the management of *homestay* networks, eco-guides, utilization of local cuisine, and community transportation services (Purnomo et al., 2020). Consequently, inter-regional economic disparities (*regional disparities*) that have fueled massive urbanization to large cities can be effectively suppressed (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Social empowerment through ecotourism also strengthens the position of vulnerable groups, particularly women and rural youth, within the local economic structure (Cater & Lowman, 2023). Women's participation in ecotourism supply chain management such as managing micro-enterprises in culinary, handicraft, and hospitality increases family financial independence and the health and education of children in rural areas (Cole, 2021). For rural youth, the availability of quality jobs in the technology-based ecotourism sector provides an alternative, dignified livelihood in their hometowns (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). This phenomenon prevents the loss of human capital (*brain drain*) from rural areas to cities and simultaneously fosters youth pride in the natural and cultural potential of their region (Setiawan et al., 2022).

This community-based ecotourism development strategy has been empirically proven to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of communities in the face of crises (Wearing & Neil, 2019). Communities that manage ecotourism tend to have a more flexible level of livelihood diversification than those who rely entirely on monoculture agriculture or a single job in the mining sector (Stronza et al., 2019). When global economic fluctuations occur, local food independence and social capital networks *built* through village ecotourism institutions act as buffers *that* maintain community well-being from external shocks (Fennell, 2020).

Preservation of Local Wisdom, Cultural Identity, and National Resilience

A crucial pillar of the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045 is strengthening national resilience rooted in cultural resilience and national identity amidst globalization (Bappenas, 2023). Ecotourism provides a platform where nature conservation and the preservation of indigenous knowledge *mutually* reinforce each other (Setiawan et al., 2022). Various traditional customary systems in Indonesia, such as *Sasi* in Maluku and Papua, *Subak* in Bali, and customary forest management in various regions, have been shown to incorporate principles of modern ecological science that regulate the wise use of natural resources (Sirtha et al., 2020). In ecotourism practices, this local wisdom is integrated into tour interpretation materials, providing a profound educational experience for visitors while reviving the nation's noble values (Cole, 2021).

Cultural empowerment in ecotourism also prevents the degradation and commodification of culture that often occurs in mass tourism models (Utama, 2021). In ecotourism, cultural attractions are positioned as an integral part of the environmental protection narrative, where tourists are encouraged to respect the norms, rituals, and social norms prevailing in local communities (Wearing & Neil, 2019). The academic and financial appreciation tourists receive for traditional knowledge strengthens indigenous communities' confidence (*indigenous empowerment*) in defending their customary lands and traditions from the threat of destructive industrial expansion (Duffy, 2022). This constitutes crucial social capital for maintaining the stability and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly in border areas and the outermost small islands (Lestari, 2024).

Thus, ecotourism directly contributes to strengthening Indonesia's *soft power* in cultural and environmental diplomacy on the international stage (Buhalis et al., 2023). Indonesia is not only known as a tourist destination with exotic natural beauty, but also as a global leader *in* regenerative tourism models that integrate biodiversity and biocultural diversity *(* Supriatna, 2022). Achieving this global reputation elevates the nation's prestige and provides a strong geopolitical impetus in global climate and environmental negotiations towards 2045 (OECD, 2020).

Governance Barriers and Operational Challenges of Ecotourism in Indonesia

Although ecotourism offers tremendous transformational potential, various structural and operational barriers still threaten its effective implementation in Indonesia (Nurhidayah & Lipman, 2019). A key issue frequently encountered is overlapping authority and regulations between the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), and local governments (Gretzel et al., 2020). The lack of synchronized spatial planning policies often triggers land use conflicts around conservation areas, where large-scale tourism investment permits clash with local communities' management rights and ecological protection principles (Utama, 2021). Without legal certainty and integrated governance, ecotourism potential is vulnerable to degradation by uncontrolled commercialization (Duffy, 2022).

Another threat that has the potential to damage the image and essence of ecotourism is the practice of greenwashing *by* tourism industry players (Gretzel et al., 2020). Many tourism developers use the "ecotourism" label merely as a marketing gimmick, while their operations on the ground continue to implement mass tourism principles that generate massive plastic waste, excessive water consumption, and the clearing of native vegetation (Fennell, 2020). Furthermore, limited local human resource (HR) capacity in financial literacy, foreign language skills, and digital technology utilization is a major obstacle to the development of professional ecotourism business management in remote areas (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). This gap is often exploited by third parties or external agencies to seize economic control from local communities (Nugroho et al., 2020).

To overcome these obstacles, strong political will is needed *to* formulate strict and legally binding national ecotourism accreditation and certification standards (Supriatna, 2022). The government must encourage strengthening the capacity of local institutions through ongoing mentoring, providing access to green business capital, and developing basic infrastructure that is environmentally friendly (World Bank, 2021). Inter-stakeholder synergy (*pentahelix*) involving the government, academics, communities, business actors, and the media is an absolute requirement for creating a resilient, equitable, and transparent ecotourism ecosystem to oversee the achievement of Indonesia Emas 2045 (Bappenas, 2023).

Strategic Roadmap for Ecotourism Implementation Towards Golden Indonesia 2045

To ensure the optimal effectiveness of ecotourism as a key national strategy, an integrated strategic roadmap was formulated, divided into three long-term implementation phases (Bappenas, 2023). The first phase (2025–2030) focused on strengthening the regulatory foundation, harmonizing laws between institutions, and developing Indonesian National Standards (SNI) for ecotourism certification and community-based governance (Nurhidayah & Lipman, 2019). In this phase, the government prioritized the development of digital infrastructure and small-scale renewable energy in priority ecotourism destinations in the 3T (frontier and outermost) regions, as well as strengthening village tourism institutions (Kemenparekraf, 2021).

The Second Phase (2031–2040) focuses on accelerating and replicating a national-scale ecotourism model integrated with carbon market schemes and green finance (Wunder et al., 2020). In this phase, implementation is expanded to include the massive commercialization of *Payment for Ecosystem Services* (PES)-based ecotourism, strengthening the capacity of internationally certified local human resources, and integrating artificial intelligence (*AI*) technology for monitoring ecological thresholds (Gretzel et al., 2020). The private sector is encouraged to invest in regenerative tourism projects that restore degraded habitats (Buhalis et al., 2023).

The Third Phase (2041–2045) is the stage of consolidation and global leadership, in which Indonesian ecotourism has transformed into a major pillar of non-extractive GDP (Suharto & Rahid, 2022). In this final phase, national ecotourism has proven capable of maintaining the sustainability of macro-ecosystems, guaranteeing per capita income for high-*income countries*, and positioning Indonesia as a global model in integrating green economic development and biodiversity conservation (UNEP, 2011). This integration finalizes the achievement of all key indicators of the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045 (Bappenas, 2019).

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CONCLUSION

Ecotourism has proven to have a very strategic position as a key catalyst in realizing the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. Through a reorientation from mass tourism and extraction-based industries to a sustainable tourism model, ecotourism can accelerate the national transition to *a green economy* without sacrificing ecological integrity (Sukmana, 2023). The integration of ecotourism into the macro development structure provides a real solution to the dilemma of economic growth and environmental sustainability, namely by transforming the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services into a source of state revenue and quality employment in an inclusive manner (Suharto & Rahid, 2022). Therefore, mainstreaming ecotourism within the framework of the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2025–2045 is a crucial step to ensure the achievement of high, equitable, and climate-resilient economic growth (Bappenas, 2023).

The success of ecotourism as a key strategy is also driven by its ability to strengthen the pillars of equitable development and preserve the nation's cultural identity. Through *the Community-Based Ecotourism* (CBE) scheme and recognition of local wisdom (*indigenous knowledge*), ecotourism is effectively able to reduce economic inequality between regions, alleviate poverty in rural and remote areas, and empower vulnerable groups such as women and rural youth (Nugroho et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2022). Furthermore, ecotourism's function as an instrument for nature conservation and carbon sequestration (*blue* and *green carbon*) positions Indonesia as a global leader in ecosystem-based climate change mitigation, while strengthening *the soft power* of cultural diplomacy at the international level (Dharmawan et al., 2021; Supriatna, 2022).

To optimize this potential by 2045, political commitment and an integrated cross-sector governance ecosystem are required. The government and all stakeholders need to immediately end overlapping regulations, eradicate *greenwashing* practices, strengthen national ecotourism certification criteria, and expand access to green financing schemes such as *Payment for Ecosystem Services* (PES) and ESG investments (Gretzel et al., 2020; Wunder et al., 2020). Through the implementation of a phased, adaptive, science-based strategic roadmap, ecotourism will not only become a major pillar of non-extractive Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also a development legacy that ensures the sustainability of natural resources for future generations of Indonesia (Bappenas, 2019; Utama, 2021).

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