



## **EAST KALIMANTAN PROVINCE'S PARADIPLOMACY IN HANDLING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF DERAWAN ISLAND**

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### **Abstract**

Paradiplomacy, the international activities of sub-national governments, has become increasingly relevant in environmental governance and sustainable tourism, particularly within decentralized political systems. Indonesia's regional autonomy has enabled provinces such as East Kalimantan to build cross-border partnerships, environmental cooperation frameworks, and tourism promotion networks that transcend national diplomatic channels. Derawan Island, one of Indonesia's most renowned marine tourism destinations, is facing increasing pressures from mass tourism, coral degradation, inadequate waste management, and socio-economic transformation. This article examines how East Kalimantan Province employs paradiplomacy as a strategy to promote sustainable tourism development on Derawan Island. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of regional policies, provincial cooperation initiatives, institutional arrangements, and global environmental partnerships, this paper argues that paradiplomacy has emerged as a tool for capacity building, green tourism innovation, and adaptive environmental governance. Yet, structural challenges, including fragmented authorities, limited local capacity, asymmetrical relations with foreign partners, and weak ecological enforcement, continue to undermine progress. This research contributes to the discourse on subnational diplomacy in maritime Southeast Asia and provides recommendations for enhancing East Kalimantan's international engagement to support sustainable island tourism.

**Keywords:** Derawan Island, East Kalimantan, local governance, paradiplomacy, sustainable tourism

## Introduction

The emergence of paradiplomacy in global governance has transformed the way the way subnational enengagengage with international actors. With increasing decentralization and intensified global environmental pressures, provinces and municipalities are playing more assertive diplomatic roles, ranging from trade promotion to environmental collaboration and knowledge exchange (Cornago, 2010; Kuznetsov, 2015). In Indonesia, where regional autonomy was formalized through the 1999 and 2004 Local Governance Laws, provincial governments have gained authority to participate in international cooperation aimed at development, environmental protection, and technical capacity building.

East Kalimantan is one of Indonesia's provinces rich in natural potential, offering stunning landscapes and a unique cultural heritage. If this potential can be optimally developed, tourism can be one of the sectors that will increase investment in East Kalimantan by attracting both local and foreign tourists. However, many of the existing tourist destinations in East Kalimantan have yet to succeed in attracting large numbers of visitors. This is influenced by several factors, including limited accessibility, unprofessional management, and unstable environmental conditions (Jauchar & Idris, 2022). In addition, one of the areas in East Kalimantan has now been designated as the State Capital (IKN), precisely located in North Penajam Paser, the appointment of East Kalimantan as a replacement for the national capital is an opportunity for regions in East Kalimantan to develop the tourism sector further because later areas in East Kalimantan will also feel the impact of the growth of IKN such as the large number of visitors from both outside and within the country where this must then be utilized by regions in East Kalimantan, one of which is by increasing tourism potential so that later tourism can become one of the significant economic driving sectors in East Kalimantan (Wardhani & Setiadi, 2024). Therefore, tourism development is expected to be carried out immediately to serve as a driving force for increasing tourism competitiveness, especially in marine tourism on Derawan Island (Fithriyah & Shimizu, 2021).

Berau is one of the regencies located in East Kalimantan Province. It is one of the areas rich in tourism, drawing from both marine and land-based natural resources. Berau itself has a variety of beautiful tourism destinations, especially in the marine tourism sector. One of the leading marine tourism destinations from Berau Regency is Derawan

Island. The Derawan Islands are one of the sectors being promoted by Berau Regency and East Kalimantan Province as a mainstay destination in East Kalimantan (Fitri, 2020). The potential offered by the Derawan islands or ecotourism that can attract tourists is 1) green turtles, 2) Coral Reefs, 3) Manta Fish, 4) Jellyfish, 5) Various kinds of fish, 6) Adequate facilities, and 7) Local community culture (Peta, 2019).

But until now on Derawan Island tourism there are still various obstacles that significantly affect the development of the tourism industry in the Derawan Islands including limited infrastructure, accommodation, difficult access, and the difficulty of investors to invest (Yusri, 2019) These limitations then become very influential on the level of tourist arrivals because access is difficult for tourists and the limited infrastructure available makes reconsideration for tourists to come to Derawan (Ilham & Mujiono, 2018). If these obstacles cannot be appropriately overcome, it will have a domino effect on various aspects, including the economy, society, and the environment. From an economic perspective, the substantial income generated by the tourism sector will likely disappear, which will have a significant impact on the local community, putting it at risk of experiencing a widening social and economic gap (Puspita & Nasir, 2024). From a social perspective, it will lead to unequal distribution of benefits, which may cause young people to migrate out of the area and create economic dependence on government subsidies. From an environmental perspective, if there is no follow-up from the government involving the local community in the Derawan area, it will cause more severe damage that could result in the loss of world heritage status and the collapse of the marine ecosystem, which will harm the future of tourism, especially on Derawan Island (Sandra et al., 2020).

Several comprehensive studies on Derawan Island have consistently identified similar problems. Althalets et al. (2021), Harahap et al. (2021), and Puspitasari et al. (2023) map obstacles in three domains: First, physical infrastructure, which includes limited access to transportation and high mobility costs. Second, limited government funds, human resource turnover, and coordination between local stakeholders, as well as a lack of understanding regarding industrial waste management and marine ecosystem conservation (Althalets et al., 2021; Harahap et al., 2021; Puspitasari, 2023). Furthermore, Puspita (2024) explains that community-based tourism initiatives have succeeded in increasing local community income. However, this focus remains primarily on the

hospitality sector, resulting in disparities in income distribution (Puspita & Nasir, 2024). This study was confirmed by Iswanto (2024), who analyzed the role of stakeholders and found that collaboration among the local government, the private sector, and the community has not been systematic (Denny, 2024).

Unlike previous studies that focused solely on internal evaluations related to tourism development in Derawan, this study offers a new perspective by integrating the concept of paradiplomacy as a strategic solution to overcome existing limitations. The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects. First, this study is the first to comprehensively apply the theory of paradiplomacy in the context of marine tourism development on Derawan Island, proposing concrete cooperation with Male, Maldives, which has similar geographical and marine tourism characteristics. Second, this study will analyze the opportunities for paradiplomacy in the context of the strategic momentum surrounding the establishment of the National Capital City (IKN) in East Kalimantan, which presents new opportunities for regional tourism growth that have not been previously explored. Third, this study integrates SWOT analysis with the paradiplomacy framework to examine specifically how international cooperation can address internal weaknesses while maximizing existing strengths and opportunities. These obstacles then become the primary focus of my research, namely to find solutions that can be implemented by the governments of East Kalimantan and Berau to improve the quality of Derawan Island tourism, so that later it is expected to encourage an increase in tourist arrivals to Derawan Island marine tourism and improve the quality and competitiveness of Derawan Island tourism. One way that local governments can achieve this is by establishing paradiplomacy, which has become a key element in promoting tourism in a region, particularly in the context of the Derawan Islands in Berau, East Kalimantan. In an increasingly complex era of globalization, the challenges faced by areas in developing their tourism sector require more innovative and collaborative approaches. Paradiplomacy, which involves cooperation between local governments and international actors, offers a strategic solution to address these challenges.

The Derawan Islands possess tremendous tourism potential, boasting stunning natural beauty, rich biodiversity, and a unique local culture. However, despite its great appeal, Derawan still faces various challenges, such as limited infrastructure, difficult accessibility, and a lack of effective promotion (Peta, 2019). This is where paradiplomacy

plays an important role. Through paradiplomacy, the Berau local government can establish cooperation with other cities or countries that have experience and expertise in tourism management. For example, cooperation with Male, Maldives, which is known for its successful tourism management, can provide insights and best practices in infrastructure development, tourism promotion, and training for local communities (Mukti, 2019). This exchange of knowledge and technology can help improve the quality of tourism services in Derawan, thereby attracting more tourists.

Paradiplomacy also opens opportunities to attract foreign investment. By establishing good relations with partner countries, Berau can create a conducive climate for investors to invest in tourism development. This investment will not only enhance infrastructure but also generate job opportunities for the local community, which in turn will stimulate regional economic growth (Wiratma & Kuswardini, 2022). Furthermore, paradiplomacy can strengthen diplomatic relations between Berau and partner countries, which can have a positive impact on cooperation in other fields, such as the environment and culture. By involving local communities in the tourism development process, awareness of the importance of environmental and cultural preservation can also be enhanced, ensuring that the growing tourism industry is not only economically beneficial but also sustainable. East Kalimantan Province is increasingly relying on paradiplomacy, international cooperation, knowledge transfer programs, and sustainability networks to strengthen its governance capacity in sustainable tourism management. This article explores the scope, mechanisms, and effectiveness of paradiplomacy initiatives undertaken by East Kalimantan Province in managing sustainable tourism development on Derawan Island. This study raises two main questions: how East Kalimantan Province operationalizes paradiplomacy in the tourism and environment sectors, and the challenges and opportunities that shape the effectiveness of paradiplomacy in East Kalimantan. To answer these questions, this article combines academic literature on paradiplomacy with policy analysis, institutional evaluation, and theoretical insights on sustainable tourism governance.

## **Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the main theoretical framework is employed to analyze Opportunities for Paradiplomatic Cooperation in Berau, aiming to enhance the Tourism Potential of the Derawan Islands. Paradiplomacy is an interrelated framework that provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the mechanisms and outcomes of international and local government collaboration (Mukti, 2019). Paradiplomacy is a new discipline in international relations that examines the international activities of sub-national governments, such as cities and regions, by fostering cooperation with other sub-national entities or involving state and non-state actors. The concept of paradiplomacy emerged in the 1980s, introduced by Soldatos, who coined the term by linking "paradigm" and "diplomacy," which has relevance in decentralized diplomatic engagement (Soldatos, 1992).

The development of international relations today involves various non-state actors, in addition to states, as the main actors. Local governments, which are sub-national actors, have become one of the main changers in discussions on international relations. As part of the state, local governments have the authority to conduct foreign relations independently, representing their regional interests without requiring the involvement of the central government. With an increasing number of countries implementing decentralization systems worldwide, this trend is further strengthened. Local governments are increasingly motivated to engage in international cooperation to advance regional development, as they act as sub-national entities in global collaboration. The interactions or foreign relations activities carried out by sub-national actors in the context of international relations are often referred to as paradiplomacy.

Later, the theory of paradiplomacy was further developed by Duchacek (Duchacek, 1984) into three distinct characteristics as follows:

1. Cross-border Regional Paradiplomacy: cooperative activities involving state sub-actors with geographical proximity.
2. Transregional Paradiplomacy: Collaboration between sub-state actors within a larger or similar region.
3. Global Paradiplomacy: Diplomatic cooperation involving sub-state actors who are geographically distant and from different regions.

According to Mukti, Paradiplomacy in Indonesia has developed based on Law No. 2 of 1999 on regional autonomy, which was later amended to regulations in 2004 and

2014. The law allows regions to play a significant role in exploring international cooperation to improve community welfare through the provision of efficient and effective public services. This framework provides a lens for analyzing opportunities in Berau and Male's sister city cooperation, with a broader scope and a focus on tourism.

### **Research Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach as a basis for creating, interpreting, and validating arguments in the context of international relations. According to Lamont (2021), qualitative research methods are strategies for collecting and processing non-numerical data, which allow researchers to explore broader meanings and interpretations of various situations. The non-numerical data required in this study will be obtained through interpretation from various sources available on the internet (Lamont, 2021). After data collection, the researcher will conduct deductive analysis, starting from general discussions to more specific discussions. This research also utilizes library research, which involves collecting and analyzing information from various relevant sources, including official Berau government reports, books, articles, and other research reports (Denzin, 2017). To support this qualitative approach, the study involves analyzing documents and policies related to the East Kalimantan development plan, tourism strategies, and international cooperation agreements. Additionally, an academic literature review on paradiplomacy, sustainable tourism, and marine governance was conducted. Case-based analysis will focus on the dynamics of tourism and the environment on Derawan Island. At the same time, theoretical triangulation will integrate the paradigms of paradiplomacy, sustainable tourism, and multi-level environmental governance. Given the conceptual and exploratory nature of this research, it does not rely on primary fieldwork but rather synthesizes available secondary data to provide interpretive insights.

### ***Paradiplomacy in the Indonesian Context and the Case of East Kalimantan's Sustainable Tourism Development in Derawan Island.***

Paradiplomacy, as a form of international engagement carried out by subnational governments, has gained increasing attention in the context of decentralization in Indonesia. This concept is highly relevant for understanding the involvement of East



Kalimantan Province in sustainable tourism management on Derawan Island. In this regard, various theoretical perspectives on paradiplomacy, as presented by Mukti, Fathun, & Utomo, provide a strong conceptual foundation for analyzing the challenges and opportunities faced by local governments in establishing international partnerships in the tourism and environmental sectors.

In Mukti's study, paradiplomacy in Indonesia is described as a phenomenon that occurs within the framework of decentralization but remains bound by a strict hierarchy of authorization from national foreign policy (Mukti, 2015). Mukti emphasizes that although local governments have the opportunity to build international partnerships in the trade, tourism, and cultural sectors, all of these activities must remain in line with national diplomatic priorities and obtain approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the context of East Kalimantan, this is evident in the province's efforts to establish international cooperation and promote sustainable tourism on Derawan Island. However, despite initiatives to collaborate with foreign investors, conservation agencies, and international tourism promotion networks, procedural obstacles still hinder the signing of international agreements and access to cross-border funding. For example, foreign NGOs that support coral reef conservation and marine biodiversity must obtain permission from the national level through the provincial office, in line with Mukti's view that paradiplomacy in Indonesia is often hindered by centralized authorization. Fathun offers a more comprehensive perspective by viewing paradiplomacy as part of multi-level governance involving coordination between local, provincial, national, and global governments (Fathun, 2022). Fathun argues that paradiplomacy is not only the result of legal autonomy but also arises from institutionalized practices, bureaucratic capacity, and inter-agency coordination. This perspective is particularly relevant in the case of East Kalimantan, especially in relation to sustainable tourism development in Derawan. Tourism management in this region involves multiple layers of governance, ranging from the Berau Regency Tourism Office to the East Kalimantan Provincial Government, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and international institutions such as WWF and the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI-CFF). Fathun explained how the fragmented and sometimes overlapping roles of these various institutions complicate policy implementation, especially in waste management systems, coral reef restoration, or ecotourism certification. The lack of



smooth coordination between the regency, provincial, and relevant ministries often slows down decision-making, despite international cooperation in the field of marine conservation. Utomo brings a new dimension to the understanding of paradiplomacy by highlighting the role of local governments as increasingly active "diplomatic entrepreneurs" in forging global partnerships to achieve environmental protection, sustainable tourism, and inclusive growth, particularly in border areas or resource-rich regions. This approach is highly relevant to the context of Derawan Island, where tourism potential is closely linked to fragile marine ecosystems, including coral reefs, manta rays, and sea turtles (Utomo, 2022). East Kalimantan's efforts to attract ecotourism investment, collaborate with ASEAN marine conservation programs, and promote Derawan at international tourism exhibitions illustrate the strategic and sustainability-focused paradiplomacy described by Utomo. For example, the provincial government has leveraged its membership in the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) and cooperation with Japanese and European environmental agencies to implement community-based ecotourism and coral reef monitoring programs. These initiatives align with Utomo's view that paradiplomacy supports not only economic goals but also long-term ecological resilience and global commitments to environmental conservation. Collectively, the views expressed by Mukti, Fathun, and Utomo illustrate the complex challenges that paradiplomacy in East Kalimantan faces in promoting sustainable tourism development on Derawan Island. From Mukti's perspective, paradiplomacy in Indonesia is characterized by limitations on authorization from the central government, which slows down local initiatives. From Fathun's perspective, the success of paradiplomacy is highly dependent on good coordination between various levels of government, which are often fragmented. Meanwhile, from Utomo's perspective, paradiplomacy has the potential to promote economic and ecological sustainability through strategic global partnerships. These three perspectives highlight that paradiplomacy in East Kalimantan is not a phenomenon that is entirely autonomous or entirely limited, but instead operates in an intermediate space where international cooperation can be realized when there is alignment between local interests, national priorities, and the international sustainability agenda. The Derawan case also demonstrates the importance of strong institutional capacity, proactive local leadership, and the ability to negotiate with international partners in realizing effective sustainable tourism policies. Despite ongoing challenges,

paradiplomacy in Indonesia shows great potential for integrating local areas into broader global tourism and environmental governance systems.

### ***Regions Need to Undertake Paradiplomacy***

In an effort to maximize tourism development and promotion, paradiplomacy may be the right choice for Berau. Literally, paradiplomacy can be defined as foreign cooperation carried out by local governments, such as provincial, regency, and city governments. Paradiplomacy, also known as parallel diplomacy, refers to the behavior and ability of a sub-state entity or local government to cooperate with foreign parties for specific interests (Keating, 2000). Paradiplomacy can be described as the involvement of a city, federal state, or provincial government in diplomatic affairs equivalent to those of a country (Leffel, 2018). Paradiplomacy policy is part of the authority to promote industry, trade, investment, agriculture, education, tourism, and other matters that require cooperation with local governments abroad (Tavares, 2016). The role of diplomacy by the Indonesian government has been clearly defined as the authority of the central government. Activities carried out by local governments related to international relations must be agreed upon and coordinated with the central government to obtain approval for the cooperation being undertaken (Mukti, Takdir Ali, 2021). Based on Law Number 24 of 2000, the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have a coordinating role in the implementation of international relations and cooperation carried out by local governments. On the other hand, regional heads act as representatives of their regions in signing cooperation agreements with foreign parties (Mukti, 2013). However, the diplomatic role of local governments in Indonesia is limited to their ability to propose cooperation initiatives with foreign entities. All such activities remain under the supervision and control of the central government.

Therefore, the role of autonomous regions in the study of international relations is crucial and should not be overlooked. In comparison to other areas, autonomous regions have the capacity to engage directly in international relations with foreign parties, both through intergovernmental interactions and cooperation with foreign non-governmental organizations. These non-governmental actors can be community and tribal groups, economic interest groups, multinational companies, and elements within a country's government bureaucracy. Some parts of the government bureaucracy sometimes interact

directly with foreign parties without the knowledge or approval of the central government (Mukti, 2014). One of the regions in Indonesia that has not yet taken advantage of the practice of paradiplomacy is Berau Regency, East Kalimantan. This regency is one of the regions in Indonesia that has areas with beautiful tourist attractions. Berau has several tourist attractions, including the Derawan Islands, Sangalaki Island, and Maratua Islands. The Derawan Islands are a popular tourist destination that has gained international fame. In addition to the Derawan Islands, there are also the Maratua Islands, which are surrounded by small islands that hold a unique natural charm. One of the most famous islands is Kakaban Island, which is home to a lake that harbors venomous jellyfish (Arifin, 2023). This indicates that Berau has tourism potential that should be fully maximized through cooperation with international partners.

By capitalizing on the popularity of the Derawan Islands, Berau Regency may be able to focus on this area for tourism development. The 13,500-hectare Derawan Islands are renowned for their exceptional biodiversity, particularly their extensive coral reefs, which are part of the famed Coral Triangle. The Coral Triangle is one of the world's most renowned areas for its exceptionally rich diversity of coral reef ecosystems and marine species (Putri, 2023). However, behind this beauty, the Derawan Islands face various infrastructure-related problems, including damaged access roads, high mobility costs, and limited internet access, as well as inadequate infrastructure (Yusliana, 2022).

Tourist areas with poor road access will automatically hinder the mobility of tourists, making it difficult for them to reach tourist destinations. In addition, the convenience of tourism can also be disrupted due to difficult internet networks. This is the reason that infrastructure development in Berau must be maximized, especially in tourist areas such as the Derawan Islands and the Maratua Islands. Development in tourism is not only aimed at increasing foreign exchange, but also at creating jobs and stimulating the growth of local economies, such as MSMEs (Wiratma & Kuswardini, 2022).

Additionally, the Berau Regency Government has designated Derawan as one of its regional icons, as evidenced by its island image featured on the Rp.20,000 banknote issued between 2016 and 2022 (Rahaya, 2024). The Berau Government also has an integrated master plan for 2025 aimed at developing a sustainable tourism model based on the Hexa-helix approach, which involves the government, businesses, communities,

academia, media, and financial institutions (Berau Post, 2025). In recent years, the tourism sector has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with only approximately 127,396 visitors arriving in Derawan in 2020, comprising 127,176 domestic tourists and 220 international visitors, during the implementation of sea and air transport restrictions (Indri, 2024b).

In 2021, the tourism industry began to recover gradually thanks to domestic tourism stimulus programs. The number of visitors reached 141,483, with the majority being domestic tourists (141,398) and only 85 international tourists, despite ongoing restrictions due to international quarantine measures (Indri, 2024b). Following the lifting of quarantine restrictions, 2022 saw a significant 180.83% increase compared to the previous year. A total of 397,337 tourists visited, with 286 coming from abroad (Selasar, 2023). This surge was driven by digital promotions from the East Kalimantan Tourism Office and the reopening of the Tanjung Batu, Derawan sea route.

In 2023, the synergy of direct flights by Batik Air from Jakarta and Surabaya to Berau, combined with the Blue Signing campaign by WWF, set a new record with 422,592 tourists, including 1,666 international visitors and the remainder domestic. Although the Third Committee of the Berau Regional Parliament requested a field verification due to a nearly 100% increase compared to 2022, the Tourism and Culture Office confirmed that resort and homestay data were recorded accurately (Indri, 2024a). The positive trend continued in January-September 2024, with 316,433 tourists recorded (1,811 international and 314,622 domestic), surpassing the annual target of 236,141 visits just two months before the end of the year (Redaksi Klik Borneo, 2024). The East Kalimantan Tourism Office also released preliminary figures of 557,214 visitors for the entire 2024, the highest in the past five years, although market details have not yet been announced.

**Table 1. Derawan Island Tourist Visits 2020-2024**

Year	Total Visits	Domestic tourists	Foreign tourists
2020	127,396	127,176	220
2021	141,483	141,398	85
2022	397,337	397,051	286
2023	422,592	420,926	1,666
2024	316,433	314,622	1,811

Source: Data processed by the author from various sources

The surge in tourist visits following the pandemic has opened up significant opportunities for Berau to secure international support through thematic paradiplomacy. First, despite the number of international tourists remaining below 0.5% of total visits (1,666 out of 422,592 in 2023), this indicates substantial potential for expanding the international market (Berau, 2024). One strategic step is to join the UNESCO Global Geoparks, which not only provides recognition in terms of conservation but also enhances the global visibility of Berau's tourist destinations (Hutabarat, 2022). Second, with the increasing number of tourists visiting, exceeding 557,000 people annually, there is a need to manage environmental impacts, particularly marine debris issues. Berau can leverage international programs such as UCLG ASPAC CRIC and the Global Park Defense initiative from Global Conservation, which began monitoring Maratua coral reefs in 2023 (WWF, 2022). This program can be expanded to Derawan for continuous monitoring and the implementation of an ecosystem service payment scheme.

This trend of increasing tourist numbers also presents an opportunity for the Berau Regency Government to utilize green financing schemes from SECO-Swiss and training provided by UNWTO to manage tourist destinations. Consistent data over five years provides a strong foundation for grant proposals or credit financing that can be used to build environmentally friendly infrastructure, such as ports, tourism information centers, and certification for foreign-language diving guides (Conservation, 2025). All of this aims to make Derawan Island a successful example of sub-national diplomacy that balances economic, cultural, and environmental conservation aspects.

In addition, according to Rudy Mas'ud, Governor of East Kalimantan, he stated that British investors are ready to invest in the development of the two islands, Maratua

and Derawan. This step will encourage the area to become an international tourist destination. Furthermore, he stated that Derawan Island has tremendous potential, not only for the domestic market but also for attracting the global tourism market. Therefore, we will carry out progressive and strategic tourism promotion. Continuing the statement given by the Governor of East Kalimantan, Sri Wahyuni, as Regional Secretary of East Kalimantan Province, said that the island is already well-known internationally. Although it has great potential, Sri Wahyuni herself said that one of the main challenges is the high cost of transportation to these islands due to limited access (Glen, 2025).

### *SWOT Analysis: Derawan Islands Tourism*

Using SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is a method for describing conditions to identify the level of readiness or obstacles so that it can be used as a reference for forming strategies to improve strengths and overcome problems. Through in-depth analysis of these four subjects, understanding the SWOT analysis can become a strong foundation for formulating effective strategies. In this context, the analysis can help maximize internal potential and minimize existing weaknesses. Externally, it provides an overview of how to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate potential threats. By thoroughly understanding these internal and external factors, it is possible to design policies and actions that lead to increased competitiveness and the achievement of more effective goals. Therefore, this study employs a SWOT analysis to comprehensively examine both internal and external factors, mapping out opportunities that can be leveraged in forming paradiplomacy cooperation. The Strengths of Derawan Island are the conditions that support tourism. By understanding these strengths, tourism can be developed to become more resilient, enabling it to survive in the market and further develop the tourism sector (Tendy, 2021). In this case, the Derawan Islands warrant a SWOT analysis, and this section will discuss the strengths that make the Derawan Islands an enjoyable destination. Therefore, we group them into several parts. Beautiful, pristine, and calm, Derawan Island is part of a world-class marine park that offers stunning underwater views and a diverse array of exotic marine life. This underwater park is a popular destination for tourists who enjoy diving and snorkeling, allowing them to explore coral reefs and marine biota directly (Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2022). With its relatively small size, Derawan Island offers tourists the

opportunity to explore the island on foot or by bicycle easily. This makes it easy for tourists to explore all the island's tourist attractions (Kemenparekraf, n.d.). Derawan Island also offers numerous water sports activities, including swimming, snorkeling, diving, and island hopping. In addition, tourists are treated to witnessing the laying of eggs and seeing baby turtles hatch and head to the sea (Prakoso, 2023). Not only that, Derawan Island also offers tourists a beautiful natural scenery. Derawan Island is renowned for its stunning natural attractions, including pristine white sandy beaches, crystal-clear water, and lush green forests (Za & Yahya, 2019). Tourists can also enjoy gorgeous sunset views from the Panjang pier, which extends out into the ocean.

Apart from its beautiful natural panorama, Derawan Island has a strong attraction due to its diversity. In this area, there are almost 600 species of coral reefs, of which 76% of the total coral reefs in the world can be found on Derawan Island. There are 574 coral reef species in this coral triangle (95%), and as many as 72% of the total coral reef species in the world are in Indonesian waters. In this case, Raja Ampat is ranked first, and the second rank is occupied by the Derawan Islands (Penanaman & Timur, 2020). The condition of Derawan Island and its surroundings has quite varied diversity, also depending on the geographical location where there are seagrass beds. In addition to coral reefs, the types of fish on Derawan Island have almost 37% of the total coral reef fish or as many as 2,228 species of fish from a total of 6000 species that can be found in the waters of Derawan Island, and 56% of the total coral reef fish in the Indo-Pacific region (4,050 species). Additionally, this area is home to almost 8% (235 species of coral reef fish), which are classified as endemic species or local species, meaning they are found only in this region (Penanaman & Timur, 2020). In addition to hosting numerous species of coral reef fish, this area is also home to several marine mammals, including the Blue Whale, the largest animal on Earth; the Sperm Whale; the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin; and the Dugong, which is now classified as an endangered species. Of the seven turtle species found worldwide, six occur in these coral reef waters, and two of them can be observed in their juvenile stage around Derawan Island (Mujiono & Prahara, 2020).

Derawan Island offers a unique marine tourism attraction not found elsewhere. Marine tourism, as promoted by Derawan Island, is a type of tourism that leverages the natural potential of the marine environment as its primary attraction. It encompasses activities conducted on or beneath the sea surface and is inextricably linked to the island's



rich marine ecosystem and diverse marine life (Ilham & Mujiono, 2018). Marine tourism in the region carries a more profound significance. Beyond providing entertainment through various attractions and the natural beauty of coastal and marine environments, it also encourages tourists to engage directly in environmental conservation and to develop a deeper understanding of sustainable marine tourism management. Derawan Island boasts a stunning blue and green sea gradient, rows of coconut trees along the coast, soft sand, and a small forest in the middle of the island, which serves as a habitat for various types of plants and animals, as well as the beauty of its enchanting underwater nature. Derawan Island has the third-highest ranking as a leading destination for world-class diving, according to the 2016 Pesona Indonesia awards, and has made it a must-do diving destination for divers on the island.

**Figure 1. Map of Derawan Island**



Source: Pesona Indonesia

The identified weaknesses include limited tourism facilities and infrastructure, as well as restricted and expensive access. This is due to limited transportation infrastructure. According East Kalimantan Tourism Office. Transportation access to Berau Regency can be divided into several categories based on the origin of tourists and the type of transportation used. For tourists departing from within Berau Regency, several transportation options are available (Pariwisata & Timur, 2023). To get to Tanjung Batu Port, tourists can use travel services with a fare of around Rp. 200,000 per person. Upon arrival, they will be charged an entrance fee of Rp. 5,000 per person. To continue the journey to Derawan Island, tourists can take a regular speedboat connecting Tanjung Batu Port to Derawan Island Port for Rp. 200,000 per person (Redaksi Media Kaltim, 2025).

For tourists arriving from within East Kalimantan Province, several transportation options are available, including land, air, and sea routes. For land travel, tourists can take a travel service from Samarinda or Balikpapan to Tanjung Redeb at a cost of approximately Rp. 400,000 per person. From Tanjung Redeb, they can continue their journey to Tanjung Batu Port at a fare of Rp. 200,000 per person, plus a port entrance fee of Rp. 5,000 per person. After that, tourists can take a regular speedboat at a fare of Rp. 200,000 to reach Derawan Island.

For the air route, tourists can choose flights from Sepinggan International Airport to Kalimarau Airport with a ticket price of around Rp. 1,400,000 per person, or from APT Pranoto Airport with a ticket price of around Rp. 1,500,000 per person.

For those choosing the sea route, they can return using a travel service from Tanjung Redeb to Tanjung Batu Port for Rp. 200,000 per person, plus a port entrance fee of Rp. 5,000 per person. They can then continue their journey by regular speedboat connecting Tanjung Batu Port to Derawan Island Port, for Rp. 200,000 per person. For an alternative route, a speedboat also connects Tengkeyu Tarakan Port to Derawan Island, with a fare of Rp. 400,000 per person.

For tourists arriving from outside East Kalimantan Province, they can choose the air route with flights from Soekarno Hatta International Airport to Kalimarau Airport at a cost of approximately Rp. 2,300,000 per person, or from Juanda International Airport at a fare of approximately Rp. 1,900,000 per person. Additionally, tourists can use a travel service from Tanjung Redeb to Tanjung Batu Port for Rp. 200,000 per person, plus a port entrance fee of Rp. 5,000 per person. They can continue their journey by taking a regular speedboat to Derawan Island for Rp. 200,000 per person. With various transportation options available, travelers can choose the most suitable mode of transport to access Berau Regency based on their needs and budget.

Second, the availability of public toilets remains limited, indicating a lack of investment in infrastructure that supports tourism. Nevertheless, the local government has begun constructing a tourist toilet at the Derawan KSPD gate, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2023 (Pengesti, 2023). Third, essential facilities such as ATMs, power plants, and network providers are available in only one unit each, which is clearly insufficient to meet the needs of visiting tourists (Utami & Dewi, 2022).

In addition to these factors, environmental issues also pose significant challenges. Low environmental awareness among tourists and local communities poses a threat to the sustainability of the Derawan Islands ecosystem (Penanaman & Timur, 2020). One example is the suboptimal management of communal and industrial waste. Although the Derawan Islands have numerous accommodations, the management of hotel industrial waste remains inadequate, with liquid waste often being discharged directly into the sea.

The Derawan Islands present a significant opportunity to attract investment, particularly in the tourism sector. Derawan Island is included in the National Strategic Tourism Area (KSPN). The East Kalimantan Provincial Tourism Office and the Berau Regency Culture and Tourism Office are implementing Sustainable Tourism Development on Derawan Island, which is a National Strategic Tourism Area (KSPN). Sustainable tourism development is an innovation designed to support economic transformation, reducing dependence on oil, gas, and coal (Sandra et al., 2020). The tourism sector is also expected to improve the living standards of communities involved in tourism activities. Sustainable Tourism Development applies the principles of sustainability by prioritizing ecological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions (Zhang et al., 2025). Conceptually, sustainable development is derived from the combination of the ideas of "development" and "sustainability." The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) formulated one of the foundational definitions of sustainable development, describing it as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Klarin, 2018). The Derawan Island in Berau Regency has a tourism location that has great potential to attract tourists, from local to foreign, like the Bajau tribe's culture, which can be developed into marine tourism. On Derawan Island, approximately 95 percent of the population belongs to the Bajau Tribe. The cultural traditions of the Bajau people, including the Dalling dance, the Igal dance, and other forms of performing arts, constitute an important part of their cultural heritage (Akhrianti et al., 2023). These cultural expressions are often presented as entertainment for visitors to Berau and Derawan Island. In addition, Kakaban Island also holds significant potential to become one of the leading tourist destinations in Berau Regency. Kakaban Lake is located in the Derawan Islands, East Kalimantan. This lake is classified as an endemic lake and has been nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its uniqueness. The lake has a

unique jellyfish biota, which makes it distinctive. Kakaban jellyfish do not sting because they have lived in a lake isolated from the sea for generations, and without predators, they have lost their ability to sting (Kemenlu, 2022).

Lake Kakaban is home to four species of non-stinging jellyfish: the moon jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*, 5–50 cm), the spotted jellyfish (*Mastigias papua*, 1–20 cm), the box jellyfish *Tripedalia cystophora* (7–10 mm), and the upside-down jellyfish *Cassiopea ornata* (15–20 cm). The presence of these four endemic jellyfish species has led to the nomination of Kakaban Island as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, highlighting the need for enhanced protection (Hillary et al., 2004). The East Kalimantan government also strongly supports investment initiatives, facilitating investor participation to develop the region's tourism potential further. In 2018, the investment plan in East Kalimantan was recorded at more than IDR 17.26 trillion, and the investment realization reached IDR 4.77 trillion. Meanwhile, when compared to this year's investment realization target of IDR 38.60 trillion, it has only reached 12.36%. One of the factors contributing to the suboptimal investment realization is that many companies have not submitted their Investment Activity Reports (LKPM), resulting in a significant portion of investment data remaining unrecorded in the official database (Pintu, 2018). Berau Regency ranks as the second-largest contributor to investment in East Kalimantan, with IDR 635.13 billion, or 29.21%, following West Kutai Regency. This level of investment demonstrates the substantial potential of Berau Regency, which remains highly promising for further development (Izza, 2023).

The Derawan Islands may pose a threat to one party or even both parties (Riantoro & Aninam, 2021). According to the author, after reviewing it again, several potential threats will occur in this program, such as: Security Threats In this case, security is one of the main factors in all fields, one of which is tourism, with this one party can steal information because they can freely do so, the threat of terrorism because tourism is often a place for terrorists to carry out their actions, therefore it is necessary to increase tight security. Security is a crucial factor that can significantly impact tourism. If the security of an area is not guaranteed, tourists are automatically reluctant to travel to the destination, which can be detrimental to the tourism industry. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct careful planning. Environmental damage with this, ecological damage is also a

real threat, because the increasing number of tourists who come does not rule out the possibility that all human activities can make the environment vulnerable to being dirty or even damaged, especially if in carrying out infrastructure development as to support local tourism is not done wisely, it can damage the Derawan Islands ecosystem, including coral reefs and biodiversity (Sandra et al., 2020). Therefore, the government's role is significant in creating stringent policies and implementing effective conservation measures to protect the natural beauty while supporting tourism growth.

Lack of government attention to the management of tourist attractions In the next aspect, there is a lack of attention from the government to the management of tourist attractions, which is a problem that can be said to be very complex, for example: Lack of funds issued by the government and Resources In this case, if the government does not pay great attention to the tourism management industry, the biggest concern is the difficulty of developing tourism infrastructure which will cause damage to several tourist destinations without maintenance (Sumarjiyanto, 2020).

Legal and policy uncertainty, resulting from a lack of attention to this management, can lead to government instability. If this issue is not addressed, it will hinder investment, as industry players require clarity from the government regarding the rules and policies that will be implemented. Supervision and control are crucial, particularly in the absence of government oversight of tourism objects. If the government fails to enforce existing laws, the next concern is that problems such as over-tourism, environmental damage, and violations of local cultural or environmental norms will arise. Therefore, the role of the government is crucial in addressing this problem. The government needs to allocate substantial financial resources, establish clear and consistent policies, and enhance supervision and control to ensure the sustainability of the tourism industry, allowing it to develop. By doing this, the tourism development program will certainly be structured and run without any obstacles.

The absence of souvenir products is a significant challenge, as the lack of distinctive local goods limits the ability of tourism sites in Derawan to enhance their attractiveness. Without products that reflect the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the region, Derawan risks losing opportunities to enrich the tourist experience. This absence also affects the local economy by reducing employment opportunities and slowing community development. Potential solutions include fostering collaboration among the government,

industry stakeholders, and local communities to create high-quality signature products that highlight the area's uniqueness, strengthen competitiveness, and offer memorable experiences for visitors (Harahap et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to provide training for local communities in product design, marketing strategies, and basic business management. With these skills, residents will be able to produce souvenir products that appeal to both domestic and international tourists. In turn, this capability will generate additional income and contribute directly to improving the local economy.

Research using the SWOT analysis above can map the potential of Derawan tourism to expand further opportunities for establishing paradiplomacy. Furthermore, SWOT analysis serves as a diagnostic tool to identify internal capacities and limitations that impact Berau's ability to develop cooperation in the realm of paradiplomacy. The extraordinary internal strength of marine tourism, combined with unique attractions such as non-stinging jellyfish in Lake Kakaban, is a valuable asset in exploring paradiplomacy opportunities. This unique asset is not only a potential for domestic tourism, but also a global comparative advantage that can attract international partners who share similar characteristics in managing destinations. Furthermore, internal weaknesses such as limited transportation infrastructure, a lack of public awareness, and low environmental awareness identify specific areas where Berau needs knowledge, technology, and investment transfer from paradiplomacy partners. Without in-depth knowledge of these weaknesses, paradiplomacy cooperation will only be generic and biased, resulting in a lack of tangible results in sustainable tourism development.

By using SWOT analysis, we can also identify opportunities and threats, revealing the external context that creates strategic interest and justifications for Berau paradiplomacy. With the establishment of the IKN in East Kalimantan, it can increase global interest in the private sector, such as the potential nomination from UNESCO Global Geoparks and other international programs. This will have a positive impact on tourism in Berau, particularly on Derawan Island, through international cooperation opportunities. Paradiplomacy can be seen as a mechanism for translating global opportunities into concrete benefits for Berau. For instance, the region can access funding through SECO's Swiss green financing schemes and capacity-building programs, such as tourism training offered by the UNWTO. Various threats to Derawan tourism, including increased tourist visits, inconsistencies in government policies, and inadequate attention



to conservation, require solutions that exceed local capacities to manage these issues. With paradiplomacy cooperation with countries or cities that have been successful, this is the right choice for Berau to manage tourism sustainably.

SWOT analysis can be used as a strategic framework to determine the most appropriate model and form of paradiplomacy for the internal conditions in Berau. The relationship between strengths and opportunities indicates that Berau can capitalize on its biodiversity and the momentum of the new capital city to establish paradiplomatic relations with other regions. This strategy aligns with the theory of diplomacy proposed by Duchaeck regarding transregional paradiplomacy, which discusses collaboration between sub-state actors in a wider or similar region. The relationship between weakness and opportunities can determine which areas in Berau require technical assistance and investment from international partners, particularly in relation to the development of sustainable tourism. The weaknesses and threats highlight the need for synergy focused on capacity building for local governments and communities in environmental management, preventing ecosystem damage, and developing leading local products. It can be said that SWOT analysis not only determines existing conditions but also provides a roadmap for designing specific paradiplomacy programs.

## Conclusion

Based on the qualitative analysis presented above, Derawan Island in East Kalimantan plays a significant role in terms of both ecological potential and environmental challenges. From a paradiplomatic perspective, the province has effectively engaged with global environmental networks, secured international funding, and strengthened its knowledge base on sustainable tourism practices. These developments contribute to ongoing efforts in coral reef rehabilitation, community empowerment, ecological certification, and the promotion of more environmentally friendly tourism models.

Despite the opportunities that Derawan Island in East Kalimantan has gained, it faces various systematic obstacles that could still hinder the achievement of sustainable results. These obstacles are related to fragmented management, limited human resources, funding issues, and uneven regulations. To overcome these problems, it is necessary to achieve sustainable ecological resilience, institutional capacity, increased local participation, and broad diversification of international partnerships.



Paradiplomacy is not a substitute for national policy; rather, it serves as a complementary mechanism that supports and enriches the policies established by the Indonesian government. In this context, it enables subnational innovation aimed at advancing the sustainability of tourism ecosystems. With improved coordination and a more substantial long-term institutional commitment, East Kalimantan has the potential to position Derawan Island as a leading model for sustainable island tourism management in Southeast Asia. The findings of this study also contribute to the broader literature on development cooperation, demonstrating that cooperation is not limited to administrative arrangements but can function as a strategic tool capable of integrating economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions within a multi-level governance framework involving both national and international stakeholders.

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