



**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE BORDER REGION  
OF TIMOR-LESTE: A CASE STUDY OF  
BOBONARO DISTRICT**

**AFONSO GONCALVES**

**MASTER OF ARTS  
IN  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL INNOVATION  
MAE FAH LUANG UNIVERSITY  
2023**

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to (1) explore the challenges of the tourism industry in the Atabae Sub-district of Bobonaro, Timor-Leste, and (2) analyze how community empowerment can help in creating CBT in the Atabae Sub-district of Bobonaro, Timor-Leste. This research applies qualitative data analysis in order to search and collect data, investigate procedures, and gain a thorough understanding of community empowerment in managing community-based tourism (CBT). The primary data is collected in the Atabae Sub-district by interviews several sectors involving in tourism industry, including 8 local tourism business owners, and 5 government officials, both local 2 and national authorities 3. Also, the documentary research is also applied secondary sources of data to understand tourism context, especially regarding CBT of Timor Leste. Then both primary and secondary data collected from documents, literature and interviews are analyzed to assess the situation, significance, and challenges of CBT in Atabae Sub-district. The research results found that (1) CBT development in Atabae Sub-district are facing several challenges, ranging from lack of financial support, to inadequate infrastructure, to insufficient skills of local people in tourism industry, (2) local community is a key factor in the development of CBT, (3)

the community empowerment can be encouraged in several ways, including increasing roles of local government, more supporting on financial resources in tourism development, promoting capacity building of local community, and encouraging participatory development.

**Keywords:** Community Empowerment, Community-Based Tourism Development, Sustainable Tourism



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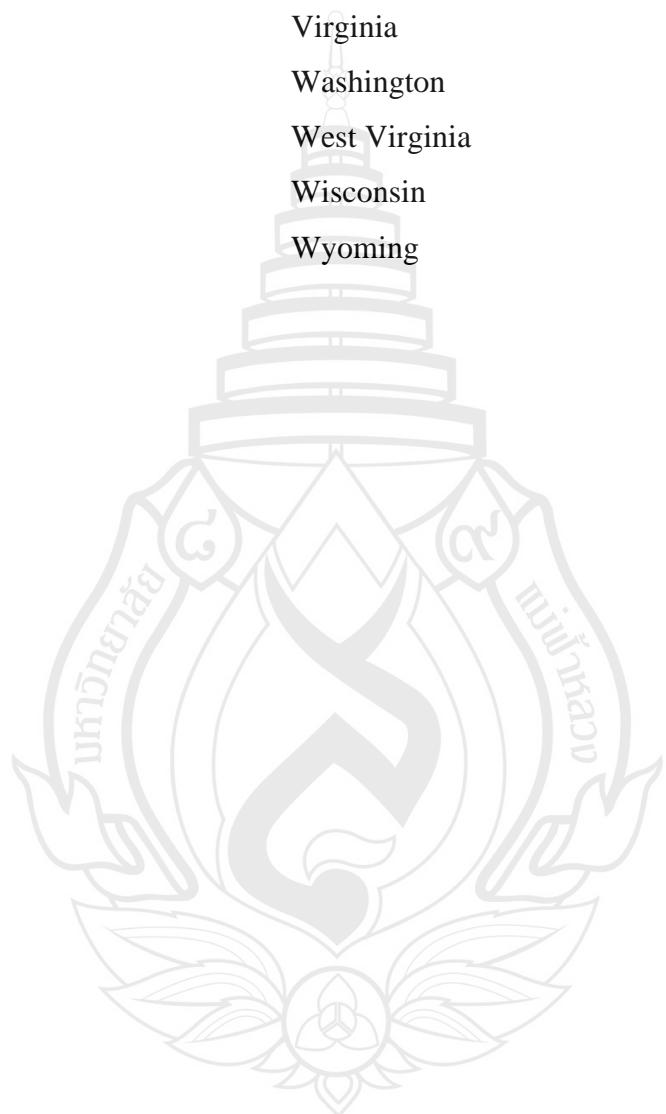


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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS**

VT	Vermont
VA	Virginia
WA	Washington
WV	West Virginia
WI	Wisconsin
WY	Wyoming



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Timor-Leste is a new country in this millennium. Before Timor-Leste became a country, Timor-Leste was colonized by the Portuguese and was once joined by Indonesia. Timor-Leste was separated from the Indonesian state in 1999 through a UN-sponsored independence referendum which was held in Timor-Leste on 30 August 1999 and recognized by the international community on May 20, 2002, as a sovereign country in Southeast Asia. After independence, the country faced challenges amidst a shortage of human resources, in the fields of education, agriculture, tourism, and economic development. As a result, greater economic diversification is required, and tourism is routinely cited as a development priority by Timor-Leste government officials and other international organizations (Government of Timor-Leste, 2002; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2011).

Along with agriculture and oil, tourism is included in the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 as one of the pillars of Timor-Leste economic development (Government of Timor-Leste, 2011). The Strategic Development Plan recognizes tourism as an industry capable of diversifying Timor-Leste economy, providing employment, and promoting regional and rural development. It is widely considered that the people of Timor-Leste feel tourism is a viable industry with societal benefits. On the other hand, tourism has long been known as a smoke-free industry, in which tourism as a business can provide money as well as other social, cultural, and economic benefits without the need for large industries that emit toxic smoke into the environment (Santoso, 2016).

Even though local people in Timor-Leste lack skills in the tourism industry, tourism development must be promoted as an important component of a country

economic development. As an industry, tourism can encourage development in several sectors of the national economy, for example (1) promoting an increase in economic activity as a result of the construction of infrastructure and facilities for the development of tourism; (2) increasing new industries that are closely related to tourism, for example, transportation and accommodation; (3) increasing agricultural and animal husbandry products for the needs of hotels and restaurants, as a result of more and more people going on tourist trips; (4) expanding local goods to be better known internationally including food and beverages (5) encouraging the development of remote areas that have so far been untouched by development (Yoeti, 2008).

Community-based Tourism (CBT), then, is promoted as one of the tourism developments that can improve the economic welfare of local communities. Hausler (2005) defines CBT as a form of tourism that provides opportunities for local communities to control and be involved in the management and development of tourism. The main focus of CBT, according to Pookaiyaudom (2013), is community involvement in tourism development activities that can push the community towards sustainable tourism development. Pantin and Francis (2005) argue that CBT is an integration and collaboration between approaches and tools for community economic empowerment through the assessment, development, and marketing of community natural and cultural resources. Moreover, CBT promotes community benefits in terms of economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental aspects, as well as access, participation, and control. (Nurhidayati & Fandeli, 2012).

According to the 2011 Strategic Development Plan of the government of Timor-Leste, the key tourist categories identified for development in Timor-Leste are ecotourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, and event tourism. The Plan, however, makes no specific mention of CBT. Instead, CBT has been mentioned as a strategy for attracting cultural visitors. Timor-Leste CBT concept concentrates primarily on village-based housing. There are several guest houses or restaurants and tourist destinations, even businesses that are related to the tourism industry which can be seen as CBT in the Timor-Leste region (Ministry of Tourism, Trade, and Industry [MTCI], 2009).

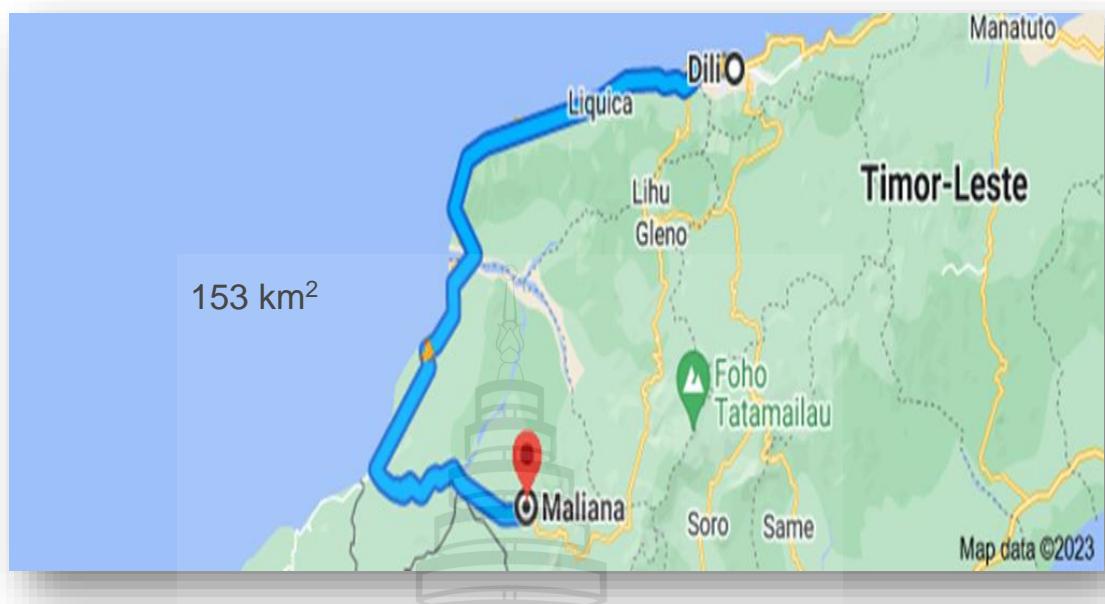
To strengthen CBT, community empowerment is an effort and a necessary component to develop and actualize community conditions actively and sustainably based on the principles of social justice (Zubaedi, 2013). Empowerment is a strategy

for improving community capacity and altering people lives. In this regard, community empowerment can encapsulate community values to build a new paradigm in community-centered, participatory, empowering, and sustainable development (Chambers, 1995). Chambers (1995) stressed that development with a community empowerment model seeks options for local economic growth rather than simply satisfying basic community needs.

Community empowerment is essential to achieving shared goals and giving local communities more control over their own lives. In Timor-Leste, the development of CBT must first prioritize community empowerment in order to fulfill the aspirations of the community. It is clear that the ideas of CBT and community empowerment complement each other since they both seek to help the community grow in the tourism sector by providing guidance and support in terms of community skills.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Tourism is viewed as an industry capable of generating major economic growth. Tourism increases job availability, income, and standard of living, while also supporting other economic sectors. Tourism expansion benefits the state revenue, employment opportunities, social values, and community knowledge. Tourism development can be part of sustainable national development, so development must be integrated with other development sectors (Suwantoro, 1997). Tourism can grow and benefit communities. In Timor-Leste, the Bobonaro region has a lot of tourism potential. However, due to the plethora of tourist attractions in Timor-Leste, tourists have paid less attention. Another factor that affected the tourism industry in the Bobonaro region is market competitiveness. For example, the region is far from downtown Dili, (even further from Maliana the capital city of Bobonaro), lacks of adequate facilities, very high transportation costs, a shortage of tourism experts, and limited ability in foreign languages.



Source Google Maps (2023)

**Figure 1.1** Map showing the distance between Dili and Maliana

The 1,368 km<sup>2</sup> Bobonaro region is located in the center of Timor Island, 180 km southwest of Dili, the nation capital. Its coordinates range from 125.21694183° to -9.13041210°, or 125.43438720° and -8.95447254°, and it is approximately 1000 meters above mean sea level. It is located in the country western area and borders Indonesia to the west. There are 106,639 residents as of the census taken in 2022. Bobonaro's capital city is Maliana. Vila Armindo Monteiro was the alternative name for the capital of the Bobonaro Regency, which is the primary difference between it and the Portuguese Timor district. The district includes the sub-districts of Atabae, Balibó, Bobonaro, Cailaco, Lolotoi, and Maliana.



Source Fischer, J. (2008)

**Figure 1.2** The sub-districts are in Bobonaro district

Tourism plays an important role in economic development in the Bobonaro district, especially in the Atabae sub-district. It is the spearhead of the economic progress of a region. In the Bobonaro district, the Atabae Sub-district is the most visited by tourists in Bobonaro district. However, when compared to other regions, the Atabae Sub-district received fewer tourists as the area is less convenient.

Atabae Sub-district is a small town located in the northwestern corner of Timor-Leste, near the border with Indonesia. Located in the Bobonaro district and is surrounded by beautiful mountains and forests. The people of Atabae are mostly rural and depend heavily on farming, fishing, and to a lesser extent developing the tourism industry for their livelihood. The Atabae also offers opportunities for hiking and exploring attractions such as Bea Malae Lake, Fatuk bot, Mount Gagap Laun, and Bea-

Cloa Beach. Overall, Atabae can be considered an affordable destination for visitors traveling on a budget, but costs can increase if visitors plan to do certain activities.



**Figure 1.3 Atabae Sub-district**

Tourism in the Atabae sub-district is known for its weaving and traditional crafts, and visitors can find hand-woven textiles and baskets for sale at local markets. There are several guest houses and restaurants that are very attractive to attract tourists to visit and enjoy local food in these places.

Unfortunately, the development of tourism in Atabae is rather slow because of several reasons, such as economic conditions, foreign language skills, transportation costs, and even infrastructure that is not reached by tourist attractions. Moreover, in terms of CBT, Atabae lacks of community ability in planning to manage the tourism industry, as well as a lack of local participation in tourism management. Therefore, empowering the community is very important in promoting and developing CBT in Atabae, which can provide mutual benefits to the local community.

Community empowerment, however, is much more than community involvement or participation. It implies community ownership and action explicitly

aimed at social and political changes. Community empowerment is a process of renegotiating power to gain more control. It is recognized that if some people are empowered, then others will share their existing power and give up some of it (Baum, 2008).

Therefore, this research contributes to understanding community empowerment in the development of community-based tourism in Timor-Leste, by specifically exploring the process of community empowerment for the development of CBT in the Atabae sub-district. This contribution critically explores the challenges in CBT management, including policies, regulations, human resources, and community capacities in the past and current tourism development, and analyses how community empowerment can develop the CBT, in addition to providing advice to authorities and the cooperation of agencies related to supporting community empowerment for the development of CBT in Atabae sub-district of Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1.3.1 What are the challenges of tourism development in the Atabae sub-district of Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste?

1.3.2 How can community empowerment help in creating CBT in the Atabae sub-district of Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste?

1.3.3 What should be the guidelines to support community empowerment in the development of community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district of Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1.4.1 To Explore the challenges of the tourism industry in the Atabae Sub-district of Bobonaro, Timor-Leste.

1.4.2 To analyze how community empowerment can help in creating CBT in the Atabae Sub-district of Bobonaro, Timor-Leste.

1.4.3 To suggest guidelines to support community empowerment in the development of community-based tourism in the Atabae Sub-district of Bobonaro, Timor-Leste.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Research Areas**

This research uses a case study in the Atabae sub-district, Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste by focusing on analyzing community empowerment for the development of CBT in the Timor-Leste border region.

Atabae sub-district is a strategic area because this city is located in the middle of the international highway that borders Indonesia and is also easily accessible from the city center of Timor-Leste and Indonesia. If tourism in this city is developed well, the future will be even brighter.

### **1.5.2 Period of Study**

This research will focus on the period starting from 2011, when the Timor-Leste Government issued the 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan, to 2019 before COVID-19 spread to Timor-Leste and caused the prohibition of traveling across the world.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Tourism

Individuals, families, and groups engage in a variety of travel and leisure activities together referred to as tourism to achieve inner peace, balance, and contentment. Numerous facilities and services offered by national, local, and corporate governments have an impact on tourism. Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that involves individuals traveling for pleasure or business to countries or regions outside of their typical surroundings, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2018). According to the UNWTO (2018), tourism is a ubiquitous phenomenon in daily life due to people's frequent movement across surroundings and the rising rates of both leisure and business travel. For this reason, tourism is a mainstay sector for growing the economy of a country and a community.

According to Spillane (1987), tourism is a traveling activity that aims to obtain satisfaction, knowledge, enjoyment, and health. It is a travel activity carried out by someone to enjoy the natural beauty visited in that area or country. Similarly, Yoeti (1996) shared a common perspective with tourism that it is when someone travels from their place of origin to another place and does not want to work at the destination, they visit but only travel to have fun and enjoy the beauty of nature, the freshness of the air and calm the mind.

He concluded that tourism is a temporary trip from one place to another which is organized to fulfill various desires while having fun rather than working to earn a living in the destination visited (Yoeti, 1996). Furthermore, according to Pitana and Gayatri (2005), tourism is the activity of temporarily moving people to a destination outside their place of residence and work and carrying out activities at that destination.

Pendit (1999), in contrast, focused more on the advantages of tourism and its significance for social and economic activity, particularly for day-to-day living. He provided examples of how tourism affects people social and financial well-being. His point of view is crucial since it seems that using economic action is one way people connect socially to achieve their goals. Additionally, economic activity has a significant impact on societal well-being. He said that the governments of recently developed countries like Timor-Leste should engage in the tourism industry to boost foreign exchange earnings and compete with other developing nations. Through this industry, it is hoped that foreign exchange earnings can increase and a country can achieve balance in foreign trade (Pendit, 2002).

Numerous categories can be used to categorize tourism. Based on the destination and the country of origin, the UNWTO classified tourism into three primary categories: domestic, inbound, and outbound travel. The actions of a resident tourist within the country of reference are referred to as domestic tourism, whether they are part of an outbound or domestic tourism trip. International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics (IRTS), 2008). When tourists travel within their nation, it known as domestic tourism, because it involves less formal travel documentation and less time-consuming procedures like foreign exchange and health checks. When traveling domestically, a visitor rarely has trouble with language barriers or currency exchange.

Inbound tourism refers to the acts taken by a tourist who visits a destination outside of his/her usual surroundings for not less than 24 hours or more than a year in a row. The objective of travel is for business and pleasure, not to make money. Inbound tourism comprises the activities of a non-resident visitor within the country of reference on an inbound tourism trip (IRTS, 2008).

Outbound tourism refers to the activities of local tourists visiting another country for business or vacation. When citizens of a given country travel to and stay in places outside of their home country and outside of their usual surroundings for up to 12 consecutive months for leisure, business, or other purposes, this is referred to as outbound tourism (IRTS, 2008).

### 2.1.1 Community-based Tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT) first appeared in response to worries about the negative impacts of mass tourism in the 1970s. When the World Bank began looking into methods to use the tourist sector to combat poverty in 2000, the idea acquired even more traction. CBT also includes the community in decision-making and getting the most share of directly generated tourism revenue in order to decrease poverty, increase employment, and positively influence the preservation of the surrounding environment and indigenous culture. This is believed to eventually help the local population whose numbers have grown as a result of greater tourism develop a sense of identity and pride.

Rest (1997) defined CBT as development-focused tourism that looks into social community, environment, and cultural continuity. CBT is managed, owned, and cared for by community people to teach visitors about how ordinary life and customs are conducted in the area. Because the community immediately adopts CBT and reaps the benefits, it is effectively a populist economic concept. Rest (1997) supplemented that.

*"Tourism that considers the sustainability of the environment, society, and culture is known as community-based tourism. To help tourists broaden their horizons and educate themselves about the community and its customs, it is run and controlled by the community, for the community".*

According to Suansri (2003), CBT is a strategy for promoting community development as well as the protection of the environment and cultural heritage. It is also sustainable for the environment, society, and culture. Stated differently, CBT serves as a tool for achieving sustainable tourist development. The unique characteristics of CBT stem from the advantages of community in granting more control over social processes to foster prosperity and keep other groups from encroaching and exploiting the resources of the community (Timothy, 1999).

Murphy (1985) emphasized a strategy focused on identifying the goals of host communities and their desire and ability to absorb the benefits of tourism. According to Murphy, every community should be encouraged to identify its own goals and direct tourism to increase the needs of local people.

According to I Made Adikampana (2017), discusses various forms and types of local community participation in planning and developing various alternative tourism

destinations. He proposed 5 criteria for implementing community-based tourism as a benchmark for the success of tourism development, including:

1. The benefits obtained from CBT must be distributed evenly to all communities in the destination.
2. Good and careful tourism management.
3. CBT must have strong partnerships and support from both inside and outside the community.
4. The uniqueness of the attraction must be considered to maintain the sustainability of the destination.
5. Environmental preservation must not be ignored.

According to Jafari (1980), he realizes that community empowerment is very important and also preserving local culture and traditions, so to apply CBT, he proposed 5 criteria. For the implementation of community-based tourism, these include:

1. Empowerment of local communities: Local communities must be actively involved in decision-making and tourism management in their destinations.
2. Preservation of culture and cultural heritage: Community-based tourism must pay attention to and preserve local culture, traditions, and cultural heritage.
3. Equitable economic benefits: Tourism must provide fair and equitable economic benefits for local communities, including through the creation of jobs and business opportunities.
4. Community participation: Local communities must be involved in developing tourism programs and benefit from tourism activities.
5. Environmental sustainability: Community-based tourism must preserve the environment, reduce negative impacts, and prioritize environmentally friendly practices.

Butler (1990), also agrees with Jafari (1980). He explained that before implementing CBT, local community empowerment is very important to develop CBT to achieve maximum and sustainable results, and he proposed 5 criteria of CBT including:

1. Empowerment of local communities in decision-making and tourism management.
2. Appreciation and preservation of local culture and traditions.

3. Improve the quality of life of local communities through the economic and social benefits resulting from tourism.

4. Community involvement in developing tourism programs and activities.

5. Reduction of negative impacts on the environment and nature.

In addition, Getz (1990), based on his views, proposed that there are 5 criteria for implementing community-based tourism, including:

1. Economic empowerment of local communities through participation in the tourism industry.

2. Reduce economic and social disparities between local communities and visitors.

3. Development of micro and small businesses owned by local communities.

4. Development of tourism products based on local culture and traditions.

5. Reduction of negative impacts on the environment and nature.

In the meantime, the World Tourism Organization released guidelines for community-based tourism, which included standards for creating and executing sustainable community-based tourism (UNWTO, 2016). Four essential criteria for sustainable community-based tourism are covered in this guide, including:

1. Community participation: Within the framework of CBT, community participation

denotes the proactive engagement of nearby communities in the advancement and administration of tourism. This involves taking part in the creation, execution, and assessment of tourist initiatives.

2. Environmental conservation: attempts to preserve and safeguard the natural and cultural surroundings of tourism destinations are referred to as environmental conservation.

3. Economic empowerment: Efforts to raise local communities' standard of living financially through long-term CBT development are referred to as economic empowerment.

4. Meaningful tourism experiences: these are those that offer advantages to both visitors and local communities.

Furthermore, it was identified that three tourism activities can be carried out to support the CBT concept, namely adventure travel, cultural tourism, and ecotourism. The World Bank believes that an increase in adventure, ecological, and cultural tourism will be able to increase the income of the local community and its surroundings while preserving the culture, arts, and way of life of the surrounding community (The World Bank, 2023). The three tourism activities, including adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and ecotourism that support the CBT concepts are explained below:

### 1. Adventure Tourism

Traveling from place to place in pursuit of novel experiences is known as adventure tourism. This kind of tourism primarily caters to young people who have an interest in traveling to rural areas. Both soft and hard adventure travel are feasible. Notwithstanding the subjectivity involved, the players degree of experience, athleticism, and willingness to take risks is what primarily set the two apart (UNWTO, 2014). Hiking and animal viewing are examples of soft adventures, but outdoor activities like whitewater rafting and rock climbing are typically thought of as challenging ones. Adventure tourism is defined as travel that includes at least two of the following three elements: physical activity, immersion in both culture and the natural world by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2014, p. 12). Rock climbing, heli-skiing, and white-water rafting are examples of adventure tourism activities. Adventure tourism requires physical fitness because it involves activities that demand stamina and muscle. Young folks make up the majority of adventure tourists because of their boundless energy.

The assessment indicated above makes it evident that both the natural and cultural settings are considered, as adventure tourism requires the selection of a suitable, pleasant, and safe natural tourism option. Due to the disparate cultural backgrounds of the locales, it is therefore wise to obtain the consent of the people before participating in any adventure tourism-related activities.

### 2. Cultural Tourism

The World Tourism Organization gave a preliminary account of cultural tourism in 2018, describing it as a way to protect cultural heritage, promote global understanding, and maintain peace. In line with the rise in both domestic and international travel, cultural tourism is viewed as a good form of travel that will

strengthen the local economy and support the preservation of local cultures (Richards, 2011).

Cultural tourism is the travel to other locations to experience and learn about local customs, festivals, and cultural events. It is not only a commercial endeavor. This kind of tourism helps spread indigenous communities' wealth, diversity, culture, and customs throughout the world. Cultural tourism, according to Wahab (1992), is a type of travel where the goal is to discover more about other countries rather than merely take in entertainment that is a part of that country's culture, such as traditional dance and local way of life. Everything is contingent upon the purpose of the journey.

So cultural tourism is a trip carried out based on the desire to broaden one's outlook on life by visiting regions and abroad, studying the state of society, customs, way of life, culture, and art. Often this similar desire is combined with the opportunity to take part in cultural activities, such as art exhibitions (dance, drama, music, and fine arts) or religious activities with historical motifs.

In addition, from Salah Wahab point of view (1992), cultural tourism is for someone who wants or takes the initiative to visit another region or country, with the intention that the person wants to increase their cultural knowledge through the region or country they visit. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) view is that cultural tourism can create peace and global understanding because culture is more trusted by local communities in general, communities that are radical or integrated with natural culture, thus cultures can unite one another.

One example of cultural tourism that stands out in remote areas of Timor-Leste is that when guests, whether known or unknown, visit or come to someone's or family's house, the first thing they greet is giving betel and areca nut to the guest, with betel and betel nut indicates that the bond between the guest and the homeowner is well established. It can be further added that cultural tourism is the most important type of tourism for foreign tourists visiting Timor-Leste. They want to see art, dance, Timor-Leste history, and everything related to Timor-Leste culture. Similarly, Richards (2011) perceived, cultural tourism as good tourism, one of which is to explore and attract tourists to visit local communities.

In conclusion, cultural tourism is an activity or cultural attraction in a region or country outside the residence of tourists who visit to gain information and new experiences about culture through the wisdom of cultural attractions in that region.

### 3. Ecotourism

Ecotourism was first defined as travel to relatively undisturbed or contaminated natural areas with the specific aim of studying, admiring, and enjoying the landscape and wild plants and animals, as well as existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in the area (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1987). Ceballos-Lascurain (1991a, 1991b) definition views ecotourism as based on the experience and educational factors of protected natural areas. He stated that ecotourism is a multi-dimensional philosophical concept, which is a component of environmental development and requires planning based on strict guidelines and regulations that will enhance sustainable operations.

Using a method that will turn them into someone deeply involved in conservation issues, he suggests ecotourists create a distinctive profile to gauge their knowledge of the natural world and cultural aspects (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991a, P. 25). Ceballos-Lascurain drew a contrast between the use of natural resources in mass tourism and ecotourism. While both groups are interested in visiting natural areas, mass tourists participate in activities such as cycling, jogging, and water sports that are not related to ecological or environmental issues, thereby playing a more passive role in the environment. However, via activities like nature photography, botanical study, and other hands-on approaches to protecting wildlife and natural resources, ecotourism is more involved with natural areas and wildlife observation (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991a, 1991b). As mentioned in Fennell (1999), p. 43. His definition of ecotourism was as follows: Ecotourism is an ethically managed, low-impact, non-consumptive, locally-oriented type of sustainable tourism that is centered on experiencing and learning about nature. It should help with their repair or preservation since it typically takes place in natural environments. In a proposal for the international certification of sustainable tourism and ecotourism, ecotourism is defined as sustainable tourism with a natural area focus, which benefits the environment and communities visited, and fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation, and awareness. (Mohonk, 2000, p. 100). Yoeti (2008) added that travelers to ecotourism sites should take care of

the environment by keeping it clean to improve people welfare and preserve ecotourism uniqueness for future generations.

Salafky et al. (2001) assert, however, that conservationists need to be aware of differences in resource availability and land use. Locals are open to supporting conservation efforts as long as they do not conflict with their primary source of income, according to research by Walpole and Goodwin (2001). In the right hands, ecotourism can flourish to great heights.

On the other side, improper management of ecotourism can lead to issues or negatively affect life social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects (Yoeti, 2008). One kind of travel that gives careful consideration to environmental issues is ecotourism. The plan for the growth of ecotourism includes a conservation program.

Thus, ecotourism is essential to preserving the distinctive qualities and integrity of ecosystems in pristine regions. In a nutshell, community-based tourism is travel that is fully planned, overseen, and managed by the local community to advance welfare via the preservation of significant sociocultural traditions, the environment, and cultural treasures.

Even if there are differences in view among CBT specialists regarding the nature of CBT, there seem to be some shared goals and objectives around the development of CBT for the benefit of local populations. The study application of the theories of Richard Butler and Jafar Jafari, which form the basis of Timor-Leste's governance, especially in the Atabae sub-district, is supported by the body of extant literature.

### **2.1.2. Experiences of Community-based Tourism in Other Countries**

When well-planned and managed, community-based tourism may promote responsible community development and inspire locals to take an active role in environmental preservation (Eshetu, 2014). By raising awareness of environmental issues and educating the public, community-based tourism can also help the people who live near tourist destinations preserve and conserve the environment. Koh Yao Noi, Thailand, has profited from CBT, for instance, in addition to other planning and management support, by increasing knowledge of environmental conservation,

promoting appropriate sanitation, waste management controls, and safety in the tourism sector (CBT Thailand Network Coordination Center, 2013).

The Jernigan ecotourism project in Bali, Indonesia, is another excellent illustration of the positive effects of CBT on the environment. It has reduced the adverse effects of tourism activities on the environment, involved local communities in tourism planning, decision-making, and management, and channeled tourism-related funding for community development and environmental preservation (Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV) & University of Hawaii, 2013).

Another interesting example that illustrates the CBT with the strength of community empowerment is the Development of the Nglanggeran Tourism Village in Gunung Kidul Regency, Indonesia. This is done through three strategies, namely awareness, human capacity, and empowerment. Community empowerment is carried out through socialization and innovation. The human capacity was carried out as a form of support for the development of Tourism Villages, the Tourism Office and the Ministry of Tourism actively provided training and assistance to State-owned enterprises (BUMN) private parties, and NGOs (Research Center for the House of Representatives (DPR) Republic of Indonesia (RI) Expertise Agency, 2018).

Along with the development of community-based tourism, the concept has been expanded to integrate ideas regarding Community-Based Eco-Tourism (CBET) responsibility, destination management, and sustainable development for host populations (Torquebiau & Taylor, 2009). By visiting CBET initiatives, tourists can gain an understanding of nature, local ecosystems, and natural attractions.

CBET can also increase environmental awareness and encourage regular participation in environmental conservation efforts (Higham, 2007). In the Okavango Delta in Botswana, ecotourism has become the main livelihood activity for residents, replacing several traditional local livelihood activities (e.g., agriculture, livestock, hunting, and gathering) that have negative impacts on the environment (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010).

## 2.2 Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a process or way to improve the standard of living or quality of the community through certain activities to the characteristics of the community in the area. According to Rusmiyati (2011, p. 16), empowerment is the way people, organizations and communities are directed to be able to control their lives, or empowerment is considered as a process of making people strong enough to participate in facing events and institutions that affect their lives. The concept of empowerment is related to the term empowered. She explained further that empowerment is a way to be independent and brave enough to face all challenges in doing something, whether in the business world or being involved in political organizations, as well as having the courage to express ideas or aspirations of the community (Rusmiyati, 2011).

Teguh. (2004) asserts that the three primary elements of empowerment are promoting independence, enhancing potential or power (empowering), and enabling. Programs that empower individuals are those that educate people on how to become part of empowered communities, where individuals can overcome obstacles and demands by utilizing their resources and potential. It is made clear that empowerment requires not only being trustworthy, moral, and driven to achieve objectives or meet expectations but also being resilient and self-sufficient in the face of difficulty.

The local community will profit from the development and maintenance improvements brought about by the surge in tourism, particularly in terms of better living circumstances. This will encourage the community to make these changes. Adopting changes that will raise the standard of living will depend on the community willingness to get involved. The community will feel empowered and accountable if it participates on multiple levels. Because they have a hard time accepting change, the oldest cultures need extra care. To avoid misunderstandings in the future, people need to be made aware of tourism and its effects from the outset.

The growth of community-based tourism can benefit the community in many ways, such as by generating new employment opportunities and revenue streams, opening up new avenues for investment, and enhancing local marketing in addition to infrastructure upgrades like new roads, water systems, and medical facilities. Exchange

goods, expand opportunities for skilled workers, improve recreational and cultural programs and activities that residents can participate in, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for the social life of the community. Early community involvement is essential in the development planning process. Community-based tourism, according to Kontogeorgopoulos (2005), is a locally driven method of community development that improves the socioeconomic status of its constituents and the welfare of local communities through the use of an integrated strategic small-scale approach.

Enhancing people quality of life is a crucial component, and bringing about changes to improve people quality of life will primarily depend on their willingness to engage. The general population must be made aware of the possible drawbacks of tourism from the outset. Development is essentially an effort to improve people quality of life. As a result, any action that significantly improves the standard of living in the community qualifies as a development activity (Saptari, 2009). One example would be the growth of the tourism industry via Community-based Tourism (CBT), which is carried out by individuals and private companies. Their initiatives will provide the community with more opportunities to become engaged and improve their standard of living involvement in the tourism industry.

Apart from that, according to Murphy (1985), tourism is a community industry so the sustainability of tourism development is very dependent and determined by the acceptance and support of local communities for tourism. The implication of tourism as a community industry is that tourism not only involves local communities who directly benefit from tourism but also local communities who indirectly contribute to the continuation of tourism development. Local community participation in tourism development can be divided into six types (Mowforth & Munt, 2016), namely:

1. Passive participation: The public participates by being informed of what has been decided or has happened. The information shared is solely that of external professionals;
2. Participation through consultation: The community participates by consulting or answering questions. This process does not recognize any part of decision-making, and professionals are not required to take society's views;

3. Purchased participation: People participate in exchange for food, cash, or other material incentives. Local communities are not interested in expanding technology or practices when incentives end;

4. Functional participation: External agencies view participation as a way to accomplish their objectives, particularly in the area of cost reduction. The community takes part by organizing into organizations to accomplish pre-established objectives;

5. Active involvement: The community takes part in cooperative analysis, action plan creation, and the establishment or bolstering of regional organizations or groups. The learning approach that seeks out other viewpoints and groups dictates the utilization of the resources that are accessible;

6. Self-mobilization and connectivity: Society takes part by making changes to the system on its own, without the help of outside organizations. They establish relationships with outside organizations to get the technical assistance and resources they require, but they still have control over how those resources are used.

The review above emphasizes that development must involve communities in remote areas, meaning that development must be evenly distributed, not just development in the city center so that no one is jealous and feels left out. In line with the benefits include new employment opportunities, investment opportunities, improved facilities, market share, training opportunities, recreational and cultural facilities, as well as increased appreciation for the social life of the community.

CBT is a type of alternative tourism that includes community participation as the main element in tourism to achieve tourism development goals (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). This understanding is in line with the thoughts of Garrod et., (2001); and Timothy and Boyd (2003) call community-based tourism the participation of local communities in tourism development. In this case, local community participation can be done in two ways, namely: the decision-making process and the distribution of tourism benefits.

Participation in decision-making means that local communities can voice their hopes, desires, and concerns regarding tourism development, which can then be used as input in the planning process. Murphy (1985) stated that the involvement of local communities in the tourism planning and development process is a determining factor in the sustainability of tourism destination development. Taking a role in the

distribution of tourism benefits implies that local communities should have equal opportunities to obtain financial benefits from tourism and links with other sectors.

Meanwhile, according to Timothy point of view (1999), if tourism development in an area means CBT manages it well and will accommodate employment opportunities for residents. Conversely, related parties such as the government and NGOs, both national and international, must provide training support related to tourism so that tourism development carried out by the community cannot be doubted and will be sustainable because the community already has experience in tourism development and has received training from related parties. For this reason, tourism development must be able to create jobs and business opportunities as well as provide training and education for local communities to understand the impacts or benefits of tourism (Timothy, 1999).

#### Previous Research on CBT and Community Empowerment in Timor-Leste

Previous research on community empowerment in Timor-Leste was carried out by a few experts and researchers. One such study was conducted by Denis Tolkach (2015), who used a collaborative network approach to study CBT in Timor-Leste. Through his research, he found that most participants agreed that the country would benefit from a CBT network that would concentrate on marketing, training, and improving communication between CBT initiatives as well as lobbying governments on behalf of participating communities and CBT. The network will take ownership of the media's low level of dependency and integration, leading to shared objectives and a variety of general activities including seminars and gatherings. The Ministry of Tourism in Timor-Leste introduced Community-Based Ecotourism Marketing (CBET) training in 2016. After this training, it was found that the outcomes of the CBET marketing project are very advantageous for CBET Timor-Leste as a whole, as obtaining market access has shown to be one of the main challenges facing CBET businesses in terms of marketing and promotion. Therefore, the project has provided various benefits in terms of marketing and helping CBET to engage the market through the CBET website, brochures, and a CBET familiarization tour. The primary objective of the training was to improve products and services in the restaurant, accommodation, local transportation, and other industries.

## 2.3 Sustainable Development

The term sustainable development refers to a series of continuous social development procedures that are intended to protect the environment and its natural resources while maintaining the community standard of living. By doing this, it is made sure that progress is carried out without endangering the capacity of future generations to meet their demands.

The global movement known as sustainable development, on the other hand, seeks to guarantee that everyone lives in harmony and prosperity, abolish poverty, and safeguard the environment and climate.

Sustainable development, according to Salim (1992), is a development strategy that harmoniously balances the demands placed on natural resources and those of humankind. The demands placed on human resources must be weighed against those of the environment because natural resources are finite. It's critical to take into account the environmental harm that natural resources cause as well as how they are exploited.

According to Salim, human resources and the availability of natural resources are essential for sustainable development. Sustainable development is assured to succeed if people possess the authority to enact laws that preserve and safeguard natural resources. The Nino Konis Santana National Park in Timor-Leste (East Timor-Leste) is an example of a protected area. Entitled regulation no. 2000/19 concerning protected places, the aim is to maintain, protect and conserve natural tourism as sustainable development for the future, the park mission is to preserve a variety of natural, cultural, and ecological values while also enhancing its significant role as a cornerstone of Timor-Leste's tourism strategy.

Another example of sustainable development in the city of Timor-Leste is in terms of infrastructure, especially the construction of toll roads. In general, the road that was built connects two districts, namely Kovalima district and Manufahi district, with the construction of this toll road, to overcome the problem of congestion that occurs, which is why this part of the infrastructure is a type of sustainable development.

According to the President's Council on Sustainable Development in the United States. United State Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA, 2011), Sustainable

development is a development process that can improve the level of the economy, and preserve the environment and social conditions for the benefit of present and future generations. USEPA point of view, sustainable development is a development process to improve the country foreign exchange economy and even to improve the community's economy, such as protected eco-tourism forests whose perfect uniqueness is maintained can attract visitors to visit the place, thereby improving the economy of the surrounding community.

Salim (1992) also pointed out that there are several aspects in which the idea of sustainable development is different from conventional development patterns, including:

1. The resources used in sustainable development maintain the integrity of the ecosystem and its functions. Conventional development, on the other hand, handles natural resources regardless of how they benefit the ecology.

2. By implementing an environmental impact analysis (AMDAL) system, sustainable development actively evaluates how development will influence the environment to prevent negative consequences and stimulate positive ones. The possibility of environmental impact, particularly from sources outside the corporation, is not taken into consideration because an AMDAL system is not used in conventional development.

3. In sustainable development, the interests of future generations are taken into account, so that the quantity and quality of natural resources are maintained intact for future generations. In conventional development, there is no explicit orientation to the fate of future generations. How sustainable natural resources are for future generations is not ignored.

4. Because environmental changes occur gradually, sustainable development has a long-term vision. Conventional development operates under a short-term vision period, meaning that decisions made now may not always be motivated by long-term goals later on.

5. Natural resource management is required because sustainable development accounts for the reduction of natural resources brought about by the development process. To be included in the actual costs of the development process, the government calculations must be made clearly and their existence must be

acknowledged. The outcomes of resource exploitation are factored into gross domestic product since conventional development ignores the depletion of natural resources caused by consumption, but depletion of natural resources is not included in gross domestic product.

### Sustainable Tourism

The term sustainable tourism describes actions taken by and within the travel and tourism sector. Recognizing both the positive and negative effects of tourism is the goal. It seeks to maximize beneficial effects while minimizing detrimental ones. A few detrimental effects on a location are overcrowding, environmental harm, and economic leakage.

Positive effects on a destination include the creation of jobs, the conservation and interpretation of cultural assets, the protection of wildlife, the rehabilitation of landscapes, and other advantages. According to the UNEP and UNWTO, sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and the host communities. Moreover, they assert that striking the right balance between these three dimensions is necessary to guarantee the long-term sustainability of tourism. United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] & United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO], 2005), p.11–12. The tourism industry focus on the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of development is known as sustainable tourism.

In a similar vein, the World Conservation Union (WCU) describes sustainable tourism development as the process of improving a destination without diminishing the value of the available resources. This may generally be accomplished by keeping an eye on and caring for the resources that are currently available to preserve them for use in the future. Long-term tourism development includes funding for environmental preservation and tourist attractions in addition to sponsorship from travelers (UNWTO, 2005).

The WCU statement is very consistent in the sense that the authenticity of nature cannot be changed because it is the creation of the Almighty. It is like that; humans only have to protect and preserve it properly. Likewise, the World Commission on the

Environment explains that current development must not use up tourism resources but must be remembered for future generations.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (UNWTO, 2005), Defines sustainable tourism as development that meets the demands of the present while also taking into mind the lifestyles of future generations. A further meaning is that development, should not spend or drain tourism resources for the short term but must pay attention to the continuation of long-term tourism development in the future.

Other principles of sustainable tourism according to the Kingdoms Department of the Environment (Magdalena, 2002) are also more or less the same as the concepts previously written, including:

1. The environment has an implied value as an asset from tourism, whose existence must be considered for the long term.
2. Tourism must be introduced as a positive activity that can provide potential benefits to the community in other places around it.
3. The relationship between tourism and the environment must be managed to sustain the environment for the long term and tourism activities must not have unexpected impacts.
4. Tourism activities and their developments must consider the degree of naturalness and character of the place where they are located.
5. A harmony between the needs of tourists, places, and residents must be sought and reconciled.

In a book titled Sustainable Tourism Development Guide for Local Planners, McIntyre (1993) states that three essential elements are interrelated in the development of sustainable tourism and that if these elements are included, quality of life will increase. Attractions, facilities, and accessibility are the three elements (3As). The tourism product often refers to the attractions of natural, cultural, historical, and heritage locations rather than something manufactured artificially. For these reasons, these resources must be conserved, which calls for sustainable development and planning. Additionally, by fostering linkages between different economic sectors and diversifying the rural economy, tourism contributes to the socioeconomic development of rural communities worldwide. creating jobs, and enhancing local cultural values and the physical environment (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997).

## 2.4 Gaps from Past Research

Even though community empowerment in Timor-Leste has been the subject of numerous studies, the Atabae Sub-district, which serves as the research case study, and the Bobonaro district are not included in these studies. It was discovered that a student had studied Strategy for the Development of Hot Springs Tourism Objects in Marobo Village, Bobonaro Regency, Timor-Leste, but he had not given community empowerment any thought. To advance CBT through community empowerment, this study will build on and combine with earlier research, with a particular emphasis on CBT community empowerment in Atabae Sub-district, Bobonaro Regency, Timor-Leste.

## 2.5 Summary

Tourism is an industry that promotes travels inside, outside the region, or abroad to get a new panorama, new culture, new community life, new nature, relaxation and enjoy the atmosphere of that place, and this trip requires time, energy, and patience. On the other hand, Community-Based Tourism is a very precise decision-making process in the community, in obtaining the largest share of revenue directly from the presence of tourists so that Community-Based Tourism can create jobs, reduce poverty, and have a positive impact on environmental sustainability and local indigenous culture that in the end it is expected to be able to foster identity and a sense of pride from residents who grow as a result of increased tourism activities.

An increase in tourists within a country or region will provide enormous benefits for community-based tourism. With this, Community-Based Tourism is managed and owned by and from the community, aiming to provide tourists with knowledge about how local wisdom and daily life are carried out in the community.

Apart from that, the community must be empowered to understand tourism and the impacts it may have so that there are no misunderstandings in the future. Development planning must involve the community from the beginning of the planning stage. Improving people's living standards is a major factor, and people's willingness to

get involved in tourism development is the key to making changes that will improve their quality of life.

By involving the community in development, the aim is that development and economic improvement are not only concentrated in cities, while other areas are left behind. So, all citizens from various levels of society and regions can experience the same development results without the need to move or urbanize.



# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

The researcher will use qualitative data analysis. This research aims to search and collect data, investigate procedures, and gain a thorough understanding of community empowerment in managing community-based tourism (CBT). Additionally, it creates a logical, factual, and accurate picture of the local environment and social partnerships.

### 3.2 Research Site

The official name in English for what is commonly termed Timor-Leste is Timor-Leste. Republic Democratic of Timor-Leste [RDTL], 2002). Timor-Leste is bounded to the south by the Timor Sea and to the north by the Banda Sea. It is situated between Australia and Indonesia. The eastern portion of the island of Timor is occupied by this nation, whereas the western portion is known as West Timor, Indonesia. This nation includes the two small islands of Atauro Island and Jaco Island as well as the Ambeno area of West Timor, known as Oecusse, which is an Indonesian enclave.

Timor-Leste experiences different dry and wet seasons due to its tropical environment. Usually, it's hot and muggy. The Banda Sea is home to the highest concentration of coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests in the nation. Due to the country's west-to-east mountain range, the north and south coasts have different rainfall patterns (Asian Development Bank, 2014). The country has a lot of potential for ecotourism and nature-based tourism because of its richness of natural resources, which include beaches, mountains, and other noteworthy natural locations (Edy-vane

et al., 2009; Grupo de Estados de Reconstrução de Timor-Leste [GERTIL], 2001; UNDP & UNWTO, 2005).

Timor-Leste is divided into 14 districts (Ainaro, Aileu, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima, Dili, Ermera, Liquisa, Lautem, Manufahi, Manatuto, Oecusse, Viqueque, and Atauro), with a country area of around 15,000 square kilometers. According to the Constitution, Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages of Timor-Leste; However, Indonesian is still widely used. Timor-Leste has a complex and tumultuous political history, from occupation by Portugal and Indonesia to its independence in 2002.

On November 28, 1975, Timor-Leste proclaimed its independence from Portugal. On December 7, 1975, Indonesia invaded the nation. Timor-Leste was occupied by Indonesia for 24 years before regaining its independence on May 20, 2002, with UN assistance. Timor-Leste is a fragile, post-conflict developing nation that is among the world's poorest and has significant obstacles to human development. Based on life expectancy, adult literacy, rates of educational enrollment, and a GDP of USD 4.59 million per capita, Timor-Leste was placed 131st out of 193 countries in the 2018 Middle Human Development Index (UNDP, 2018).

The country has a subsistence economy reliant upon natural resources and the population experiences food insecurity and low levels of income, particularly in the rural areas (UNDP, 2012). The percentage of the country's population living in rural areas is estimated at 75 percent (RDTL, 2011).

Atabae is a sub-district in the municipality of Bobonaro with an area of 251.8 km<sup>2</sup>. The capital of Atabae is Aidabaeten. Atabae sub-district is in the north of Bobonaro Regency and is crossed by the international highway between Atambua, Indonesia, and Dili (the capital of Timor-Leste). Atabae sub-district to the west borders the Balibo sub-district, to the south it borders the Maliana sub-district and Cailaco sub-district, to the east it borders Maubara (Liquica) District and Hatolia (Ermera) District. and to the north, it borders the Savu Sea.

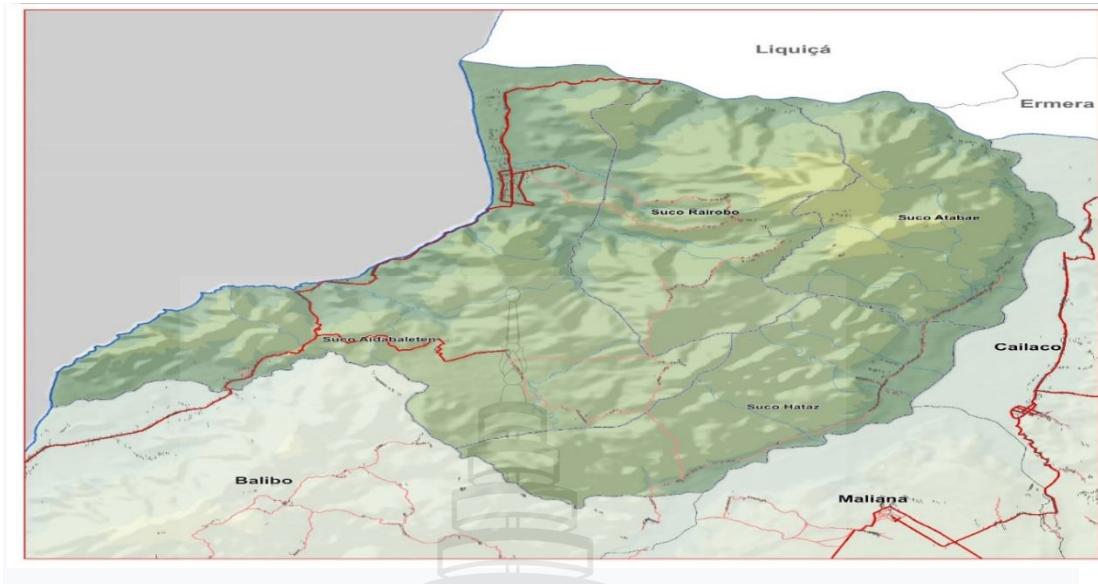
Atabae Sub-district consists of 4 villages and 20 hamlets:

1. Atabae Village (Hamlet. Madebau, Fatubesi, Lolocolo, Helesu and Saburapo)

2. Aidabaeten Village (Hamlet. Aidabaeten, Damlaran, Tasimean, Tutubaba, Enelaran, Biacou and Miguir)
3. Rairobo Village (Hamlet. Rairobo Villa, Vila Maria, Faturase, and Limanaro)
4. Hataz Village (Hamlet. Boloi, Aidabasalala, Biamarae and Koitapo)

Therefore, tourism development in the Atabae sub-district is very important because it has many tourists and cultural tourism destinations such as Bea Cloa Beach, Fatuk Bot, Bea Malae Lake, traditional houses that attract tourists to visit, as well as its strategic location in the area. It is located in the middle of the international highway that borders Indonesia and is also easily accessible by local and foreign tourists. One of the local economic developments is the development of community-based tourism which provides various entrepreneurial opportunities. This can improve the community economy, and foreign exchange and create jobs as well as the growth of small industries as a form of poverty alleviation effort in the Atabae sub-district.

As a result, the Atabae sub-district, Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste is selected as a research site for this study as it can fit the objectives of this research in terms of the development of CBT. Moreover, the research location is the hometown of the researcher so he can collect data, conduct interviews, and search for sufficient details regarding the challenges of implementing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and the development of community empowerment of community-based tourism (CBT) in the Atabae sub-district.

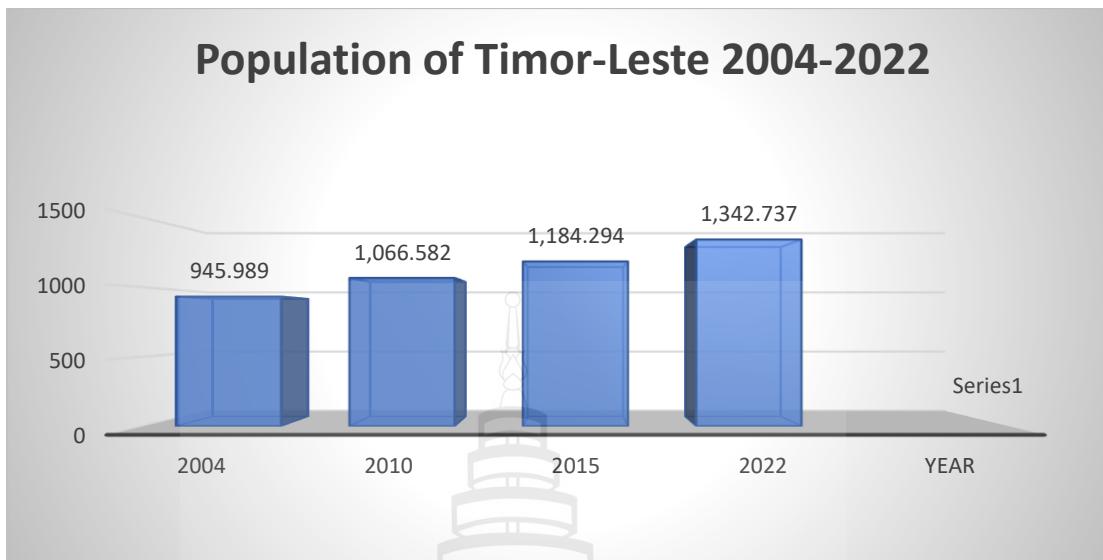


**Source** General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance (2019)

**Figure 3.1** Map showing the geographic location of the Atabae Sub-district

### 3.3 Demography

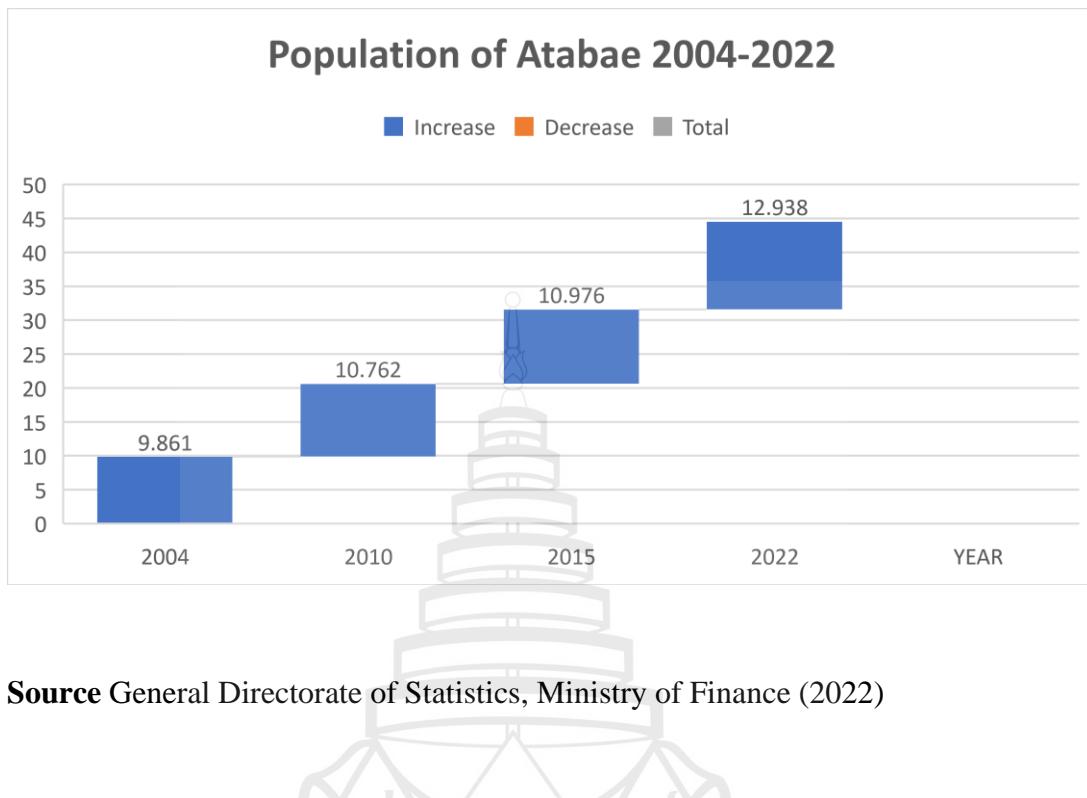
The current population of Timor-Leste is 1,342,737 (NSD, 2022). The first post-independence census conducted in 2004 numbered 945,989 people, and in 2010 the census showed that the population had exceeded the one million marks. In the last two decades, the population has continued to increase. Between the 2015 and 2022 censuses, the population increased by 156,000 people, equivalent to a population growth of 13 percent.



**Source** General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance (2022)

**Figure 3.2** Timor-Leste population and housing census

The population of the Atabae sub-district in the 2004 census was around 9,861 and the number of populations in 2010 and 2015 increased by 31%. Between 2015 and 2022, the current population has increased to 37% National Statistics Directorate, Timor-Leste [NSD], 2015).



**Source** General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance (2022)

**Figure 3.3** Atabae population and housing census

Of the villages, Aidabaeten Village has the largest population (6,926) and Hataz Village has only 2,328 people compared to other villages in the Atabae sub-district. The Atabae people generally speak Kemak, and some also speak Mambae, Tetum, Indonesian, and Portuguese. Indonesian can only be used by students and parents who were born during Indonesia occupation, while Portuguese is used by students and parents who were born during Portugal's colonization. The majority of Atabae people are Roman Catholic.

In the Atabae sub-district, there are 2 churches and several chapels, each of which was built in the hamlet. The two churches, namely the San Francisco de Assisi Church, are in the capital city and the Rairobo Church is located in Rairobo.

The livelihood of the Atabae people is generally farming and some work as fishermen, namely residents who live in coastal areas. As for the tourism industry and tourist destinations in the Atabae sub-district that can be visited, such as the Bemart Jong Guest House, restaurants which are generally along the beach, and also tourist destinations such as Be'a Malae Lake, Bea Cloa Beach, Fatuk bot, Mount Gagap Laun,

traditional houses and also activities which visitors can do is scuba diving, trekking, and others.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Primary Data**

This research applies qualitative data analysis to search and collect data, investigate procedures, and gain a thorough understanding of community empowerment in managing community-based tourism (CBT). The primary data is collected in the Atabae sub-district by interviews with several sectors involved in the tourism industry, including 8 local tourism business owners, and 5 government officials, both local (2) and national authorities (3). Also, the documentary research applied secondary sources of data to understand the tourism context, especially regarding the CBT of Timor Leste.

#### **3.4.2 Secondary Data**

This research data was collected through any official websites related to government or education, and also sites that publish annual data such as the General Directorate of Statistics Timor-Leste regarding population census, Geographic location of Atabae sub-district, and data in the form of official documents, journal articles, and other official documents related to Community Empowerment for community-based tourism development on the Timor-Leste border, which can support this research.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Analysis data, data obtained from 2011 when the Timor-Leste government issued the 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan to 2019 before COVID-19 spread to Timor-Leste. In addition, primary and secondary data collected from documents, literature, and interviews were analyzed to assess the situation, significance, and challenges of CBT in the Atabae sub-district. This research uses qualitative analysis which focuses on the challenges of community empowerment faced by the community

in developing CBT in the Atabae sub-district. This research data was analyzed using narrative analysis of respondent responses and will be used by applying qualitative analysis techniques. This research requires the researcher to capture the information provided by respondents. With this, the researcher knows more about the experiences that people have.

### 3.6 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 3.4** Conceptual framework

#### Descriptions

The conceptual framework above shows that currently there are problems faced by the community in managing tourism in Atabae. The problems faced by the community include, but are not limited to, the limited ability of the community to manage CBT, economic and tourism place conditions, limited foreign language skills in communicating with tourists, lack of community participation, and even lack of services. There could be some other problems that researchers will explore and study

to solve. Tourism development in the Atabae sub-district should begin with empowering local communities through training and proposed related support guidelines, which are related to CBT so that in the future the community can implement the CBT well. As a result, the development of CBT in the Atabae sub-district can attract more tourists to visit the place so that creating jobs provides benefits to the locals and the community can carry out CBT well towards sustainable tourism.



## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### 4.1 General Overview of Tourism Development in the Atabae Sub-district

Atabae sub-district is located in the municipality of Bobonaro, western Timor-Leste. The region is renowned for its incredibly beautiful natural environment, including stunning mountains, beaches, and forests. Guests can walk through verdant forests explore the clean sea waters of the Atabae district and relax on the white sandy beach. Traditional settlements in the Atabae sub-district provide an overview of the rich cultural history of the area. Overall, the Atabae sub-district, Bobonaro district of Timor-Leste is a beautiful location that provides an extraordinary mix of natural wonders and cultural experiences.

Because of its numerous stunning and distinctive tourist attractions which include natural, cultural, and historical tourism, and its stunning natural surroundings, which include enchanted beaches, untamed landscapes, and abundant natural resources, the Atabae sub-district has the potential to become a popular travel destination worldwide cultural legacy. The Atabae sub-district is being marketed as a tourist destination by the federal and local governments, which see tourism as a vital economic development area. To increase tourist amenities and accessibility, several infrastructure projects have been completed. These include building bridges and highways that connect Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The next step is to make every hamlet and tourist attraction accessible.

Aside from that, the Atabae sub-districts traditional dance, music, and handicrafts are among the cultural assets the local administration is attempting to protect and develop. This will aid in bringing both domestic and foreign visitors to the region. Tourism has grown to be a significant source of revenue for local communities

as a result of government initiatives and promotions. Nowadays, a large number of locals are employed by tourist-related companies, including lodging, dining, and handicraft shops. The Atabae sub-district economy has grown, albeit not entirely, and the standard of living of the populace has also been enhanced by tourism.

Apart from that, based on the interview with a local government official, establishing good relations with people in the tourism industry is important because it helps to community-based tourism. So that tourism can develop better in the future, everything must be developed to prepare better conditions for tourist locations such as the Bea-cloa beach Figure 4.1, sea estuary, and Bea Malae Lake so that they attract more tourists to see them. A local government official, Personal Communication, January 2024. Atabae has a unique location which is said to have busy and interesting tourist attractions. If managed well, the future of the Atabae sub-district will be even more beautiful.



**Figure 4.1** View of Bea-Cloa Beach in the Atabae Sub-district

Several tourism industries are currently developing in the Atabae Sub-district, as shown in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1** The number of tourism businesses in the Atabae sub-district, comparing between 2014 and 2024

No	Name of the tourism industry	Numbers in 2014	Numbers in 2024
1	Hotel Mira-Mar	-	1
2	Anjo Guest house	-	1
3	Paparei Guest house	-	1
4	Bemart Jong Guest house	1	1
5	Handicraft	-	1
6	Restaurants	3	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>

The table above shows that the development of the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district is slowly progressing, although the numbers are not that many and the condition of the tourism industry is still simple and minimal, it is steadily progressing, compared to the previous year, 2013–2014, when there were only 3 restaurants and 1 guest house.

In terms of foreign and domestic tourist visits, based on interviews with the local business owners in the tourism industry, it can be estimated that there are domestic visitors of around 300-600 people per month and 30-60 foreign visitors come to visit Atabae sub-districts per month. The number of guests visiting the Atabae sub-district is quite increasing. It also needs to be emphasized that these tourists do not only spend the night or eat at restaurants, some carry out tourism activities such as hiking, mountain climbing, and visiting tourist locations such as Bea-cloa beach, Bea-malae Lake, traditional houses, and other tourist locations in Atabae sub-district. Apart from that, visitors take part in traditional activities such as cooking, weaving, or farming to learn about the way of life of the people living in the Atabae sub-district (Local business owners, Personal Communication, January 2024)

Of these visitors, compared to 2013-2014, it has decreased slightly, sometimes there are 100-150 people domestic tourists visiting a month. Meanwhile, international

visitors a month were around 30-45 people. The reason is that there was not so much crowd at that time (Local Business Owners, Personal Communication, January 2024) In terms of income for the community managing the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district, according to an interview with the restaurant owner, he said that the daily income of his restaurant is around USD 30-100. Meanwhile, another restaurant owner mentioned that he receives around USD 100-300 per day and if he gets group visits, the daily income can reach USD 1,000-3,000. On the other hand, income from guest houses, according to an interview, income for accommodation is a little less. They can earn around USD 25-50 per day. Meanwhile, daily income from handicrafts can be around USD 80-100. According to interviews, the income local people earn from the tourism industry because the price of necessities has increased. So, with the increase in the cost of living, it is difficult for people in the tourism business to earn a daily income to meet all of a person's basic needs, especially if they have to cover various kinds of expenses (Local business owners, Personal Communication, January 2024)

It is concluded that the development of community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district provides positive developments for the local community and contributes to regional economic growth, especially community-based tourism. The development of the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district continues to grow due to the increasing number of local and international visitors. With this, to increase tourist visits, both domestic and international, to a higher level of visits, it is necessary to develop the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district and get more support from the government, NGOs, or international organizations. In the future, the Atabae sub-district will be famous internationally just because of tourism.

## **4.2 Community-based Tourism Development in Atabae Sub-district**

Community Based Tourism Development in Atabae sub-district refers to one own initiative, one own thought, one own capital, and with the aim of natural and

cultural exploration, this tourism development which as a whole provides benefits to the local community.

Currently, the development of tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district has been developed in several places such as Aidabaeten Erkina Tutubaba Hamlet, Atabae Villa Tasi Mean Hamlet, and also most of the handicrafts such as Hataz Village, Aidabasalala Hamlet, Biamarae Hamlet, Coitapo Hamlet and Rairobu Village, Faturase Hamlet, Limanaru Hamlet. There is the local community, including several tourism activities;

**Nature Exploration:** Tourists can explore the natural beauty of the area through activities such as hiking, trekking, and visiting Bui Cari Cave, Villa Maria, traditional houses, Bea-Malae Lake, Bea-Cloa Beach, visiting local markets, tasting traditional Timorese food, or observing birds singing (Tourism business owners, Personal communication, January 2024).

**A guest house** is also a place to relax and spend the night with basic lodging options similar to those in your home.

**Homestays:** Travelers can spend time with local families to get a first-hand look at everyday life, customs, and cuisine.

**Experience culture:** Guests can take part in customary tasks like farming, weaving, or cooking. To learn more about the local way of life, tourists can engage in cultural events, attend ceremonies, and converse with community members. for guests to understand the local way of life. However, other types of tourism activities such as kiosk sales (the kiosk sales are the same as a shop but the kiosk sales are smaller), local transport providers (motorbike, private car rental), and handicrafts are also available, mostly in Aidabaeten village because Aidabaeten village is located in the center of Timor-Leste and Indonesia and has good public transportation such as bus, minibus (tetun language Microlet), and pickup (tetun language Angguna). Local people and visitors can access public transportation in various directions, such as from downtown Dili (Timor-Leste) - Likisa district - Atabae sub-district - Maliana (Bobonaro), even international transportation such as, Timor Travel (Minibus), Paradise (Minibus), Bus (Babadok) and Bus (Bargong) direct connected between Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

Community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district is built based on a concept that involves participation and direct benefits for the local Atabae sub-district community. Through this approach, local communities are involved in managing the tourism industry or tourist destinations, preserving the environment, and sharing cultural heritage experiences with tourists.

The Atabae sub-district can be enjoyed by various types of tourists. The city offers a calm and relaxing atmosphere that is suitable for anyone who wants to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Couples can take in the surrounding natural beauty and relax in the peaceful atmosphere of the location. Walking on the beach, enjoying a romantic picnic, and watching the sunset together are all options for visitors.

Families can enjoy discovering the local villages and the Atabae sub-district culture. Along with hiking Mount Gagap Laun and the neighboring Loes River, visitors can enjoy picnics and cool swims in the natural waters. In the Atabae sub-district, tourism activities often revolve around cultural immersion, ecotourism, and local experiences. Several community initiatives offer tourists the opportunity to interact with local communities, experience traditional culture, and explore the natural beauty of the area. Tourists have the opportunity to stay in guesthouses and homestays with local families, participate in traditional activities such as weaving or farming, explore natural attractions such as trekking and mountain climbing, and interact with the community through various cultural events and ceremonies. (Tourism business owners guest house, Personal communication, January 2024).

With community initiatives in tourism activities also varying, there are usually several guesthouses as well as homestays, restaurants, and local guides facilitating this experience in the Atabae sub-district. These initiatives play an important role in promoting sustainable tourism practices, supporting local livelihoods, and preserving cultural heritage in the Atabae sub-district region.

Atabae sub-district is one of the sub-districts where this industry was first developed through community initiative, without the help of national or international non-governmental organizations or the government, but with funds, supplies, and planning provided by the residents themselves. Opportunities to preserve natural

resources and traditional community culture present with the rise of the tourism industry.

Figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 show the current conditions of tourism businesses, including restaurants, handicrafts, and lodgings in the Atabae sub-district



**Figure 4.2** Development of the tourism industry in the Atabae Sub-district



**Figure 4.3** The handicraft tourism business was developed by the local community in the Atabae Sub-district



**Figure 4.4** Lodgings for tourists and visitors in the Atabae Sub-district

Based on interviews with tourism business owners, the development of the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district is in good progress. Even though the conditions of the place are not modern or inadequate and number of visitors is not yet very busy and even the income is not very satisfactory, the local people of the Atabae sub-district have great attempts to develop the tourism industry. Local people remain enthusiastic about running their businesses (Tourism business owners, Personal communication, January 2024).

According to the current situation of the tourism industry in the Atabae, the CBT needs to be strengthened, as it is a way to create more equitable economic

opportunities in the local community, create jobs, and provide direct economic benefits to the community in the Atabae sub-district, as well as promote the natural beauty, unique cultural diversity, traditions in the Atabae sub-district area. This can also increase awareness of the importance of preserving the environment and local cultural heritage and, most importantly, promote sustainable tourism practices through the empowerment of local communities in the Atabae sub-district.

### **4.3 Challenges for Developing the Tourism Industry in the Atabae Sub-district**

The development of the tourism business in the Atabae sub-district is divided into three main categories: Lodging, restaurants, and handicrafts. Even though the number of tourism businesses has increased, it still faces several challenges in developing CBT. As for the development of community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district, it has its own challenges, as explained below;

#### **4.3.1 Weak Community Involvement in the Development of CBT in Atabae Sub-district**

Community involvement refers to encouraging active community participation in decision-making regarding local tourism development. Apart from that, the community must also be involved and contribute actively in planning, managing, and promoting tourism destinations in the area where the community lives. So that people feel ownership and responsibility for the tourist destination itself. With community participation, tourism development can be more in line with local values and community needs.

The lack of local community involvement in the development and management of tourism industry activities is one of the main obstacles to developing CBT in the Atabae sub-district. Additionally, managing conflict or power dynamics, ensuring community involvement, and striking a balance between the interests of various community members can be difficult.

Apart from that, community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district has weaknesses, namely that the local community does not have a vision and mission in long-term planning and does not have sufficient capital to develop quickly. This weakness reflects the inability of local communities to engage in tourism activities due to a lack of knowledge, experience, and expertise in the tourism sector.

The researcher found several factors causing weak community involvement in the development of Community Based Tourism (CBT) in the Atabae sub-district, including the lack of community understanding of the CBT concept. Local communities do not yet understand the purpose and benefits of implementing the CBT concept. There is minimal outreach and education about CBT carried out by the government and non-government. And low community capacity.

The lack of skills and abilities of the community in managing tourism activities is one of the obstacles hindering the successful development of CBT in the Atabae sub-district. Limited community access to training and guidance on CBT development, lack of coordination and communication

The lack of community involvement in the planning and decision-making process regarding CBT development is also one of the obstacles to CBT development. And there are also limited communication channels between the community, managers, and other stakeholders. Weak community ownership and control, the community does not yet have a strong sense of ownership of CBT activities in their area. Community control and control over the management of CBT is still very limited. Low community motivation and initiative, lack of community awareness, and motivation to actively participate in CBT development. Low community initiative to develop tourism potential in their region.

To overcome these problems, more intensive efforts are needed from the government, non-government, and other stakeholders to increase the involvement and empowerment of local communities in the development of CBT in the Atabae sub-district.

### 4.3.2 Inadequate Community Capacity in Developing CBT in Atabae Sub-district

Atabae sub-district is a location in a developing region where the establishment and growth of community-based tourism (CBT) have faced challenges due to inadequate community capacity. CBT is a tourism model that aims to involve and empower local communities in the development and management of tourism activities in their area.

According to an interview with a tourism industry manager, while managing the tourism industry business restaurant and guest house, we have not attended any training related to the tourism industry activities that we are currently running, whether from government or non-government (Tourism business owners, Personal communication, January 2024).

Increasing community capacity in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district aims to increase the involvement and skills of local communities in managing tourism, promoting local cultural heritage, and obtaining economic benefits from the tourism industry. This can include training, education, local tourism promotion, language training, service training, and infrastructure development that supports sustainable tourism.

Community empowerment: community empowerment can also support the development of small and medium businesses in the tourism sector, such as hotels, guest houses, homestays, restaurants, local crafts, and agrotourism, which can provide direct economic benefits to the community.

Lack of human resource capacity in the tourism sector can cause various problems, such as less than optimal service to tourists, lack of innovation in developing tourism destinations, and gaps in service quality between one tourism destination and another. This can also hinder the growth of the tourism industry as a whole and reduce the competitiveness of a tourism destination in the global market. Therefore, it is important to increase human resource capacity through training, education, and skills development so that the tourism industry can develop sustainably.

The local communities in the Atabae sub-district can manage tourism more effectively if they have greater capacity to manage community-based tourism. Developing your knowledge and abilities in marketing, managing a tourism business, protecting the environment, and providing services to visitors are a few examples of this. This approach ensures the sustainability of the local environment and culture while allowing the community to participate more actively in the benefits of tourism. Boosting community capacity can also aid in improving economic prospects and enhancing community participation in tourism-related decision-making.

#### **4.3.3 Insufficient Community-based Tourism Infrastructure and Services in Atabae Sub-district**

Often, rural or remote communities do not have the necessary infrastructure and services to support tourism, such as transportation, accommodation, restaurants, recreation facilities, health services, and sanitation facilities, which can also be an obstacle in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district. Some of the infrastructure challenges in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district include:

**Infrastructure Development:** Improving tourism infrastructure such as access to transportation, accommodation, and other public facilities to support the growth of community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district, thereby increasing tourists visiting the area.

**Accessibility:** Limited Road access and transportation to villages or hamlets can be an obstacle for tourists to visit tourism development sites in the area.

**Basic Facilities:** Encouraging the growth of tourism may be hampered by the restricted supply of electricity, clean water, and suitable sanitary facilities. To develop community-based tourism, the Atabae sub-district is currently facing infrastructure and service challenges. These include restricted access to transportation, inadequate lodging options, a lack of clean water and sanitation, and restricted access to security and health services for both visitors and locals. A community chief in the Atabae sub-district said that the availability of clean water for the people of the Atabae sub-district has not been

fully felt, especially for the people who manage the tourism industry due to the lack of clean water (Hamlet head of community, Personal Communication, January 2024). In addition, the regional government has no power in the infrastructure program. Temporary transportation has not been provided because the Atabae sub-district, is not yet included in the CBT development category including sanitation facilities.

Meanwhile, health services are available in four villages in the Atabae sub-district, while the Police Post is only in the Atabae sub-district, but both services are inadequate. (A local government staff, Personal Communication, January 2024).

Apart from that, the lack of accessibility to information and technology can also be an obstacle to promoting community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district area.

The conclusion of overcoming the problems of inadequate infrastructure and services in developing community-based tourism is that tourism potential cannot be utilized optimally. This can hamper local economic growth, reduce tourist attraction, and limit community participation in developing the tourism sector. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to and improve infrastructure so that community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district can develop sustainably and inclusively providing maximum benefits for the local community.

#### **4.3.4 Environmental Sustainability in CBT Development in the Atabae Sub-district**

Balance tourism development with the need to protect the fragile natural environment and cultural heritage.

Ensuring sustainable use of natural resources and mitigating the potential environmental impact of tourism activities.

With this, an interview with a restaurant manager, for promoting sustainable CBT and preparing a clean and comfortable environment for tourists to enjoy the view and continue their journey is necessary. This is to attract both domestic and foreign tourists to visit more so that community-based tourism development will be guaranteed to last long and be sustainable because tourist demand is met by the community (A restaurant manager, Personal Communication, January 2024).

Tourism industry sustainability refers to efforts to develop and manage the tourism industry responsibly so that it can provide long-term benefits for the environment, local communities, and the economy as a whole. The concept of sustainability in the tourism industry includes three main dimensions, namely:

**Environmental Dimension:** Environmental sustainability in the tourism industry is related to preserving natural resources, environmental conservation, waste management, and mitigating negative impacts on the ecosystem. Efforts such as using renewable energy, environmentally friendly practices, and preserving natural areas are the focus of maintaining environmental sustainability.

**Social Dimension:** Social sustainability in the tourism industry emphasizes empowering local communities, respecting local culture and heritage, and improving social welfare. Local community participation, increasing income for local communities, and preserving culture are important aspects of maintaining social sustainability.

**Economic Dimension:** Economic sustainability in the tourism industry is related to sustainable job creation, fair distribution of benefits, as well as positive contributions to local economic growth. Tourism development that provides long-term economic benefits for local communities and pays attention to social justice is the focus of maintaining economic sustainability.

Balancing economic benefits with environmental and cultural sustainability is essential in community-based tourism. Ensuring that tourism development does not damage the environment or erode local cultural traditions can be a challenge. By paying attention to these three dimensions of sustainability, the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district is expected to develop sustainably, maintain environmental and cultural sustainability, and provide sustainable benefits for all parties involved. Efforts to realize the sustainability of the tourism industry require collaboration between the government, tourism industry players, local communities, and tourists to create tourism destinations that are sustainable and highly competitive.

#### **4.3.5 Limited Access and Promotion of Community-based Tourism Markets in the Atabae Sub-district**

Accessing markets and effectively promoting community-based tourism to potential visitors can be challenging, especially for small-scale community initiatives with limited marketing resources. Market access and promotion in the tourism industry are two important, interrelated aspects to increase the attractiveness of tourism destinations and attract tourist interest.

**Technological Limitations:** Limited internet and telecommunications connections can affect tourism promotion and access to information for tourists and local communities.

**Market Access:** There are several aspects of market access in the tourism industry, ranging from the availability of convenient and sufficient transportation to the accessibility of popular tourist destinations to the provision of lodging and other amenities. Travelers will find it simpler to get to destinations, to visit a variety of tourist attractions, and to receive quality services when they are on vacation if they have good market access. Market promotion is the process of introducing and promoting travel destinations to prospective travelers via a variety of media, including social media, official travel websites, advertising, and agent partnerships. Good market promotion can raise awareness of tourism destinations, pique travelers interest in going there, and have an impact on their decision to travel. Developing an integrated promotional plan that can be applied to places like districts or sub-districts is crucial, according to Payangan (2014), to make travellers in a particular target market aware of what a destination has to offer, marketing techniques must be established.

Likewise, the local government officer in Atabae sub-district explained that community-based tourism marketing is a very important factor because today era is digital.

*“To promote something related to tourism in the sense of CBT, promotion should be done through the media because it is cost-effective. Apart from that, the local government has plans to help promote the CBT business at national and international*

*levels, but for the time being the central government is taking over market access and promotion, because it has not yet devolved (decentralized) government authority to the Bobonaro regional government, especially the Atabae sub-district, to regulate and manage its region. in the state system, whether administrative, planning or financial”*

A local government officer (Personal Communication, January, 2024)

The conclusion is that, by paying attention to good market access and effective market promotion, tourism destinations can increase their competitiveness in the global market, attract more tourists, and make a positive contribution to local economic growth. Therefore, tourism destination managers need to pay attention to these two aspects holistically in their destination development and marketing efforts.

#### **4.3.6 Insufficient Regulatory and Policy Framework in the Atabae Sub-district CBT Development**

Regulatory and policy frameworks at local, regional, and national levels can be complex and can pose challenges for community-based tourism initiatives in the Atabae sub-district. Government policies in developing community-based tourism development can include various aspects, such as the development of tourist villages, training and education for local communities, promotion of culture-based tourism, environmental protection, and community participation in tourism management.

Thus, regarding local government policy, the local government only motivates, regulates, and monitors community activities related to the tourism industry. Meanwhile, regarding regulations in the development of community-based tourism activities, for the time being, there are no regulations that speak specifically to CBT Atabae Sub-district regional government officer (Personal Communication, January 2024).

The conclusion from the Regulatory and Policy Framework in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district is that it is important to have a clear regulatory and policy framework to support the development of community-based tourism. This can help regulate and protect the interests of local communities, maintain

environmental sustainability, and promote inclusive economic growth. With a strong regulatory and policy framework in place, it is hoped that tourism can provide sustainable benefits for local communities and the region as a whole.

#### **4.3.7 Inadequate Community Financial Resources in the Atabae Sub-district CBT Development**

Financial resources are anything that can be used to finance the activities or operations of a company, organization, or individual. Financial resources can be cash, investments, loans, or other assets that can be used to meet financial needs. Financial resources also include income, expenses, and overall financial management. Some of the financial obstacles faced in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district include:

1. Limited financial resources to build tourism infrastructure such as roads, sanitation facilities, and transportation facilities.
2. Limited access to business capital to assist local communities in starting or developing tourism businesses.
3. Limited funds to promote local tourism widely, both at national and international levels.
4. Limited funds to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources that are tourist attractions.

A restaurant manager in the Atabae sub-district complained that building a tourism industry business from scratch with very minimal finances is difficult. It impacts the condition of the restaurant and during the rainy season, rain water enters the restaurant because of a shortage of money for maintenance. Likewise, an interview with another restaurant manager also shows concerns about financial support

*“I submitted a proposal to ask for support financial funds to the previous government, namely the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) constitutional, but because of the change to the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) constitutional, it was temporarily postponed”*

A local restaurant manager (Personal Communication, January 2024)

According to interviews, the statement above is very clear, tourism businesses, especially in the Atabae sub-district, are need financial supports. Even though they lack funding, the people of Timor-Leste, especially the Atabae sub-district, do not give up on running the tourism industry business and want to get benefits to survive everyday life, and to develop their country, despite facing the biggest obstacles of insufficient funds.

To create long-lasting solutions that benefit locals and tourists, overcoming these obstacles frequently necessitates cooperation between communities, governmental organizations, non-profits, and business sector partners. However, as far as the tourism sector in the Atabae sub-district is concerned, neither the government nor any national or international NGOs have not yet provided enough support.

#### **4.4 Community Empowerment in Developing Community-based Tourism in the Atabae Sub-district**

Community empowerment can be beneficial to the development of CBT by involving residents in tourism management, maintaining and promoting their cultural heritage, as well as providing training and education about the tourism industry to local communities. In this way, the community can feel the direct benefits of tourism development in the Atabae sub-district area while still maintaining the community cultural identity. Community empowerment can play an important role in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district, however, current community empowerment in the Atabae sub-district still faces some challenges:

**Community Cooperation and Participation:** The level of community cooperation and participation in the Atabae sub-district is not entirely clear from the information given. Without more specific information, it is difficult to identify the exact problems and difficulties the Atabae sub-district community faces in terms of community empowerment and CBT development. Insufficient communication and collaboration among the government, the community, and other interested parties also impede successful cooperation. However, for successful CBT development, it is

essential that the local community is actively engaged and works together towards common goals. Effective community participation and cooperation would involve the community being involved in decision-making, taking ownership of tourism initiatives, and collaborating on the planning and implementation of the CBT.

**Government Support:** It is also unclear to what extent the government supports the development of CBT and community empowerment in the Atabae sub-district. One of the most common problems communities face in these circumstances is a lack of funding and support for initiatives led by the community restricted ability and knowledge of the community to oversee tourism-related activities. To ensure that CBT initiatives are implemented successfully, the community and local government authorities should ideally work together and provide support. This could involve developing policies, providing funding, implementing capacity-building initiatives, and fostering an atmosphere that will support the growth of community-led tourism. In addition, possible disputes or imbalances of power in the community prevent people from working together. The challenge of guaranteeing a fair allocation of tourism advantages among the local population is then very important.

To overcome these mentioned obstacles, community empowerment can play an important role in developing community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district, in several ways:

#### **4.4.1 Community Participation in Decision-Making on Community-based Tourism Development in the Atabae Sub-district**

Incorporating the community into the decision-making process for tourism development guarantees that their needs and preferences are fulfilled. This could foster a strong sense of responsibility and ownership for the expansion of the travel and tourism sector. Local communities demonstrate that they have a deep understanding of the needs, customs, and culture of their area by actively participating in the planning, development, and management of tourism destinations. In the tourism industry, this procedure is referred to as community participation in decision-making. Policies and programs related to tourism that involve the community in the decision-making process can better serve local contexts.

Increasing the legitimacy of involving the community in decision-making can increase the legitimacy of tourism policies and programs in the eyes of the community. This can create stronger support from local communities for tourism development efforts. On the other hand, improving the quality of decisions, by involving various stakeholders, including local communities, in decision-making, can improve the quality of decisions taken because it takes into account various points of view and diverse interests. Community participation in decision-making in community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district can vary.

Community participation can include consultation and dialogue processes between local governments, non-government organizations, and local communities in formulating tourism development policies and plans. Communities can also be involved in managing tourism resources, maintaining the environment, and promoting tourist destinations. It is important to ensure that community participation is recognized and valued in tourism-related decision-making so that the interests and needs of local communities can be reflected in community-based tourism development. When the community is active in decision-making, it means that the community has the opportunity to voice their hopes, desires, complaints, and concerns, regarding tourism development, especially CBT, which can then be used as input in the tourism planning process at both national and international levels.

Participation from the community can benefit Atabae's sub-district tourism: Cultural festivals, music and dance events, and demonstrations of traditional crafts can all be organized and participated in by local communities as a way to preserve and promote their cultural customs. This makes it possible for tourists to get an authentic taste of Atabae's distinctive cultural legacy. Creating cultural heritage sites: Historical structures, archaeological sites, and other cultural heritage assets can be preserved, restored, and managed by community members. This guarantees accurate and sensitive cultural maintenance of the sites.

Offering homestay and culinary experiences: Residents can welcome visitors into their homes and provide genuine homestay experiences that fully immerse them in the customs and everyday life of the neighborhood. Through cooking classes and culinary tours, community members can also highlight regional cuisine, recipes, and food preparation techniques.

Guiding and interpreting cultural experiences: Community members can be trained as tour guides, interpreters, and cultural ambassadors to share the history, legends, and significance of local traditions with visitors. This adds depth and meaning to the cultural experiences for tourists.

Sustainable tourism planning and management: The local community can participate in the planning and decision-making processes for tourism development. This ensures tourism growth is aligned with the community values, concerns, and long-term interests, promoting sustainable practices.

Thus, it is concluded that by actively involving the local community, Atabae sub-district tourism can capitalize on the deep cultural knowledge and traditions of the people, offering visitors a truly immersive and authentic experience.

#### **4.4.2 Development of Community Skills and Knowledge in the Atabae Sub-district in Developing CBT**

Community empowerment through training and skills development can improve local ability to manage and operate tourism businesses, such as tour guide skills, managing the tourism industry, tourism services, and promotion. Developing skills and knowledge in the tourism industry is important to improve professionalism, service quality, and overall competitiveness of the tourism industry. Several trainings need to be implemented:

Improving Service Quality: By developing the skills and knowledge of employees in the tourism industry, such as tour guides, hotel waiters, guest houses, restaurants, and other service personnel, we can improve the quality of services provided to tourists. This can create a more satisfying and memorable tourist experience.

Innovation and Creativity: The development of skills and knowledge can also encourage innovation and creativity in the development of new tourism products, unique tourism experiences, and effective marketing strategies. This helps tourism destinations to remain relevant and attractive to tourists. Creativity is also the generator of new ideas and innovation as the translator of new ideas into new companies, new products, new services, new processes, or new production methods.

**Increasing Competitiveness:** Skills and knowledge that continue to be developed by tourism industry employees can increase the competitiveness of tourism destinations in the global market. A skilled and trained workforce can provide quality services that meet international standards.

**Workforce Empowerment:** Through developing skills and knowledge, workers in the tourism industry can be empowered to develop their careers, increase income, and increase professionalism in their field.

**Cultural and Environmental Preservation:** Skills and knowledge development can also help in preserving local culture and the environment in tourism destinations. A trained workforce can understand the importance of preserving cultural heritage and the environment and implement sustainable practices in tourism activities.

For the development of community skills and knowledge in the Atabae sub-district for Community-Based Tourism (CBT):

**Community Engagement:** Organize regular community meetings and workshops in the Atabae sub-district to discuss tourism development plans and gather input from residents. Establish a community tourism committee or council that includes representatives from different stakeholder groups (e.g., local leaders, youth, women, and indigenous groups) to ensure diverse perspectives are represented. Conduct participatory mapping exercises with the community to identify tourism assets, resources, and potential sites for development.

**Capacity Building:** Provide training programs for community members in the Atabae sub-district on hospitality skills, such as customer service, basic language skills, and cultural interpretation. Offer entrepreneurship and small business management training to enable community members to develop and manage tourism-related enterprises (e.g., homestays, guest houses, restaurants, handicraft production, and food services). Organize tour guide training workshops to equip residents with the knowledge and skills to lead engaging and informative tours of the community's cultural and natural attractions.

**Knowledge Sharing:** Facilitate exchange visits and study tours for communities in the Atabae sub-district to learn from successful CBT initiatives in other regions or countries. Collaborate with local universities, research institutions, or NGOs to document and preserve traditional knowledge, folklore, and community cultural

practices, which can be integrated into CBT experiences. Encourage communities to share their local stories, traditions, and expertise with visitors, encouraging intercultural exchange and mutual learning.

Based on interviews with tourism industry managers regarding knowledge sharing or exchange visits and comparative studies, the people of the Atabae sub-district have not carried out comparative studies at all, either domestically or abroad (Tourism industry manager, Personal Communication, January 2024).

Comparative studies are very important for people who are managing the tourism industry on their initiative. With comparative studies, people will have new thoughts, new experiences, new products, which are obtained from the results of the comparative studies and people will be more enthusiastic in developing the tourism industry.

**Sustainable Resource Management:** Provide training on sustainable land use, natural resource conservation, and environmentally friendly practices to communities in the Atabae sub-district. Establish a community-based monitoring system to track the impact of tourism activities on the local environment and identify mitigation strategies. Promote the use of renewable energy, waste management, and water conservation techniques in CBT initiatives. **Collaborative Governance:** Facilitate the establishment of a community-based tourism association or cooperative in the Atabae sub-district to oversee the planning, management, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Ensure the active involvement of local government authorities in the CBT development process, aligning with their development plans and policies. Encourage partnerships between the community, private sector, and civil society organizations to mobilize resources and expertise for CBT initiatives.

It is concluded that by implementing these targeted interventions, the community in the Atabae sub-district can develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and collaborative structures to actively participate in and lead the development of community-based tourism initiatives that are tailored to their local context and priorities.

#### **4.4.3 Strengthening Cultural Identity in the Development of CBT in the Atabae Sub-district**

In the Atabae sub-district, strengthening cultural identity through community-based tourism can take many forms. These include showcasing local culture through festivals and events, fostering cultural heritage through museums or cultural centers, educating and training local communities about the value of preserving their culture, and promoting handicrafts, crafts, and traditional foods as part of the tourist experience. To strengthen cultural identity in community-based tourism, it is also crucial to support local communities in keeping their traditions and customs.

The authenticity and distinctive appeal of the Atabae sub-district tourist destinations can be preserved by fostering a stronger sense of local cultural identity and traditional heritage through community involvement in tourism development. A few reasons community participation in tourism development can help maintain the authenticity and unique attraction of destinations in the Atabae sub-district:

**Local Knowledge and Expertise:** The community members living in the Atabae sub-district have a deep understanding of the local culture, traditions, and natural resources. By involving them in tourism planning and development, their valuable insights can help preserve the authentic character of the destinations.

**Ownership and Stewardship:** When the local community actively participates in tourism initiatives, they tend to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the destinations.

This can motivate them to protect and maintain the unique attractions, preventing over-commercialization or degradation.

**Sustainable Resource Management:** The community members are often best positioned to identify sustainable ways of utilizing local resources for tourism, whether it's natural landscapes, cultural heritage sites, or traditional handicrafts. Their involvement can ensure that tourism development does not deplete or damage these valuable assets. Their involvement can ensure that tourism development doesn't deplete or damage these valuable assets.

**Authentic Experiences for Visitors:** Community participation helps tourism offerings reflect the true essence of the local culture and way of life. Visitors can then

have more meaningful and immersive experiences, rather than encountering staged or inauthentic attractions.

**Equitable distribution of Benefits:** When the local community is engaged in tourism, the economic benefits are more likely to be distributed equitably, rather than concentrated in the hands of external stakeholders. This can improve local livelihoods and community well-being.

On the other hand, some ways that community participation in tourism development can help maintain the authenticity and unique attraction of destinations in the Atabae sub-district:

**Preservation of Cultural Traditions:** The local community has deep knowledge and understanding of the area's cultural traditions, customs, and heritage. By involving the community in tourism planning, they can ensure that cultural practices, events, and experiences are represented authentically and respectfully. This prevents the commercialization or dilution of cultural elements for the sake of tourism.

**Sustainable Use of Natural Resources:** The community members are familiar with the local natural environment and its fragile ecosystems. Their participation can guide the development of tourism activities in a way that minimizes the impact on natural resources, landscapes, and wildlife. This helps maintain the pristine and unspoiled character of the destinations.

**Promotion of Traditional Livelihoods:** Many locals in the Atabae sub-district are engaged in traditional occupations like fishing, farming, or artisanal crafts. Integrating these livelihoods into the tourism experience allows visitors to witness and appreciate the authentic way of life. This supports the continuity of traditional practices and skills, rather than replacing them with inauthentic tourism-oriented activities.

**Storytelling and Interpretation:** Community members can provide valuable insights and narratives about the history, legends, and significance of local sites and attractions. Their involvement in interpretation and guiding can ensure that the stories shared with visitors are accurate and reflective of the community perspectives. This enhances the authenticity and meaningfulness of the visitor experience.

**Ownership and Stewardship:** When the local community actively participates in tourism development, they develop a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the

destinations. This encourages them to take measures to protect the unique character and attributes of the sites, preventing over-exploitation or commercialization.

Promoting, protecting, and appreciating a nation or region's cultural heritage as a component of the travel experience is known as strengthening cultural identity in the context of tourism. Tourism destinations can enhance their appeal by providing tourists with distinctive and genuine experiences, which is achieved through fortifying their cultural identity. In addition, local communities can play an active role in the tourism sector as business partners and cultural promoters. In addition to promoting local economic development through sustainable tourism, this can help the residents of the Atabae sub-district feel more united and prouder of their cultural heritage. Tourism destinations can distinguish themselves from one another, add value to their offerings, and positively impact the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations by preserving and enhancing their cultural identity.

It is concluded that by promoting local culture through festivals, events, and heritage development, community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district can strengthen cultural identity. Local communities must receive instruction and training on maintaining their traditions and customs. Participation in tourism development ensures authenticity and unique attractions while preserving cultural traditions, managing sustainable resources, and promoting traditional livelihoods. This helps local communities maintain cultural pride, encourage economic development, and differentiate themselves from other destinations.

#### **4.4.4 Development of Small and Medium Enterprises UKM in the Atabae Sub-district in the Development of CBT**

The development of small and medium Enterprises (UKM) in the Atabae sub-district in the development of CBT aims to increase the involvement and contribution of SMEs in the development of CBT in the Atabae sub-district area. This can include providing training and mentoring for small and medium business owners, developing collaborative networks between SMEs, promoting local products, and creating economic opportunities for local communities through active participation in the tourism industry.

To strengthen the tourism sector overall, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in the sector must grow. The Atabae sub-district residents must develop several crucial elements for small and medium-sized enterprises to empower themselves, specifically:

**Local Economic Empowerment:** By giving residents job opportunities, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in the tourism sector can grow to be the foundation of the local economy. Local communities can participate directly in the tourism sector and improve their financial well-being and income by growing UKM tourism. Small and medium-sized enterprises have the potential to lower local unemployment and poverty rates. As a result, the Atabae sub-district's local economic empowerment needs to be strengthened.

**Product and Service Diversity:** Tourism SMEs often offer unique and different products and services, which can add value to tourism destinations. By strengthening SMEs, tourism destinations can offer more diverse and authentic experiences to tourists (Adikampana, 2017).

**Preserving Local Culture and Heritage:** Many tourism SMEs are involved in preserving local culture and heritage through their products, such as traditional handicrafts, local culinary delights, or traditional performing arts. By supporting the development of tourism SMEs, the community also helps preserve local cultural heritage and traditions.

**Social Inclusion:** The development of tourism SMEs can also increase social inclusion by providing opportunities for marginalized or vulnerable groups to get involved in the tourism industry. This can help reduce social and economic disparities in society.

It is concluded that, by supporting the development of SMEs in the tourism industry, society can strengthen the sustainability of the tourism sector, promote cultural diversity, and empower local communities to participate in sustainable tourism development.

#### **4.4.5 Environmental Conservation in the Atabae Sub-district in Developing CBT**

Through empowerment, communities can be involved in environmental conservation initiatives and sustainable natural resource management, thereby supporting environmentally friendly CBT development. With strong community empowerment, CBT development can be more inclusive, and sustainable, and provide greater benefits for local communities and tourists.

For environmental conservation, the entire region of Timor-Leste uses the Tara Bandu customary law expressly recognized in the Lei de Bases do Ambiente (Law on the Basics of the Timor-Leste Environment). Law Decree Number 26 of 2012 Dated 4 July, Article 1 states, Tara Bandu: are customs which are part of Timor-Leste culture which regulate the relationship between humans and the environment, in Article 8 Tara Bandu: The State recognizes the importance of all types of Tara Bandu as customs which are part of Timor-Leste culture and traditional regulatory mechanisms for relations between humans and the environment around them, thereby saying, After acting like Tara Bandu, in the provisions of this article, the state must guarantee the effective protection of the territories involved. These statements follow what is written in the Constitution Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which in Article 2 reads:

The State recognizes and respects the norms and customary uses in Timor-Leste which do not conflict with the Constitution and the laws and regulations that regulate this matter, especially with customary law. The concept of lulik is generally considered a local term for taboo, and being called sacred, holy, forbidden, and dangerous is very important in building social relations among Timorese people, demanding that nature be respected, and applied to sacred places and people performing rituals, as well as sacred trees that cannot be cut without asking permission (Trindade, 2016).

In this way, the local government and traditional leaders have the power to preserve the environment and conserve the ecosystem in the Atabae sub-district through traditional ceremonies which are called in the Tetum language (Tara Bandu), meaning hanging items through public ceremonies to show that, for now, it is prohibited. carrying out certain things or activities in the area (for example cutting down trees, harvesting crops, catching fish, or committing violence); Anyone who violates this prohibition will be subject to severe sanctions.

Tara Bandu is widely known by individuals and the government in Timor-Leste and has been implemented throughout the country to support natural resource management (Palmer & de Carvalho, 2008). In particular, Tara Bandu has an important function in conserving and managing local natural resources. Tara Bandu main function is to protect natural resources on land and sea; protect the environment, and preserve cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, for the Atabae sub-district, a local government officer said that

*“The Aidabaleten community of Atabae sub-district is implementing Tara Bandu, until now and is ongoing, which was established in 2014 through traditional ceremonies. Implementing Tara Bandu received support from international conservation (CI) to protect natural resources, forests, and marine biodiversity, such as coral, fish, shrimp, shellfish, mangroves, and seaweed.”*

A regional government officer (Personal communication, January 2024)

Tara Bandu can also help visitors respect local natural resources and local customs when carrying out activities in these places in the sense of CBT, in addition to minimizing the negative impacts of human activities (for example forest burning and unnoticed deforestation).

On the other hand, local communities in the Atabae sub-district are concerned about the socio-cultural impact of community-based tourism activities, especially female visitors who wear bikinis. If all visitors are made aware of Tara Bandu and the need to respect local customs and conserve local natural resources, it will help minimize socio-cultural impacts, said by Tutubaba Hamlet local government officer (Personal Communication, January 2024). In this way, tour operators in Timor-Leste provide information to visitors before visiting places that are still primitive. This increases awareness and minimizes environmental and socio-cultural impacts to achieve sustainable CBT development.

Because Tara Bandu customary law was in place, the locals regarded and obeyed its laws more. In general, Timorese people, and especially those in the Atabae subdistrict, trusted and respected customary law more, and it was both respected and feared by the community. For the sake of maintaining ecological balance, the sustainability of natural resources, and human well-being, it is crucial to preserve the

natural environment. We can preserve biodiversity, maintain clean air and water, and guarantee that future generations can enjoy natural resources by working toward conservation. By preserving the environment, we can lessen the effects of climate change and encourage the well-being of all living things on Earth.

## 4.5 Summary

The Timor-Leste government recognizes tourism as an important sector for economic growth and job creation. The tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the country economy, especially the Atabae sub-district. The development of the tourism industry is very important in the Atabae sub-district, where tourism is a sector that can provide direct benefits to local communities.

The development of the Atabae sub-district tourism industry has shown a positive impact on local communities and contributed to regional economic growth. Although tourism development in the area has not yet fully become a priority for the government and local communities. However, the growth of the tourism industry in the Atabae sub-district is expected to continue due to the increase in local and international visitors.

To develop the tourism industry, the Atabae sub-district needs to encourage participation and long-term benefits for local communities. Community participation in decision-making in the tourism industry is an important factor in creating tourism development that is sustainable, inclusive, and provides benefits for all parties involved. Apart from that, tourism also prioritizes local culture and traditions. Activities include cultural exploration, community engagement, and cultural exchange.

Therefore, to draw more tourists to an area where there is a tourism industry, such as a sub-district or district, an integrated promotional strategy must be planned and implemented there. These advertisements have to be made to make sure travellers in a specific target market are aware of all that a destination has to offer.

It cannot be denied that the Atabae sub-district tourism sector has improved local communities and boosted the area's economy. In light of this, the government of

Timor-Leste must develop and put into action a national strategy to guarantee that this occurs sustainably and enhances the welfare of regional populations.

Additionally, the Atabae sub-district in Bobonaro district, Timor-Leste, has emerged as a promising destination for community-based tourism initiatives. The local community in Atabae has been actively, yet slowly, involved in community-based tourism development activities. However, several mentioned challenges have weakened the development of CBT. Empowering residents and local tourism businesses can then strengthen their capacities and encourage sustainable tourism in the community.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of Research Findings

Due to its wealth of natural resources, distinctive customs, and rich culture, Timor-Leste has a lot of potential for growing its tourism industry. Since gaining independence, Timor-Leste tourism industry has expanded at the district and sub-district levels. The government is aware of how crucial the tourism industry is to job creation and overall economic expansion. In protected places such as the Gagap Lau Mountains Protected Area in the Atabae sub-district and the Nino Konis Santana National Park, the government is promoting the growth of ecotourism. Atabae tourism industry is defined by a few key elements that are unique to the region resources and capabilities: it is locally acceptable, small-scale, and offers chances for community involvement.

Atabae tourism was initiated by the local community without external support, focusing on preserving natural resources and traditional culture. Tourism activities in Atabae include nature exploration, homestays, and cultural experiences like farming, weaving, and attending local ceremonies. Other tourism services like kiosks, local transport, and handicrafts are also available, especially in the central Aidabaeten village. Tourism in Atabae involves direct local community participation and benefits, supporting sustainable practices, local livelihoods, and cultural heritage preservation.

#### 5.1.1 The Key Challenges of Tourism Development in the Atabae Sub-district

1. Weak community involvement in tourism development: Lack of active community participation in tourism planning, management, and promotion, Lack of long-term vision, and insufficient capital for quick development

2. Inadequate community capacity in tourism development: Lack of knowledge, experience, and expertise in the tourism sector, need for training, education, and skill development to empower the community
3. Insufficient tourism infrastructure and services: Limited access to transportation, accommodation, utilities, healthcare, and security and lack of accessibility to information and technology
4. Environmental sustainability challenges: Need to balance economic benefits with environmental and cultural sustainability, ensuring tourism development does not damage the environment or erode the local culture
5. Limited access and promotion of tourism markets: Technological limitations affecting tourism promotion and information access, challenges in market access and effective market promotion
6. Insufficient regulatory and policy framework: Lack of specific regulations and policies supporting CBT development.
7. Inadequate community financial resources: Limited funds for infrastructure, business capital, promotion, and resource preservation.

### **5.1.2 The Ways Community Empowerment Can Help in Developing Community-based Tourism (CBT) in the Atabae Sub-district**

1. Promoting community participation in decision-making for CBT: Ensures community needs and preferences are reflected in tourism development, fosters community ownership and responsibility for tourism initiatives, and allows communities to leverage their local knowledge and cultural expertise.
2. Developing community skills and knowledge for CBT: Improving service quality through training in hospitality, customer service, etc. Fostering innovation and creativity in tourism product development, increasing the overall competitiveness of the tourism industry, empowering the local workforce, and preserving cultural/environmental resources.
3. Strengthening cultural identity through CBT: Showcasing local culture, traditions, and heritage. Involving the community in preserving authenticity and unique attractions. Supporting traditional livelihoods and sustainable resource management.

4. Developing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for CBT: Empowering local economic development through SME tourism, diversifying tourism products and services, preserving local culture and heritage, promoting social inclusion
5. Environmental conservation through community empowerment: Leveraging traditional Tara Bandu customs for sustainable resource management, increasing community awareness and respect for local environmental norms, and minimizing negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism.

## **5.2 The Guidelines to Support Community Empowerment in the Development of Community-based Tourism in the Atabae Sub-district**

Based on the study on the roles of society in community-based tourism (CBT) development in Timor-Leste, here are some key guidelines and suggestions for the government and agencies involved to support community empowerment in the development of community-based tourism in the Atabae sub-district:

1. Community Engagement Committee: Assemble a special committee of local government representatives, leaders in the community, and tourist stakeholders. The committee's primary duty would be to enable ongoing dialogue, cooperation, and consultation with the local populations of the Atabae sub-district. This will ensure that the communities have a direct say in the tourism development process and that their goals and wants are taken into account.
2. Capabilities programs Building: The committee should oversee the organization and implementation of targeted projects meant to improve the capacities of the surrounding communities. Small company management and entrepreneurship, hospitality and customer service, tour guiding and interpretation, and community-based tourism planning and management are a few of the subjects these courses might address. The training should be tailored to the specific needs and skill gaps identified in the local communities.
3. Access to Finance and Resources: To help the local communities create and oversee tourism-related projects, the committee should make it easier for them to

obtain funds, supplies, and technical help. This can entail creating a special fund for the development of tourism or making connections with microfinance organizations and other funding sources.

4. Infrastructure and Product Development: To determine and rank the needs for infrastructure and tourism product development, the committee should collaborate with the local government and communities. This could entail helping to upgrade the villages' water and transportation infrastructure, lodging options, and tourism experiences built around their natural and cultural resources.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation: A framework for tracking and assessing how community-based tourism activities are affecting the surrounding communities should be put in place by the committee. This would entail getting input, monitoring important performance metrics, and modifying the programs as necessary to make sure the local communities are being empowered.

6. Local Government: Promoting community-based tourism development should be a top priority for the Atabae Sub-district Administration and the Bobonaro Municipal Government. They can coordinate the many parties, offer funds for infrastructure and capacity building, and support policies and regulations.

7. Community Development Agencies: It is advisable to involve non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that concentrate on regional economic and social development. These organizations can plan training courses, aid with community mobilization, and offer technical support to nearby areas.

8. Tourism Agencies: The National Tourism Authority of Timor-Leste and the Bobonaro Tourism Office should be involved in guiding tourism planning, product development, and marketing. They can also help connect the local communities with tourism industry partners and resources.

9. Education and Training Institutions: Vocational training centers, tourism schools, and universities can design and deliver capacity-building programs tailored to the needs of the Atabae sub-district communities. These programs could cover topics such as hospitality management, tour guiding, entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism practices.

10. Financial Institutions: Microfinance institutions, banks, and development finance agencies should be engaged to provide access to credit and other

financial services for community members to start or expand tourism-related businesses. They can also offer financial literacy training to help the communities manage tourism-generated income effectively.

By establishing a dedicated Community Engagement Committee, the government can ensure that the community-based tourism development in Atabae Sub-district is truly driven by the local communities and that their capacities are continuously strengthened to participate in and benefit from the tourism industry.

### 5.3 Theoretical Discussion

Based on Jafari (1980), to develop CBT, it is necessary to pay attention to the following points.

1. Empowerment of local communities: Local communities must be actively involved in decision-making and tourism management in their destinations.
2. Preservation of culture and cultural heritage: Community-based tourism must pay attention to and preserve local culture, traditions, and cultural heritage.
3. Equitable economic benefits: Tourism must provide fair and equitable economic benefits for local communities, including through the creation of jobs and business opportunities.
4. Community participation: Local communities must be involved in developing tourism programs and benefit from tourism activities.
5. Environmental sustainability: Community-based tourism must preserve the environment, reduce negative impacts, and prioritize environmentally friendly practices.

Participation in decision-making means that local communities can voice their hopes, desires, and concerns regarding tourism development, which can then be used as input in the planning process. Murphy (1985) stated that the involvement of local communities in the tourism planning and development process is a determining factor in the sustainability of tourism destination development. Taking a role in the distribution of tourism benefits implies that local communities should have equal opportunities to obtain financial benefits from tourism and links with other sectors.

Meanwhile, according to Timothy (1999), point of view if tourism development in an area means CBT manages it well and will accommodate employment opportunities for residents. Conversely, related parties such as the government and NGOs, both national and international, must provide training support related to tourism so that tourism development carried out by the community cannot be doubted and will be sustainable because the community already has experience in tourism development and has received training from related parties. For this reason, tourism development must be able to create jobs and business opportunities as well as provide training and education for local communities to understand the impacts or benefits of tourism.

This research also found that to develop or implement Community-Based Tourism in the Atabae sub-district, one must pay attention to the fundamental challenges faced by the community in the Atabae sub-district, such as training community skills and knowledge in the tourism sector. The tourism sector supports small and medium tourism businesses through financing, as similarly mentioned by Timothy (1999).

The researcher argues that the development of CBT is not only intended for the community but also concerns the general public in the sense of national and international visitors. There needs to be collaboration between the government and the private sector to provide training to the community related to tourism so that CBT develops and also, CBT can be beneficial for society itself as well as sustainability. In addition to preserving culture and cultural heritage, increasing community participation in the development of CBT in Atabae so that people feel like they are owners in developing the tourism industry in their area and enjoy the benefits for themselves for the future as expressed by Jafari (1980) and Murphy (1985).

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher thinks that future research may reveal CBT development from more in-depth perspectives. Conducting a thorough assessment to better understand the special needs, challenges, and capabilities of the Atabae local community could help establish a more inclusive and collaborative

approach to planning and implementing CBT programs. The specific recommendations for more research are as follows:

1. Analyzing Innovative Methods of Community Involvement: Analyze successful community involvement tactics from other popular tourist destinations that have enhanced the influence of nearby communities. Analyze potential modifications and applications of these concepts in the Atabae environment to enhance community engagement and ownership.

2. Evaluating the outcomes of capacity-building initiatives: Analyze the effectiveness of the community of Atabae's ongoing efforts to improve training and skill sets. After identifying areas for improvement, develop more targeted and efficient capacity-building initiatives to equip the community with the skills and knowledge it requires.

3. Analyzing the role of cultural norms and customary organizations: Examine the most effective means of integrating traditional organizations such as the Tara Bandu customary law into the management and supervision of CBT initiatives. Consider methods for promoting the community's cultural identity and making use of traditions to promote the growth of sustainable tourism.

4. Analyzing the potential for community-run tourism businesses: Look for methods to assist the Atabae community in establishing and managing tourism-related businesses, such as community-owned cooperatives for dining establishments, lodging, or handicrafts.

5. Examining the barriers and support networks required to empower the community to assume leadership roles as service providers and business owners in the travel and tourism industry.

6. Analyzing the current regulatory and policy frameworks at the local, state, and federal levels to identify any gaps and areas where support for the advancement of CBT can be reinforced. Collaborate with legislators and government representatives to improve the climate so that community-led tourism initiatives can succeed.

7. Exploring innovative financing and resource mobilization strategies: Examine various funding options, such as public-private partnerships, social impact investing, and community-based crowdfunding, to support the expansion of local

businesses and tourism infrastructure. Find out how to increase the Atabae community access to capital and financial resources so they can finance projects or activities related to tourism. Subsequent research in these domains will facilitate the Atabae sub-district's comprehension of the community's requirements and capacities, devise more feasible strategies for enabling the local population, and create favorable circumstances for the sustained growth of community-based tourism.

8. Understanding the increasing importance of civil society roles in the development of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Timor-Leste and identifying the specific ways in which civil society organizations in Timor-Leste are contributing to the growth and success of CBT initiatives in the country. In addition, it analyzes the challenges and opportunities faced by civil society in Timor-Leste in terms of their engagement and involvement in CBT development and explores the relationship between civil society, the government, and the private sector in the context of CBT development in Timor-Leste. Also, deriving lessons and best practices that could be applied to enhance the role of civil society in CBT development in other countries or regions facing similar challenges.

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION

**The Mae Fah Luang University Ethics Committee on Human Research**

Certificate of Achievement

for

Afonso Goncalves

has successfully completed self-online training, entitled;

**Human Research Protection**

on Nov 23, 2023



Associate Prof., Maj. Gen. Sangkae Chamnanvanakij, M.D.

Chairperson of the Mae Fah Luang University Ethics Committee on Human Research

Issued date

Nov 23, 2023

Valid until

Nov 22, 2025

## APPENDIX B

### THE SDG PRIMER



## APPENDIX C

### GOOD CLINICAL PRACTICE





# CURRICULUM VITAE

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### **NAME**

Afonso Goncalves

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

2010

Economic Management (SE)

Bachelor degree (S1)

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata

College of Tourism Economics

2007

Ahli Madya Pariwisata (A.md, Par)

Diploma (D3)

Akademi Pariwisata Kupang, Indonesia

Kupang Tourism Academy

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

2014

Permanent staff at the Ministry of Tourism  
Timor-Leste to date.

2012 – 2013

Contract at the National Directorate of  
Marketing. Ministry of Tourism Timor-Leste

2010 - 2012

Receptionist & Housekeeping

Hotel Vila Verde, Dili Timor-Leste

2001 – 2002

As an Administration and Logistics

Oxfam International, Cova-Lima District

Timor-Leste