

# The Current Observation and Challenges of Tourism Development in Batur Global Geopark Area, Bali Province, Indonesia

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## Abstract

Geopark is a designated physical landscape with a geological heritage value. It is seen as one of approaches to combine both conservation and sustainable economic development. Geopark aims to attract tourists that ultimately bring impacts to the development, especially to the local governments and communities. The first global geopark in Indonesia, that is recognized by UNESCO is Batur Geopark. Batur Geopark is located in Kintamani, Bangli District, Bali Province. The main purpose of Batur Global Geopark development is to balance between the geology, environment, social-culture, economic, and conservation. Creating geoparks as tourism destination would achieve not only scientific & natural resource preservation, but also development of tourism. Since Geopark is considered a new concept in Indonesia, the main question is does geopark indeed boost tourism? If yes, how significant is it compared to the other tourism in a particular area, such as Bali? What are the challenges faced in the development of geopark?

Having the above questions, this study selects Batur Geopark as a case study and assesses to what extent Batur Geopark contributes to the tourism development in Bangli District and Bali Province. A framework to do this assessment is set up using geopark criteria as well as trend analysis since the establishment of Batur Geopark. To get comprehensive picture, we conducted field survey in Geopark Batur and ask questions to the local community, local champions, businessmen, tourism actors, local government agencies and scholars in tourism development, and we also explore the potential and the challenges of the tourism development of Batur Global Geopark. Findings indicate that developing Geopark as ecotourism is a complicated issue. Geopark is seen in various & different perspectives by different actors. While the aim of geopark is to trigger tourism development, some contra geopark and tourism activities exist, such as sand mining that make environmental and infrastructure problems. Other activities include farming that does not fit well with the geopark aims. The roles of local leaders are obviously important to engage the community. There is also a challenge due to negative perceptions of tourism development in the area as tourism is seen exploiting the nature. Local communities prefer to not to be involved in the tourism sector because they feel that tourism does not affect to increase their income and the quality of life. To address the challenges in the development of geopark, a number of activities should be considered, as follows: (i) Socialization and awareness raising of the importance of

conservation in the area's geological heritage, (ii) Batur Global Geopark needs improvement of sense of pride in local community toward their region, (iii) Creation of local enterprises, new jobs and high-quality training courses to support the economy. Meanwhile, the development of Batur Global Geopark should be coordinated with all stakeholders from local communities, local entrepreneur, local non-governmental organization and local government.

Keyword: Geopark, local community, tourism development, Batur Geopark, Bali