

A Legal Analysis of Marine Tourism Development and Investment within the Framework of the Special Economic Zone in Sekotong Subdistrict, West Lombok Regency

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ABSTRACT

Marine tourism development in Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency, has grown rapidly as part of an investment strategy within a special economic zone framework. However, this expansion raises legal issues related to coastal governance, environmental protection, and social justice for local communities. This research aims to conduct a normative juridical analysis of marine tourism development and investment to evaluate the consistency, synchronization, and harmonization of legal norms governing coastal and investment regulations. The research applies a normative juridical approach focusing on statutory analysis and secondary legal materials as the primary sources of examination. The findings indicate that Indonesia possesses a relatively comprehensive legal framework, yet regulatory disharmony, institutional coordination weaknesses, and the risk of unequal economic benefit distribution remain potential challenges. Without consistent legal governance, these conditions may trigger social conflict and ecological pressure. Therefore, strengthening regulatory harmonization and sustainability-oriented legal approaches is essential to ensure fair and sustainable marine tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

The development of marine tourism in recent decades has become one of the strategic instruments in encouraging regional economic growth while strengthening Indonesia's position as an archipelagic country that has a huge wealth of coastal and marine resources (Islahuddin et al., 2024; Pulungan, 2024; Santoso, 2025; Supriyanto, 2022). The concept of modern tourism development is no longer solely oriented towards the exploitation of natural potential, but is directed at the integration of economic development, environmental protection, and investment legal certainty in order to create a sustainable development ecosystem. Coastal areas have an important position as a new economic space that is able to attract investment, create jobs, and improve the welfare of local communities (Togatorop, 2021). The Indonesian government then adopted the special economic zone (SEZ) approach as a policy instrument to accelerate the growth of strategic areas through the provision of fiscal incentives, ease of licensing, and regulatory certainty for investors (Akbar & Kurniawan, 2025; Hutauruk et al., 2023; Pramesti et al., 2026; Setiadi & Herman, 2025). Sekotong District in West Lombok Regency is one of the coastal areas that has extraordinary marine tourism potential, ranging from small island

clusters, coral reef ecosystems, to the beauty of beaches that have not been fully developed optimally. This potential makes Sekotong an area that is conceptually very relevant to be studied in the perspective of development law, especially how the juridical framework is able to bridge investment interests with the protection of community rights and environmental sustainability.

The reality of marine tourism development in Sekotong shows the existence of various structural problems related to coastal space governance, conflicts of interest between investors and local communities, and weak regulatory synchronization between sectors. The phenomenon that has emerged shows that tourism development often moves faster than the readiness of legal and institutional instruments at the regional level. This imbalance has the potential to trigger land disputes, degradation of coastal environments, and the marginalization of communities that depend on marine resources for their livelihoods (Permatasari, 2025). Investment in marine tourism areas tends to be concentrated in large-capital actors, while local business actors still face limited access to licensing and financing. This phenomenon raises fundamental questions about the extent to which the legal framework of special economic zones is able to ensure the fair distribution of economic benefits, investment transparency, and protection of the social rights of coastal communities. Juridical analysis is important to assess whether marine tourism development policies are really running according to the principles of sustainable development or create new inequality.

This problem is increasingly relevant when viewed from empirical data on tourism development in West Nusa Tenggara Province. Before the pandemic, tourist visits to NTB had reached around 3.7 million people in 2017, making the tourism sector one of the main contributors to regional GDP. Post-pandemic, the recovery trend shows a resurgence, with domestic tourist visits recorded at more than 1 million people in a single monthly period in 2025, although the distribution of economic benefits has not been evenly distributed (Akbar et al., 2022). In West Lombok Regency, the poverty rate is still in the double digit range and relatively higher than some tourism areas that have developed well-established. On the other hand, investment growth in the coastal tourism sector continues to increase, but environmental reports show pressure on coral reef ecosystems due to development activities that have not been fully controlled (Masykar & Fisa, 2022). The inequality between investment growth and the welfare of local communities emphasizes the gap between development goals and the reality of their implementation, requiring a more in-depth legal study.

Several previous studies have examined issues related to marine tourism development, investment law, and special economic zones. Togatorop (2021) analyzed the legal framework of SEZs in Indonesia, concluding that SEZs offer significant investment incentives but highlighted challenges in supervision and community involvement, though the study did not specifically address marine tourism in ecologically sensitive coastal areas. Agatha and Riska (2024) conducted a legal analysis of investment facilities in SEZs, emphasizing that regulatory harmonization remains a key challenge, yet their study did not explore the social and environmental dimensions of tourism development within SEZs. Similarly, Sirait et al. (2024) examined foreign investment conflicts in SEZs, identifying issues arising from overlapping regulations and weak coordination, but did not specifically analyze marine tourism governance in coastal areas. Based on these reviews, several research gaps are identified: research specifically analyzing marine tourism development within the SEZ framework in coastal areas

with high ecological sensitivity remains limited; previous studies have not systematically explored harmonization of legal norms across investment, spatial planning, environmental protection, and coastal management sectors; and there is a lack of research integrating normative juridical analysis with assessment of legal implementation effectiveness in specific coastal areas such as Sekotong District. This study addresses these gaps by offering novelty in focusing specifically on legal analysis of marine tourism development and investment within the SEZ framework in Sekotong District, employing a normative juridical approach with a statute approach to assess consistency and harmonization of legal norms, and integrating analysis of both the legal framework and regulatory implementation challenges to provide a comprehensive assessment of marine tourism governance.

The development of marine tourism areas and investment basically has a strong legal foundation in Indonesia's system of laws and regulations that emphasizes the principles of sustainability, legal certainty, and social justice. Article 3 of Law Number 25 of 2007 concerning Investment emphasizes that investment is carried out based on the principles of legal certainty, openness, accountability, and environmental insight, while Article 15 letter b requires every investor to maintain environmental sustainability (Zamil & Trisnamansyah, 2022). Furthermore, the development of areas based on special economic zones obtained a legal basis through Law Number 39 of 2009 concerning Special Economic Zones, especially Article 2 which states that SEZs were established to accelerate national economic development through increased investment and labor absorption. On the other hand, the management of coastal areas is regulated in Law Number 27 of 2007 jo. Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the Management of Coastal Areas and Small Islands, where Article 7 emphasizes that the use of coastal areas must pay attention to the sustainability of ecosystems and the rights of local communities. This legal framework has normatively provided a comprehensive foundation for investment-based marine tourism development, but the main challenge lies in the harmonization of implementation between regulations and the effectiveness of supervision at the regional level.

The tension between empirical conditions (*das sein*) and expected normative conditions (*das sollen*) is a crucial point in this study. Ideally, the development of marine tourism within the framework of a special economic zone should result in inclusive economic growth, maintain environmental sustainability, and provide legal certainty for all parties. The reality on the ground shows that there is a gap between legal norms and implementation practices (Nugraha, 2024). *Das sein* shows the potential for spatial conflicts, inequality of investment access, and the risk of environmental damage, while *das sollen* demands the creation of transparent, participatory, and social justice-oriented governance. The gap between the two emphasizes the need for juridical evaluation that is not only descriptive, but also critical to regulatory and institutional effectiveness. This analysis is important so that law does not stop as a normative text, but becomes a real instrument in directing just and sustainable development.

Based on the background description that has been presented, it can be seen that there is a gap between the normatively comprehensive legal framework and the reality of the implementation of marine tourism development in coastal areas, especially in Sekotong District. Regulatory incompatibility, weak institutional coordination, and potential social inequality and environmental pressures indicate that development within the framework of

special economic zones has not fully proceeded in accordance with the principles of sustainability and social justice. Therefore, an in-depth juridical study is needed to examine the suitability of legal norms, investment implementation, and efforts to harmonize regulations in the governance of marine tourism areas. Based on this, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows: first, what is the legal framework for the development of marine tourism in special economic zones in Indonesia?; second, how is the implementation of investment in the development of marine tourism in Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency?; and third, how is the harmonization of the law and efforts to strengthen the governance of marine tourism areas to achieve sustainable and just development?

Based on the background this study aims to conduct a normative juridical analysis of marine tourism development and investment within the framework of special economic zones in Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency. This research contributes by providing a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework governing marine tourism development and investment in SEZs, offering insights into the implementation challenges and regulatory disharmony affecting coastal governance, and contributing recommendations for strengthening legal harmonization and governance to achieve sustainable and just marine tourism development. The benefits of this research are expected to be twofold: theoretically, it enriches the academic discourse on investment law, coastal governance, and sustainable development in the context of special economic zones; practically, it serves as a reference for policymakers, local governments, and stakeholders in formulating more integrated, participatory, and environmentally conscious policies for marine tourism development that balance economic growth with social justice and ecological sustainability.

METHOD

The research method used in this study was a normative juridical method, focusing on the analysis of legal norms contained in laws, regulations, legal doctrines, and relevant legal decisions. This approach treated law as an autonomous system of norms, directing the analysis toward the legal framework governing marine tourism development and investment within special economic zones. The study examined the consistency, synchronization, and harmonization of laws and regulations to assess their alignment with principles of sustainable development, coastal environmental protection, and social justice. The focus was on the normative structure of law rather than empirical field practices.

The study relied entirely on secondary data, including primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials consisted of laws and regulations related to investment, special economic zones, coastal area management, spatial planning, and environmental protection. Secondary legal materials included scientific literature, legal textbooks, academic journals, and policy documents that provided conceptual explanations of legal norms. Tertiary legal materials were used to support clarification of legal terms and concepts. Data were collected through library research and analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method and a statute approach to examine the relationships between legal norms. The results were used to formulate conclusions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the legal framework for marine tourism development and investment from a normative legal perspective.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the Legal Framework for Marine Tourism Development in Special Economic Zones

The development of marine tourism within the framework of a special economic zone is part of a national strategy to encourage economic growth based on the potential of coastal areas owned by Indonesia as an archipelagic country. The special economic zone (SEZ) approach places tourism as a leading sector that is able to create a multiplier effect on other sectors such as trade, transportation, services, and micro businesses of local communities (Missa et al., 2025). However, the development of marine tourism areas is not only an economic agenda, but also a complex legal issue because it concerns the regulation of coastal space, environmental protection, investment certainty, and social justice guarantees for local communities. Therefore, an analysis of the legal framework that governs the development of marine tourism in SEZs is important to ensure that development policies run in accordance with the principles of the state of law and sustainable development.

The main foundation of the legal framework for investment in Indonesia is regulated in Law Number 25 of 2007 concerning Investment. This law emphasizes that investments must be carried out based on the principles of legal certainty, openness, accountability, equal treatment, and environmental considerations as stated in Article 3. This principle shows that investment law is not only aimed at attracting capital, but also regulates the social and environmental responsibility of investors. Article 15 letter b explicitly requires investors to maintain environmental sustainability, which in the context of marine tourism has strategic significance because the development of coastal areas is very vulnerable to ecosystem damage. Thus, from the normative level, investment law has integrated the economic and ecological dimensions as an inseparable whole.

The legal framework is strengthened by Law Number 39 of 2009 concerning Special Economic Zones, which provides a legal basis for the establishment of certain areas as centers of economic growth with special facilities and incentives. Article 2 of this law states that SEZs are established to accelerate national economic development through increased investment and job creation. In the context of marine tourism, SEZs are policy instruments that allow for simplification of licensing, fiscal incentives, and infrastructure facilitation. However, these facilities must remain within the corridor of environmental law and spatial planning so as not to cause excessive exploitation (Safi, 2023). This is where the role of law as a tool to control development becomes important, namely to ensure that the acceleration of investment does not sacrifice the sustainability of coastal ecosystems.

More specific regulations regarding coastal areas are contained in Law Number 27 of 2007 jo. Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the Management of Coastal Areas and Small Islands. Article 7 of this law emphasizes that the use of coastal areas must pay attention to the sustainability of resources, environmental carrying capacity, and the rights of local communities. This provision has important implications for the development of marine tourism in SEZs because it emphasizes that coastal space is not just an object of investment, but a living space for people and ecosystems that must be protected. Thus, marine tourism development must be subject to the precautionary principle, community participation, and ecosystem-based management.

The environmental legal framework as stipulated in Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management is also an important pillar in the development of marine tourism. This law requires every activity that has the potential to have a major impact on the environment to have an environmental impact analysis (EIA) (Mamangkey, 2024). The development of coastal tourism areas that involve reclamation, resort development, or large tourism infrastructure is clearly a category of activities that require strict environmental studies. The presence of an EIA is not just an administrative procedure, but a legal instrument to prevent environmental damage that can harm future generations.

Although the national legal framework looks comprehensive, the main challenge lies in the harmonization of implementation between sectors. Investment, spatial planning, environmental and coastal management regulations are often under different legal regimes with fragmented institutional authority. This condition has the potential to cause policy overlap, conflict of authority, and weak supervision. In practice, accelerating investment often takes precedence over environmental monitoring, so the principles of sustainable development are not always optimally realized. This shows that the problem of marine tourism development is not only a lack of regulations, but the effectiveness of legal governance.

The role of provincial and district governments is very important in translating national norms into local policies. Regional autonomy gives the authority for local governments to regulate licensing, spatial planning, and management of tourist areas. However, without good coordination with national policies, such autonomy can lead to regulatory insynchronization. In the context of coastal areas such as Sekotong, local governments must be able to balance investment interests with the protection of coastal communities that depend on marine resources as their main livelihood. The analysis of the legal framework also needs to look at the dimension of social justice. The development of marine tourism often creates economic enclaves that only investors and tourists enjoy, while local communities are marginalized. The principle of social justice which is the goal of the state as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution requires that every development policy provide equal benefits. Therefore, the law must function as an instrument of redistribution of development benefits, not just a protector of capital interests.

The gap between legal norms and development practices shows that there is a distance between *das sollen* and *das sein*. Normatively, the law has regulated sustainability, community participation, and environmental protection. However, empirically, its implementation still faces various obstacles such as weak supervision, limited institutional capacity, and dominance of short-term economic interests. This condition shows that strengthening the legal framework is not enough through the formation of new regulations, but also through increasing institutional integrity and public participation.

Analysis of the legal framework for marine tourism development in special economic zones shows that normatively Indonesia has built a fairly comprehensive regulatory system to regulate the relationship between investment, environmental protection, and community interests. Various laws in the fields of investment, coastal area management, the environment, and spatial planning form a network of norms that are conceptually complementary. This legal structure shows the state's awareness that the development of coastal areas cannot be separated from the principles of sustainability and social responsibility. However, the completeness of regulations does not automatically guarantee successful implementation on the ground, as new

laws are effective when translated through consistent institutional practices. In the context of marine tourism areas, the complexity of cross-sectoral regulation often poses coordination challenges that make it difficult to implement legal norms optimally. Thus, the main problem does not lie in the lack of rules, but in the ability of the legal system to manage interactions between regulations so that they do not overlap.

The challenge of regulatory harmonization becomes even more evident when various economic, environmental, and social interests meet in the same policy space. Each sector has a different legal regime and institutional authority, so without strong coordination, policy implementation can easily become fragmented. This condition can create administrative loopholes that are used by business actors to avoid environmental or social obligations. In addition, the effectiveness of supervision is often hampered by the limited capacity of local institutions in monitoring the development of coastal areas that continue to develop. In fact, supervision is a key element to ensure that investments do not deviate from the principles of sustainability. Without firm and consistent supervision, the law will only become a normative document that has no real coercive force in development practice.

Legal alignment with the environment and social justice is an important measure in assessing the quality of governance of marine tourism development. Good regulation should be able to ensure that investment benefits are distributed fairly while maintaining the carrying capacity of coastal ecosystems. When legal implementation is weak, development can shift into a process of exploitation that benefits a few parties at the expense of local communities and the environment. Social conflicts, ecosystem degradation, and loss of living space for coastal communities are real risks that can arise if the law fails to carry out its control function. In the long run, the damage will actually reduce tourist attractions and harm the economy of the region itself. Therefore, improving the implementation of the law is not only an administrative need, but is the main prerequisite for the development of marine tourism to be truly in line with the goal of establishing a special economic zone as an instrument of sustainable welfare.

2. Implementation of Investment in Marine Tourism Development in Sekotong District

The implementation of investment in the development of marine tourism in Sekotong District is a concrete illustration of how investment policies meet social, ecological, and administrative realities at the regional level. Sekotong has a strategic position as a coastal area that holds superior marine tourism potential, ranging from clusters of small islands, natural beaches, to marine ecosystems that are domestic and international tourist attractions. This potential encourages the entry of investors to develop resorts, recreational facilities, and tourism infrastructure aimed at increasing the competitiveness of destinations (Rizqi et al., 2023). However, this development does not take place in an empty space, but within the legal framework of spatial planning, environment, and coastal area management that demands a balance between economic growth and the protection of natural resources. In practice, investment implementation is often faced with problems of institutional coordination, conflicts in the use of space, and inequality of economic access between large business actors and local communities. This situation shows that investment in marine tourism areas is not only an economic issue, but also a legal governance issue that determines the direction of long-term development.

The investment implementation process in Sekotong has followed a policy of simplifying regulations aimed at creating a conducive investment climate. The electronic-based licensing system and one-stop integrated service mechanism provide a relatively faster administrative framework than in the past. Nonetheless, the reality on the ground shows that simplifying procedures has not completely eliminated bureaucratic bottlenecks. Investors still face the issue of synchronization between environmental permits, location permits, and spatial suitability, while communities are often less involved in the initial planning stage. Lack of transparency in the preparation of investment projects can raise public suspicion and social resistance, especially when development is perceived to reduce public access to coastal areas (Hadi Adha et al., 2024). In this context, licensing law should not only be understood as an administrative instrument, but also as a mechanism for protecting the public interest through meaningful participation.

The implementation of investment has also brought significant changes in the local economic structure. The presence of tourism investment creates job opportunities in the service, transportation, culinary, and accommodation sectors that were previously limited to coastal areas. Some local communities have begun to adapt to the tourism economy through small businesses such as boat rentals, homestays, and the trade of local products. However, this economic transformation does not always take place evenly. Large-cap business actors tend to dominate the main tourism sector, while coastal communities are still in the informal economy with limited access to capital and training. This inequality shows that investment has not been fully an instrument of community empowerment. Without affirmative policies that integrate local communities into the tourism value chain, marine tourism development has the potential to create new economic gaps.

The environmental aspect is a dimension that greatly determines the sustainability of marine tourism development in Sekotong. Physical development activities such as coastal reclamation, wharf construction, and the development of tourist facilities have the potential to disrupt the balance of coastal ecosystems. Coral reefs, seagrass beds, and seawater quality are ecological components that are highly sensitive to human intervention. Although every investment project is formally required to have environmental documents, monitoring its implementation is often not optimal. Lack of field monitoring causes environmental protection standards to not always be applied consistently. Ecosystem damage not only has an impact on tourism, but also on the fisheries sector which is the source of livelihood for local communities. Therefore, investment implementation must be understood as a process that requires real integration between investment law and environmental law.

The relationship between investors and local communities is an important factor in determining the stability of tourist area development. When development is carried out without effective communication, there is a potential for social conflict that can hinder the investment project itself. Coastal communities have a historical relationship with coastal areas as living spaces, cultural spaces, and economic spaces (Aprilia & Amalina, 2023). If investment reduces access to these spaces, people can feel marginalized. Such conflicts are often not just a matter of land ownership law, but rather a matter of social justice and recognition of the rights of local communities. Therefore, the implementation of investment requires a participatory approach that recognizes the community as the subject of development, not just the object of policy.

The role of local governments is very strategic in managing these dynamics. The government not only functions as a regulator, but also as a mediator between investment interests and community protection. Regional institutional capacity determines the effectiveness of supervision of investors and the consistency of regulatory implementation. In the context of Sekotong, policies are needed that encourage investor social responsibility in a concrete way, for example through local economic empowerment programs, workforce training, and protection of community access to coastal resources. Without strong policy intervention, investment can grow exclusively and ignore the interests of local communities.

The implementation of investment in marine tourism areas is also closely related to regional spatial planning. Conflicts in the use of space between conservation areas, fishermen's fishing areas, and tourism zones often arise due to unintegrated planning. When spatial planning is not consistently enforced, development tends to follow a market logic that prioritizes short-term profits. Even though coastal areas are ecological spaces that have a limit of carrying capacity. Neglect of spatial planning principles can lead to environmental damage that is difficult to recover. Therefore, spatial planning law must be the main controlling instrument in the development of marine tourism areas. Investment implementation also touches on aspects of local culture and identity. Sekotong is not only an economic space, but also a social space that has the cultural value of coastal communities. Tourism development that is insensitive to local culture has the potential to erode the identity of the local community. Therefore, marine tourism investment should adopt a community-based approach that respects local wisdom. The integration of local culture in destination development can be an economic force while maintaining social sustainability.

Overall, the implementation of investment in marine tourism development in Sekotong District shows that investment is not just an economic activity, but a multidimensional process that brings together the legal system, market dynamics, social interests, and environmental sustainability in one interrelated policy space. Every investment project in coastal areas carries implications that go beyond physical development alone, as it affects the local economic structure, space utilization patterns, and historically formed social relations of coastal communities. Therefore, the success of development cannot be judged only by the amount of investment value or the number of tourist facilities built, but by the extent to which the investment is able to create a balance between economic growth and the protection of the public interest. In the context of Sekotong, poorly managed investments have the potential to put pressure on coastal resources, reduce people's access to their living spaces, and widen the economic gap between large business actors and local communities. This condition confirms that the development of marine tourism must be placed within a comprehensive governance framework, where the law functions as a guide as well as a controller of the development process.

The role of law in this framework is very crucial because the law is not only tasked with providing certainty for investors, but also protecting the interests of the community and maintaining environmental sustainability. Good investment governance requires licensing transparency, consistent supervision, and public participation mechanisms that allow the public to be involved in the decision-making process. When the law is applied firmly and consistently, it can be an instrument that guarantees that the development of marine tourism runs within the corridor of justice and does not come at the expense of future generations. On the other hand,

weak law enforcement can open up space for exploitative development practices, where short-term gains take precedence over long-term sustainability. In such a situation, the law loses its social function as a protector of the balance between economic and ecological interests. Therefore, strengthening legal governance is the main requirement so that investment does not develop wildly, but is directed towards sustainable development goals.

Without the strengthening of adequate legal and institutional systems, the development of marine tourism in Sekotong risks creating social and ecological impacts that are difficult to recover. Conflicts between investors and local communities can arise due to inequality of access to coastal resources, while environmental damage can reduce the tourist attraction that is the economic foundation of the region. Development that is insensitive to the social dimension also has the potential to erode the cultural identity of coastal communities and weaken the social cohesion of local communities. In the long run, this condition can incur social costs that are much greater than the economic benefits obtained. Therefore, marine tourism investment must be understood as a collective responsibility that demands synergy between the government, investors, and the community. Only through strong, participatory, and sustainability-oriented legal governance, the development of marine tourism can become an instrument of equitable welfare while preserving the coastal environment.

3. Legal Harmonization and Recommendations for Strengthening the Governance of Marine Tourism Areas

Legal harmonization in the governance of marine tourism areas is a fundamental need in the context of sustainable tourism development in archipelagic countries such as Indonesia, because coastal and marine spaces not only function as economic destinations, but also as complex ecological, social, and cultural spaces. Marine tourism areas bring together various intersecting legal regimes, ranging from environmental law, marine law, spatial planning law, investment law, to customary law that lives in coastal communities (Mulyana & Raodah, 2025). Regulatory inconsistency often causes conflicts of authority between agencies, overlapping permits, and weak law enforcement against ecological violations that actually damage the tourist attraction itself. In practice, many marine tourism areas develop faster than the ability of regulations to anticipate their impacts, resulting in the phenomenon of uncontrolled resource exploitation, privatization of coastal public spaces, and marginalization of local communities (Sirait et al., 2024). Legal harmonization is a strategic instrument to unite the vision of development between the central government, local governments, business actors, and coastal communities so that the management of marine tourism is not only oriented to short-term economic growth, but also ensures the sustainability of the marine ecosystem. With a strong harmonized framework, the law can serve as a governance architecture that creates certainty, justice, and sustainability at the same time, so that marine tourism areas develop as productive spaces without sacrificing their ecological integrity.

Legal harmonization in marine tourism areas demands integration between the principles of sustainable development, the principles of ecological justice, and a collaborative governance approach involving multi-actors. Fragmented regulations often make marine policy run sectoral, where ministries or agencies work on their respective mandates without a strong coordination framework. As a result, one policy can encourage tourism expansion, while another seeks to protect conservation areas without a clear compromise mechanism. Legal harmonization acts as a bridge that harmonizes these interests through vertical synchronization

between national and regional regulations, as well as horizontal synchronization between policy sectors. This approach requires the formulation of consistent norms, a firm definition of authority, and integrated licensing procedures so that there are no legal loopholes that are used for overexploitation. Furthermore, harmonization is not only a technical issue of legislation, but a legal political process that reflects the state's commitment to placing marine ecosystems as subjects of protection, not just economic objects. Thus, the law becomes an instrument of governance transformation that encourages a balance between tourism investment and the protection of marine resources.

Marine tourism areas require an adaptive management model because marine ecosystems are dynamic and vulnerable to climate change, pollution, and mass tourism pressures. Legal harmonization must be able to accommodate an ecosystem approach that sees coastal areas as an ecological unit, not just a separate administrative zone. Many governance conflicts arise because legal boundaries are not in line with ecological boundaries, so protection policies are fragmented and ineffective. Through harmonization, regulations can be designed to follow ecosystem logic, for example by establishing integrated zoning that combines the traditional functions of conservation, tourism, and community utilization. This approach reinforces the principle of prudence and state responsibility in managing marine resources as a shared heritage. In addition, a harmonized legal framework allows for the integration of scientific data into the decision-making process, so that marine tourism policies are evidence-based and not solely driven by economic interests. With an adaptive and ecology-based legal foundation, marine tourism area governance can respond to changes without losing the direction of long-term sustainability.

The social dimension in legal harmonization is also very important because marine tourism areas are often located in areas inhabited by coastal communities with strong value systems and customary practices. Strengthening governance must not ignore the rights of local communities to living space and resources that they have managed for generations. Many marine tourism conflicts are rooted in the takeover of coastal spaces by investors without adequate consultation, thus triggering social resistance and economic inequality. Legal harmonization needs to integrate recognition of customary law and community participation mechanisms as part of the formal governance structure (Agatha & Riska, 2024). When local communities are involved as key stakeholders, tourism management tends to be more sustainable because they have a direct incentive to maintain the ecosystem. In addition, a participatory approach strengthens policy legitimacy and reduces the potential for horizontal and vertical conflicts. By incorporating the social justice dimension into the legal framework, marine tourism areas can develop as collaborative spaces that empower communities, not just commercialization arenas.

Recommendations to strengthen the governance of marine tourism areas must start from regulatory architecture reforms that emphasize cross-sector integration and simplification of licensing without reducing environmental protection standards. Complex licensing systems often create a layered bureaucracy that opens up opportunities for corruption and ecological violations. Legal harmonization can be realized through the establishment of an integrated regulatory platform that connects spatial planning, conservation, and investment data in one transparent digital system. Thus, every tourism development decision can be tested against ecological and social impacts in real time. In addition, there is a need for national standards for

marine tourism management that bind local governments so that there is no exploitation race to increase local income. Strengthening governance also requires increasing the capacity of law enforcement officials and area managers to be able to implement regulations consistently. Without strong implementation, legal harmonization will only become a normative document without real transformative power.

Strengthening community-based and technology-based supervision mechanisms to ensure compliance with marine tourism area regulations. Supervision cannot be completely left to the state due to the vast coastal area and limited institutional resources. Local communities can be involved as custodians of the ecosystem through legally recognized co-management schemes. The integration of technologies such as satellite monitoring, water quality sensors, and digital reporting systems enables early detection of environmental violations. Legal harmonization must provide a legal basis for the use of such technology while protecting data and people's rights. The collaborative monitoring approach creates a sense of shared ownership of the tourist area so that compliance is not only driven by sanctions, but also by collective awareness. In the long run, this model reinforces a pro-environmental legal culture and improves the effectiveness of governance.

Strengthening these mechanisms also needs to be followed by institutional design that is able to translate community and technology participation into clear, measurable, and sustainable operational procedures in the long term. Without a strong institutional structure, collaborative oversight initiatives risk ceasing as temporary projects that are not integrated with the government's administrative system. Legal harmonization must encourage the formation of marine tourism area management units that are cross-sectoral and have a coordinating mandate, so that there is no fragmentation of responsibilities between agencies. It serves as a node that connects technology data, community reports, and policy decisions in one transparent workflow. On the other hand, the capacity of human resources is a key factor because the management of surveillance technology requires technical competence as well as social understanding of the dynamics of coastal communities. Therefore, continuous training programs must be institutionalized as part of the state's obligations in implementing legal harmonization. With a solid combination of institutions, community participation, and technological support, marine tourism area supervision can evolve into an adaptive, responsive, and accountable governance system (Togatorop, 2021).

1. Strengthening participatory legal frameworks

Regulations need to explicitly recognize the role of coastal communities as legal subjects in the supervision of marine tourism areas, not just policy objects. This recognition must be translated into the right of access to information, the right to object, and the right to be involved in the decision-making process. Participatory legal frameworks create a more equal relationship between the state and society so that supervision is not just top-down. When communities have clear legal legitimacy, they are more courageous to report violations and maintain the integrity of the ecosystem.

2. Standardization of surveillance technology systems

Countries need to establish national standards related to the use of monitoring technology so that the data generated is compatible and can be integrated across regions. Standardization includes data security protocols, system interoperability, and periodic technology audit mechanisms. Without uniform standards, the use of

technology can actually cause capacity inequality between regions. With a standardized system, supervision becomes more efficient, transparent, and accountable.

3. Strengthening local institutional capacity

Local governments and regional management units must be equipped with adequate financial and technical resources to carry out supervisory functions. Investment in the training of local officials and communities is key so that technology does not only become a symbol of modernization without real effectiveness. Strong institutions allow for a quick response to environmental violations. In addition, good local capacity reduces dependence on central interventions.

4. Integration of supervision with law enforcement mechanisms

The data resulting from community oversight and technology must have the evidentiary force recognized in the legal process. Harmonization of regulations is needed so that public reports can be immediately followed up by law enforcement officials without administrative obstacles. This integration creates a clear response chain from detection to action. When violations are handled consistently, the deterrent effect will strengthen the compliance of marine tourism actors.

Strengthening governance through a sustainable economic approach requires a paradigm shift from a model of resource exploitation to a restorative economic model that views the environment as a long-term productive asset, not a commodity that can be drained indefinitely. Legal harmonization plays an important role in creating an incentive architecture that systematically directs business behavior towards environmentally friendly practices, so that ecological compliance is not perceived as a burden, but rather as a strategic advantage. Fiscal regulations can be designed to provide tax deductions, priority access to licensing, or financing support for tour operators that implement verified conservation standards. This approach creates a market signal that sustainability has real economic value, thus encouraging healthy competition in green innovation. The application of sanctions must be progressive and proportionate in order to truly have a deterrent effect on activities that damage marine ecosystems. Without consistent enforcement of sanctions, the incentive structure will lose credibility and open up space for opportunistic practices. Therefore, legal harmonization must ensure a balance between rewards for compliant offenders and punishments for offenders as part of an ethical economic system.

The integration of sustainable financing schemes into the legal framework opens up opportunities for marine tourism economic models that contribute directly to ecosystem recovery. Mechanisms such as ecosystem service payments allow tourists and business actors to bear the costs of conservation through a transparent and accountable system. Tourism conservation funds can be allocated for coral reef rehabilitation, marine debris management, and capacity building of coastal communities as environmental guardians. Thus, the economic flow from the tourism sector does not stop at commercial profits, but revolves back to the ecological system that supports it. Legal harmonization is needed so that this financing scheme has a strong legal basis and is not abused. In addition, fund management must be subject to the principle of public accountability so that public trust is maintained. When the economy and ecology are linked through the right legal instruments, marine tourism areas can thrive as a real example of a just and sustainable blue economy.

Legal harmonization and strengthening the governance of marine tourism areas is a long-term project that requires political consistency, institutional capacity, and broad public participation. Without a harmonized legal framework, tourism development risks becoming a paradox: increasing revenues while destroying the ecological foundations that underpin it. Strong governance must view marine areas as living systems that need protection, not just economic commodities. The integration of legal norms, ecological science, and local wisdom is key to creating a management model that is resistant to global pressures. With a commitment to sustainable harmonization, marine tourism areas can develop as a symbol of the country's success in balancing growth and conservation. This vision places the law not as an obstacle to development, but as a guide towards a fair, inclusive, and sustainable future of marine tourism.

CONCLUSION

The development of marine tourism and investment within the framework of a special economic zone in Sekotong District reflects a normatively comprehensive national legal framework that integrates investment, environmental protection, and the interests of coastal communities. While regulations on investment, special economic zones, coastal area management, and environmental protection provide a foundation emphasizing sustainability, legal certainty, and social justice, gaps remain between legal norms and field practices due to weak regulatory harmonization, limited regional oversight, and short-term economic priorities. These gaps can lead to spatial conflicts, unequal economic benefits, and ecological pressure if not managed through strong legal governance. Investment in Sekotong functions as a socio-ecological process requiring an integrative legal approach: it generates economic opportunities but, without participatory mechanisms and adequate social protection, benefits often concentrate among large-capital actors, while weak supervision threatens coastal carrying capacity. Therefore, the success of marine tourism depends not only on investment value but on the quality of legal governance balancing economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Future research could examine effective mechanisms for participatory governance and regulatory harmonization to enhance equitable and sustainable outcomes in marine tourism development.

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