Journal of Community Action

Vol. 2 No. 2, April, pages: 64-68

e-ISSN 3110-2549 | DOI: https://doi.org/10.70716/joca.v2i2.275

Transforming Sembalun Tourism Village: Institutional Reorganization to Boost Local Capacity and Sustainable Tourism in Sembalun

Arief Rahmani[1*], Nida Farah[2], Hana Putri[3]

[1]Department of Tourism, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia,

[2]Department of Regional and Rural Development, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia

[3]Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika, Lombok, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author: arief.rahman@ub.ac.id*

Article History

Manuscript submitted:
09 February 2026
Manuscript revised:
23 March 2026
Accepted for publication:
27 April 2025

Keywords

institutional reorganization, community capacity, sustainable tourism, rural tourism development, governance reform

Abstract

Rural tourism development has emerged as a vital pathway for fostering economic resilience, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing community welfare. This study examines the institutional reorganization process in Sembalun Tourism Village and its role in strengthening local capacity for sustainable tourism development. Sembalun, located in East Lombok, Indonesia, possesses rich natural and cultural assets but faces governance and coordination challenges that limit its full potential. Utilizing a mixed methods approach, the research integrates qualitative interviews with local stakeholders and quantitative assessments of institutional performance indicators before and after reorganization efforts. The results indicate that institutional restructuring, including clearer governance roles, capacity building for village organizations, and collaborative planning mechanisms, significantly improved community participation, service quality, and tourism management effectiveness. Local stakeholders reported increased confidence in decision making and stronger market competitiveness. The study also highlights the importance of aligning institutional frameworks with sustainable tourism principles to balance economic growth with environmental stewardship. Findings suggest that participatory institutional reforms can empower rural communities, enhance tourism sustainability, and serve as a model for other emerging tourism villages in Indonesia. This research contributes to rural tourism governance literature and provides practical insights for policymakers and practitioners striving to achieve community led sustainable tourism.

Copyright © 2026, The Author(s)
This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license

How to Cite: Rahmani, A., Farah, N., & Putri, H. (2026). Transforming Sembalun Tourism Village: Institutional Reorganization to Boost Local Capacity and Sustainable Tourism in Sembalun. *Journal of Community Action, 2*(2), 64-68. https://doi.org/10.70716/joca.v2i2.275

Introduction

Rural tourism has increasingly been recognized as a transformative strategy for sustainable development, offering economic opportunities while preserving cultural and environmental assets; yet, its success heavily relies on effective governance and institutional arrangements (Ariyani et al., 2025;

Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Tourism villages in Indonesia, such as Sembalun Tourism Village in East Lombok, possess abundant natural beauty and cultural heritage but often lack the institutional capacity required to manage tourism sustainably and equitably (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021; Ariyani et al., 2025).

Institutional reorganization in rural tourism destinations aims to clarify organizational roles, strengthen stakeholder collaboration, and establish governance mechanisms that support sustainable tourism development (Ostrom, 1990; Hall, 2011). Previous studies on tourism village governance indicate that weak coordination among stakeholders often results in fragmented planning, underutilized tourism resources, and unequal distribution of economic benefits within local communities (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Ar-Raniry Journal). Community-based tourism (CBT) frameworks emphasize empowering local communities through participatory decision making, shared ownership, and inclusive governance structures, thereby strengthening institutional capacity and improving tourism sustainability (Murphy, 1985; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Ar-Raniry Journal).

In the context of Indonesian tourism villages, institutional reorganization generally involves integrating local governments, village administrations, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), community organizations, and private tourism actors to harmonize development objectives and operationalize sustainable tourism principles (Jurnal Kebijakan Publik; United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021). Strengthening local institutional capacity improves service quality, mobilizes community resources, and enhances adaptive planning, all of which are essential for responding to socioeconomic and environmental changes (Hall, 2011; Aref, 2011). Sustainable tourism encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions, requiring governance systems capable of balancing these objectives while ensuring equitable community participation and benefit sharing (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021; United Nations, 2015).

The Indonesian government has promoted tourism village development through policies encouraging local innovation, decentralization, and community participation. Nevertheless, implementation remains constrained by institutional and managerial capacity gaps at the village level (Jurnal Kebijakan Publik; Ariyani et al., 2025). Institutional reorganization therefore represents a strategic response aimed at establishing transparent governance procedures, streamlining decision making processes, and strengthening accountability mechanisms (Ostrom, 1990).

Sustainable tourism development extends beyond increasing tourist arrivals; it also requires investment in human capital and institutional readiness to manage tourism growth responsibly (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021). Capacity-building initiatives, including training programs, knowledge exchange, leadership development, and stakeholder networking, enhance institutional effectiveness and improve governance performance (Journal of Privietlab; Aref, 2011). In tourism villages such as Sembalun, where the natural landscapes surrounding Mount Rinjani constitute major tourism assets, institutional arrangements must integrate environmental conservation into tourism management to minimize ecological degradation (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021).

Institutional reorganization also facilitates strategic planning by aligning village development priorities with regional tourism policies and the United Nations. Research on rural tourism governance advocates hybrid governance models that combine top-down policy support with bottom-up community participation, thereby fostering collaborative decision making and long-term stakeholder commitment (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Hall, 2011). Institutional strengthening further enhances tourism competitiveness by improving service standards, destination branding, innovation capacity, and product diversification (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021). Moreover, embedding community empowerment within institutional reforms promotes equitable benefit distribution, strengthens social cohesion, and reduces inequalities associated with tourism development (Jurnal Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

This study therefore investigates how institutional reorganization in Sembalun Tourism Village enhances local capacity and contributes to sustainable tourism development through empirical evidence and stakeholder perspectives. Examining the relationship between institutional arrangements and tourism outcomes contributes to the growing body of literature on rural tourism governance while providing practical policy recommendations for strengthening tourism village management across Indonesia (Ariyani et al., 2025; United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021).

Methodology

This study employed a mixed methods research design to assess the processes and outcomes of institutional reorganization in Sembalun Tourism Village. The research combined qualitative insights from stakeholder interviews and focus groups with quantitative analysis of organizational performance indicators collected before and after the reorganization effort. The mixed methods approach is suitable for evaluating complex community governance phenomena as it enables triangulation of subjective perceptions and objective data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Sampling included purposive selection of key informants—village officials, tourism committee members, local business owners, and community representatives—as well as random sampling of tourism service users for quantitative surveys.

Institutional reorganization was documented through participatory observation and structured interviews conducted over six months. Core activities included stakeholder mapping, organizational role restructuring, training workshops, and collaborative planning meetings. Qualitative data were gathered using semi structured interview guides adapted from governance assessment frameworks. The guides explored stakeholder perceptions of governance clarity, decision making processes, inter organizational coordination, and community participation. This aligns with methodologies applied in similar rural tourism institutional studies, which emphasize participatory documentation for in depth contextual understanding (Yin, 2017).

The quantitative component focused on pre and post reorganization measurements of local capacity indicators: number of collaborative tourism initiatives, level of community participation, tourism service quality scores, and stakeholder satisfaction. Surveys were administered to 150 residents and 200 tourism visitors using validated instruments adapted from community capacity and tourism governance research (Perry & Thomas, 2017). Data collectors were trained to ensure consistency and reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using paired t tests and descriptive statistics to measure changes over time, with significance set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

To integrate qualitative insights with quantitative findings, data triangulation was applied at the interpretation stage. Emerging themes from interviews and focus groups were compared with indicator trends to identify governance factors that facilitated or hindered institutional performance. Trustworthiness strategies included member checking, audit trails, and inter coder reliability assessments for qualitative data. This comprehensive analytical strategy ensures robust interpretation of complex governance outcomes in rural tourism development.

Results and Discussion

The institutional reorganization initiative in Sembalun Tourism Village led to notable changes in organizational coordination and governance clarity. Quantitative analysis revealed an increase in collaborative planning activities involving community groups and local government entities, reflecting improved institutional engagement and shared decision making post reorganization.

Prior to the intervention, stakeholders reported overlapping roles and unclear responsibilities across tourism governance bodies. After restructuring, roles were better defined, reducing redundancy and fostering more effective teamwork among the Pokdarwis, BUMDes, and village administrative units.

Similar institutional dynamics were identified in studies showing that clear governance roles enhance tourism development outcomes (Saputra, 2024).

Community participation in tourism planning and activities increased significantly after reorganization, as evidenced by attendance records and participation rates in village tourism forums. This aligns with research on community capacity building, which emphasizes empowerment as a core component of sustainable rural tourism development (Community Capacity Building …, 2024).

Strengthened institutional structures also facilitated the development of new local tourism products and services tailored to visitor preferences, such as eco trekking and cultural homestays. These innovations contributed to increased tourist satisfaction, reported through visitor surveys conducted during the post reorganization period.

Interviews with local business owners indicated that economic benefits from tourism had become more visible and equitably distributed within the community following institutional improvements. This trend is consistent with research showing the positive role of local institutions in coordinating resource use and tourism benefits for community welfare (Aliim, 2023).

Institutional reforms also strengthened external partnerships with regional tourism boards and private sector stakeholders, increasing access to marketing platforms and training resources. Such partnerships are vital for leveraging broader tourism networks and attracting investment.

Despite progress, some challenges persisted. A minority of residents expressed concern about limited understanding of new governance processes, highlighting ongoing needs for capacity building and education. Continued institutional support is necessary to maintain stakeholder engagement.

The reorganization also improved mechanisms for environmental management, with local institutions collaborating to implement waste management policies and eco tourism guidelines. This finding complements broader sustainable tourism research emphasizing the integration of environmental stewardship in local governance (Sustainable Tourism Development …, 2025).

Stakeholder mapping exercises conducted before and after reorganization demonstrated more inclusive representation of village actors in governance structures, including women and youth groups. This inclusivity contributed to a more holistic approach to tourism planning and community well being.

Adaptive capacity, defined as the ability of institutions to respond to changes and challenges, was markedly improved post reorganization. This enhanced resilience is crucial for rural tourism villages facing changing market dynamics, seasonality, and external shocks like pandemics.

Overall, the evidence suggests that institutional reorganization significantly contributed to strengthening local governance, enhancing community participation, and fostering sustainable tourism practices in Sembalun. These outcomes align with the broader literature on rural tourism governance and institutional capacity building.

Conclusion

The institutional reorganization implemented in Sembalun Tourism Village significantly improved governance clarity, stakeholder collaboration, and local capacity for sustainable tourism development. Improved coordination among tourism actors, clearer role delineation, and enhanced participation in decision making structures helped create a more effective and inclusive institutional framework. These changes enabled the development of new tourism products and services, stronger external partnerships, and greater economic benefit sharing within the community. The quantitative improvements in governance indicators, combined with qualitative feedback from stakeholders, demonstrate that institutional restructuring can be a powerful mechanism for aligning community objectives with sustainable tourism goals.

Despite these positive developments, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring all community members fully understand and participate in the new governance processes. Continued investment in

capacity building, education, and inclusive planning mechanisms is necessary to sustain the gains achieved through institutional reorganization. Additionally, the integration of environmental management within institutional practices highlighted the role of adaptive governance in balancing tourism growth with ecological preservation. This aspect reinforces the importance of institutional frameworks capable of responding to dynamic external pressures and long term sustainability goals.

In conclusion, the transformation of Sembalun Tourism Village through institutional reorganization enhanced local capacity, governance effectiveness, and community empowerment. These improvements contributed to more resilient and sustainable tourism development, offering practical insights for other rural tourism villages in Indonesia. The study underscores that institutional reforms grounded in participatory governance and community inclusion can effectively bridge local aspirations with sustainable tourism pathways, thereby serving as a replicable model for emerging tourism destinations.

References

Aliim, T. F. (2023). Peran kelembagaan lokal dalam pengembangan dan pemanfaatan sumber daya di desa wisata. *Unpad Journal of Regional Development*.

Aref, F. (2011). The effects of tourism on residents' quality of life: A case study of Shiraz, Iran. *Life Science Journal, 8*(2), 26–30.

Ariyani, N., Fauzi, A., & Utami, A. R. (2025). Developing sustainable rural tourism in Indonesia: A cross impact balance analysis. *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change, 10*(2), 4822-4836. https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.2353

Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2011). Critical research on the governance of tourism and sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 19*(4–5), 411–421. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.580586

Community capacity building in developing rural tourism. (2024). *International Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Innovation Research*.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Goodwin, H., & Santilli, R. (2009). *Community-based tourism: A success?* International Centre for Responsible Tourism. https://www.haroldgoodwin.info/pubs/CBTaSuccessPubpdf.pdf

Hall, C. M. (2011). Policy learning and policy failure in sustainable tourism governance. *Tourism Review, 66*(1/2), 4–16. https://doi.org/10.1108/16605371111127195

Murphy, P. E. (1985). *Tourism: A community approach*. Routledge.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge University Press.

Perry, T. E., & Thomas, B. R. (2017). Assessing community capacity and governance in rural tourism development. *Journal of Rural Studies, 54*, 20-29.

Saputra, M. A. (2024). Analisis peran dan kapasitas kelembagaan Pokdarwis dalam pengembangan desa wisata Kaleke. *Cendekia: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengkajian Ilmiah*.

Sustainable tourism development in rural communities: Desa Sawangan case study. (2025). *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*.

United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2021). *Recommendations on tourism and rural development: A guide to making tourism an effective tool for rural development*. UNWTO. https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422173

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.