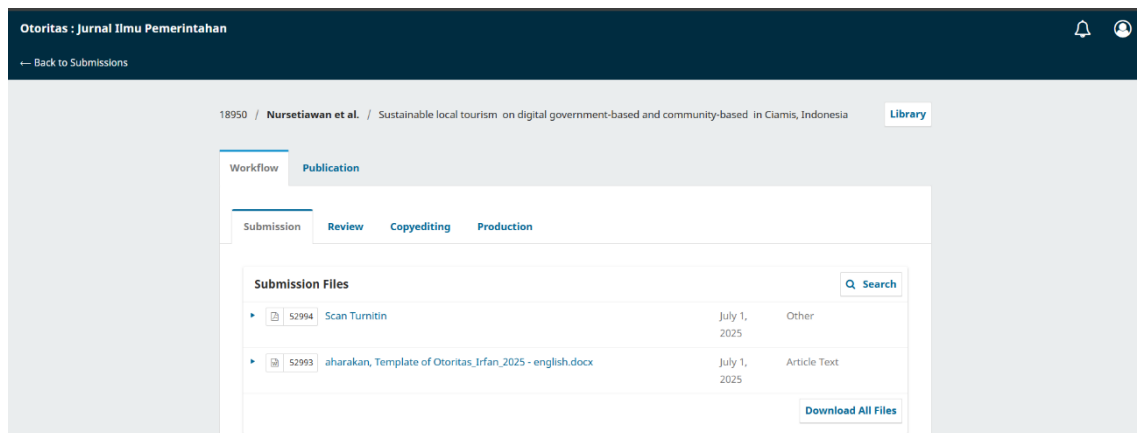
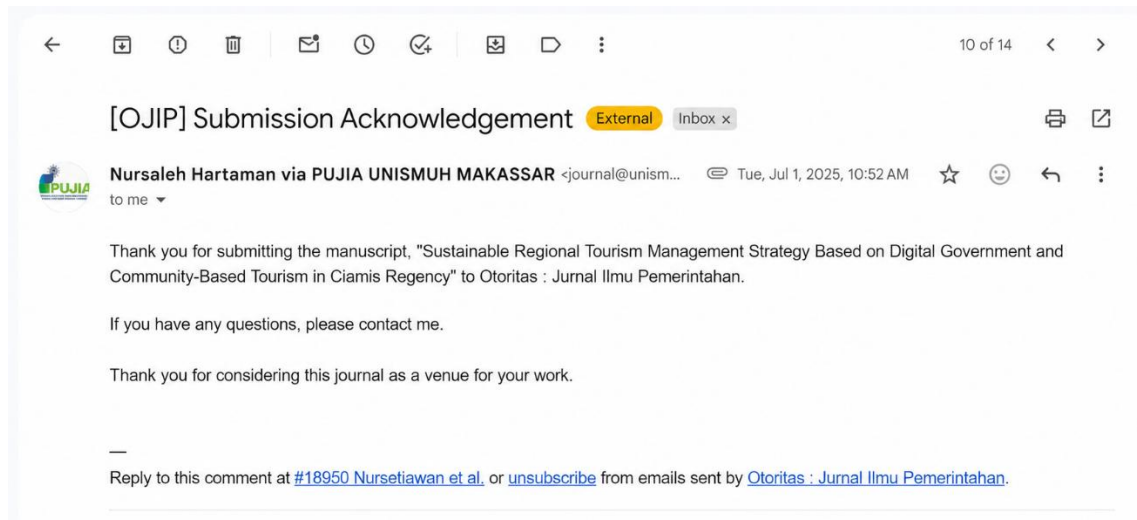


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## Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency

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### Abstract

*This study discusses the strategy of sustainable regional tourism governance that integrates the Digital Government and Community Based Tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Digital Government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance. Collaboration between local communities, local governments, academics, and industry players is an important prerequisite in realizing a sustainable smart tourism strategy. The Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism (DICBT) model is offered as an innovation that can increase the competitiveness of destinations while strengthening the welfare of local communities in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism; Governance; Digital Government; Community Based Tourism

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### Introduction

The welfare of local communities at the village level, environmental issues, and sustainable tourism are important elements that are interrelated in creating inclusive development. Sustainable tourism, for example, not only aims to promote local economic growth, but also maintains the natural ecosystem and local culture that are the attractions of tourism itself (Bagus Prabowo, 2021; Sri Subawa & Gusti Ayu Agung Nadya Leonita, 2024). The tourism sector depends on the number of tourist visits, which has implications for the Regional Gross Domestic Product and the sustainability of the local tourism industry. (Hanafi Ahmad, 2022; Sentanu & Mahadiansar, 2020).

The Regional Government certainly has an important role in improving welfare and the Regional Gross Domestic Product from the tourism sector. However, from 2019 to 2024, there was a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency. A sharp decline occurred in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, while in the following years, the increase in the number of tourists was slow and insignificant. This condition shows the need for more adaptive strategic efforts in managing the tourism sector, especially by integrating digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is a potential solution to increase the efficiency of tourism services, expand the reach of

digital promotion, and open up space for community participation in managing tourist destinations.

This will create a more inclusive and democratic tourism ecosystem, where destination management decisions can be data-based and actively involve multiple actors in the planning and evaluation process of tourism policies. On the other hand, the synergy between Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) opens up space for social transformation in destination management. Digital technology can be utilized by local communities to promote tourism potential based on culture, nature, and local wisdom more widely through social media, digital marketplaces, and online reservation systems. In addition, training and mentoring facilitated by the government are important keys so that the community has digital literacy and technical capacity in managing quality tourism services. Thus, the role of the community is not only as a field implementer, but also as a strategic actor in the digital tourism value chain.

The success of digital and community-based tourism governance strategies is highly dependent on public policy support, the political will of local governments, and the sustainability of assistance from external actors such as academics and the private sector. In the context of Ciamis Regency, this approach can be the foundation for a smart tourism model that not only emphasizes technological innovation but also upholds socio-cultural values and environmental sustainability. The integration of technology and local community empowerment is the main strength in realizing a resilient, adaptive, and competitive tourist destination in the era of digital transformation.

With an integrated information system and the use of real-time tourist data, local governments can design more responsive and evidence-based policies to encourage sustainable tourism growth. The number of tourist visits is as follows:



**Figure 1 Number of Tourist Visits to Ciamis Regency**

Source: [www.data.ciamiskab.go.id](http://www.data.ciamiskab.go.id), 2025.

Based on Figure 1, there is a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits, namely in 2020 it decreased by 30.36% and in 2024 it increased by 6.11%. The data shows that the increase in the number of tourists did not increase significantly. This indicates that recovery of the regional tourism sector is needed to face various challenges. (Wahyuni, 2021). Factors such as government policies, economic conditions, destination attractiveness, community participation, and tourism promotion can influence the level of tourist visits (Ahmadi & Natasya Giyar Dwisyafitri, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024).

Sustainable tourism is one of the steps in efforts to improve the economy in the tourism sector (Palazzo et al., 2022). Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility, as well as community participation, are alternatives for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The cohesion of the role of local communities or societies in tourism governance results in dynamics in the creation of tourism opportunities based on local resources (Sharpley, 2023).

Smart tourism is a framework for improving resources, information accessibility, and management in tourist destinations (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022). However, for regional tourism industry actors, this has not been fully utilized and developed in optimizing digital-based services, utilizing big data for analyzing tourist trends, and integrating technology in destination promotion and management (Nur Aini Afifa & Setyo Nugroho, 2022; Satyaninggrat et al., 2023). Lack of digital infrastructure, limited technological literacy, and minimal collaboration between stakeholders are the main challenges in implementing smart tourism at the local level (Ab Rahman & Dura, 2021; Marham Jupri Hadi et al., 2022).

Local rural communities in Ciamis Regency dominate the initiation in the formation of pioneering tourist attractions. Local communities and innovations in developing tourist destinations begin in the form of pioneering tourist attractions (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the role of social capital, community involvement, local innovation, and the influence of technology and government policies in encouraging the formation of community-based tourist destinations (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022).

Community-based Based Tourism (CBT) is one of the supporters of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 1 on No Poverty, number 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and number 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems. Community-based Based Tourism (CBT) has the potential to improve community welfare and environmental preservation, and there are negative impacts if not managed properly (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is relevant to Asta Cita number 6 regarding building in the village.

Participation of local rural communities in regional tourism development and improving welfare, as well as improving community institutions, are key factors in creating sustainable and community-based tourism (Permatasari, 2022; Widya Darmayanti et al., 2020). The role of the government is also inseparable from efforts to support and facilitate tourism development through strategic policies, assistance, and the use of technology within the framework of digital government (Kononova, 2020; Pawan Kumar et al., 2022). However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires in-depth research.

However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires a more in-depth study, especially in the context of the ongoing digital transformation. The process of cultural diffusion is not only related to the preservation of local values, but also to how these values are adapted and disseminated through digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is an important factor in encouraging the spread of local culture through official digital platforms, tourism information systems, and integrated public service applications.

Through this strategy, local governments can optimize the role of technology in facilitating community participation, accelerating the dissemination of information, and supporting the management of community-based tourism objects in a transparent and

accountable manner. Therefore, the integration between cultural diffusion and Digital Government is key to creating inclusive and sustainable tourism governance.

### **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology and case study methods. Data were obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The research location was focused on Cihaurbeuti, Sadananya, and Sukamantri Districts, Ciamis Regency. Primary data collection techniques came from community leaders, tourism managers, and local government officials. The data analysis process was carried out by triangulation and thematic coding of the data obtained to find relevant patterns (Alodia et al., 2025; Fajrul & Fita Sptyana, 2025; Meriatami et al., 2025).

This technique allows researchers to identify the relationship between the role of local actors, forms of cultural diffusion, and the dynamics of Digital Government implementation in the context of tourism management. Each category that emerges is analyzed based on the social and policy context, resulting in a holistic understanding of the real conditions in the field. Data from in-depth interviews, field observations, and supporting documents are combined to strengthen the validity of the findings. This approach not only reveals how local communities participate in the initiation of tourism objects, but also how digital technology is gradually adopted in supporting community-based tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

This study was conducted to formulate a strategy for sustainable regional tourism management based on digital government and community-based tourism in Ciamis Regency through a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. The stages begin with determining the focus and formulation of the problem, followed by a literature review of the concept of government digitalization, community-based tourism, and sustainability. The research location is focused on several leading destinations in Ciamis, with research subjects including local governments, local tourism actors, tourists, and academics. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation studies, and focus group discussions (FGD) to explore actual practices and shared aspirations.

The collected data were analyzed using triangulation techniques, thematic coding, and SWOT analysis to identify internal and external factors that influence tourism governance. Validation was carried out through member checks and peer reviews, to ensure the validity of the findings. The results of this analysis were used to formulate strategies that integrate the use of digital technology in destination management by strengthening the role of local communities, as well as to develop applicable policy recommendations to support inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

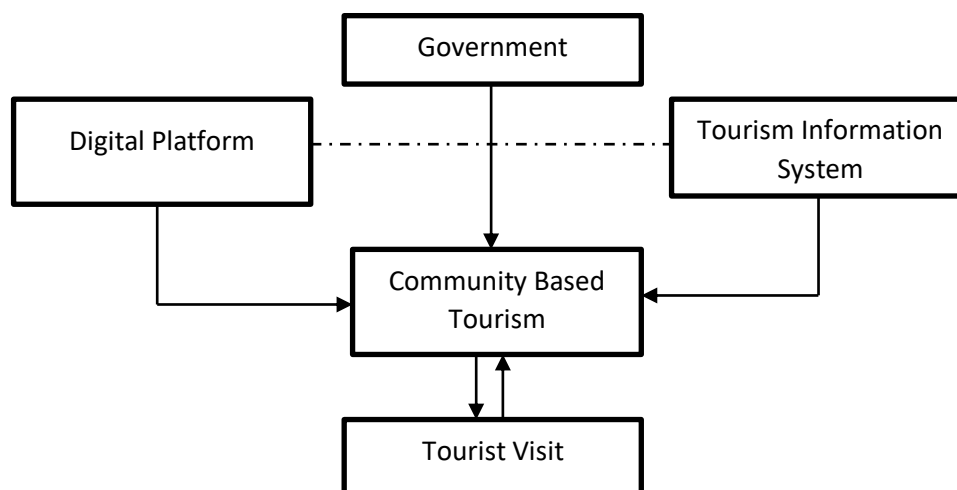
### **Results and Discussion**

The study found that the process of local community cultural diffusion occurs through social media, tourist interactions, and adaptation to new values introduced through tourism experiences. Local communities play a central role in creating and managing pioneering tourism objects, although their participation is generally still limited to operational aspects such as facility management and visitor services. Meanwhile, strategic aspects such as digital management, online promotion, and data utilization are still dominated by external parties or have not been maximized. This is due to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and suboptimal support from

the government in providing an inclusive digital platform for local tourism actors (Arief Rachman Afandy et al., 2025; Astuti et al., 2025).

In this context, the role of local government becomes crucial, not only in terms of regulation and promotion, but also in building a digital ecosystem that supports strengthening the capacity of local communities. Effective implementation of Digital Government in the tourism sector allows the government to provide public digital services such as online licensing systems, tourist attraction databases, and real-time data-based tourist information dashboards (Herawati & Handrianus Pranatawijaya, 2025). The government can also facilitate digital literacy training for tourism actors, create integrated tourism promotion applications, and establish partnerships with academics and industry players to develop service innovations (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022; Hariman & Syahputra, 2024; Hawadah, 2025).

In practice, there is still a gap between digital policies and the technical and social readiness of local communities, which hinders the realization of adaptive and sustainable tourism governance. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model formulated in this study is presented as an answer to this complexity. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism model is described as follows:



**Picture. 2 Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism Model**

Source: Research Results, 2025.

DICBT integrates aspects of cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and the use of digital technology in a participatory and sustainability-oriented tourism governance framework. In this model, Digital Government acts as the main facilitator connecting the interests of the community, government, academics, and industry players through the Quadruple Helix approach. With the implementation of DICBT, it is hoped that a community-based tourism management system will be born that not only prioritizes local wisdom but is also able to compete in the digital era, making Ciamis Regency an example of the implementation of smart tourism based on collaboration and technology.

Community-based tourism management within the DICBT (Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism) framework emphasizes the importance of active participation of local communities as the main subject in destination development. This construct not only prioritizes the utilization of cultural potential and local wisdom, but also integrates the empowerment process so that communities have the capacity and independence to manage and develop tourism sustainably. Through this approach, the

community is not just a complement, but becomes the center of tourism activities, from planning, management, to evaluation, so that a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the sustainability of the destination is created.

On the other hand, the use of digital technology is a key element in strengthening community-based tourism governance. In this context, the role of government is vital as the main facilitator in building digital infrastructure, formulating adaptive regulations, and bridging collaboration between Quadruple Helix elements: government, community, business actors, and academics. Technology enables service efficiency, data transparency, and broader and more measurable promotion and marketing. With the support of a progressive government that is oriented towards digital transformation, the tourism management system can be developed to be smarter, more collaborative, and more sustainable, as expected in the DICBT model in Ciamis Regency.

All parties do not fully understand the importance of implementing effective Digital Government in the tourism sector, which is one of the fundamental obstacles in realizing sustainable and adaptive tourism governance for the development of the times. This lack of understanding is not only found among tourism actors but also among some local government officials who still rely on conventional patterns in tourism services and promotions. This unpreparedness has a direct impact on the slow adoption of digital technology in managing tourist attractions, including in terms of promotion, information systems, and real-time tourist data collection, which is very crucial for formulating evidence-based policies.

The implementation of evidence-based policies in sustainable regional tourism management requires local governments to formulate strategies based on empirical data and verifiable field findings (Kusuwo Jumino et al., 2024). In the context of Ciamis Regency, the fluctuation in the number of tourist visits and the less-than-optimal use of digital technology show that tourism development policies cannot rely only on normative assumptions or top-down program approaches. The government needs to develop a digital tourism information system that is able to collect tourist visit data, feedback from tourism business actors, and map the potential and obstacles of each destination. This data is an important basis for determining the direction of promotional policies, infrastructure development, human resource training, and integration of digital services that are right on target and sustainable.

Furthermore, evidence-based policies also facilitate evaluation processes and decision-making that are more adaptive to local dynamics. Through this approach, government interventions can be directed at critical points, such as increasing digital literacy in tourism communities, strengthening the role of tourism villages, and developing applications and service platforms based on community needs. Empirical evidence from participatory research processes and policy impact evaluations allows the formulation of a digital tourism governance model that is not only technically responsive but also sensitive to local values. Thus, evidence-based policy becomes the main foundation in synergizing Digital Government, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and the principles of inclusive and contextual sustainable tourism development (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Another obstacle is the low digital literacy among local communities, especially in rural areas that are strategic locations for community-based tourism development. Many tourism actors are not yet able to access or manage digital platforms for promotions, online reservations, or visitor data management. In fact, within the Digital Government framework, digital collaboration between the government and the community is the key to success in creating an inclusive and responsive system. This gap is exacerbated by

limited information technology infrastructure in the regions, such as uneven internet networks, lack of technical training, and the absence of an integrated system that is easily accessible to users from various educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the strategy to strengthen the implementation of Digital Government must begin with a digital literacy program and comprehensive technical assistance to tourism actors and village government officials. Local governments also need to design affirmative policies in the form of digitalization incentives, development of user-friendly local tourism applications, and encourage the involvement of universities and technology industry players in building human resource capacity in this sector. Thus, the barriers to understanding the importance of Digital Government are not only overcome through a structural approach, but also through a cultural approach that changes people's perspectives and habits towards technology as a tool for empowerment in the tourism sector.

## **Conclusion**

Sustainable tourism governance strategies in Ciamis Regency require synergy between the use of digital technology (digital government) and strengthening the role of local communities (community-based tourism). The local government acts as a facilitator in providing digital platforms, regulations, and policies that are adaptive to technological developments and community needs. Meanwhile, local communities are the main key in maintaining the sustainability of destinations through active involvement in promotion, management, and provision of services based on local wisdom. Collaboration between the government, communities, and the private sector allows for the formation of a responsive, inclusive, and competitive tourism ecosystem.

The implementation of digital government in tourism governance in Ciamis can accelerate the process of information integration, facilitate access to services for tourists, and strengthen transparency and accountability in destination management. On the other hand, the community-based tourism approach strengthens the social and economic sustainability of local communities by making them the main actors in tourism development. For this reason, future strategies need to be directed at increasing the capacity of local human resources in utilizing technology, strengthening data-based regulations, and developing digital infrastructure that supports destination sustainability. With this approach, Ciamis has great potential to become a model for resilient and sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

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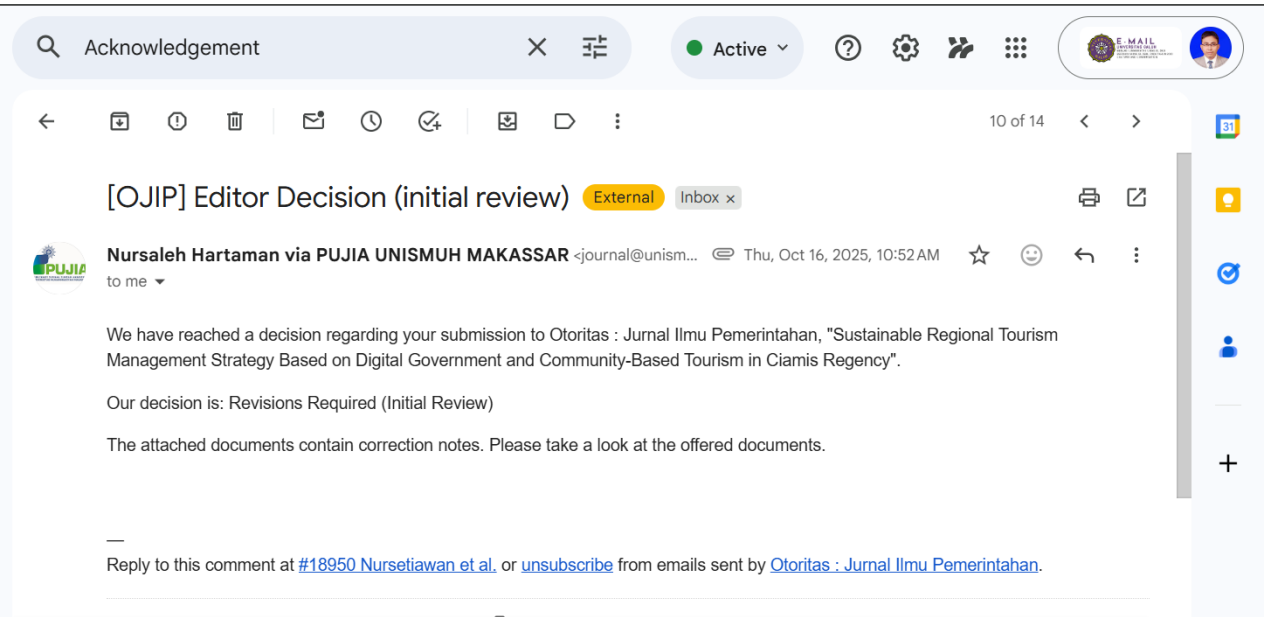
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[OJIP] Editor Decision (initial review) ✕

Participants

Nursaleh Hartaman (nhartaman)

Irfan Irfan Nursetiawan (irfannursetiawan)

| Messages                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |
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| Note                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | From                |
| We have reached a decision regarding your submission to Otoritas : Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan, "Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency". | nhartaman           |
| Our decision is: Revisions Required (Initial Review)                                                                                                                                                                       | 2025-10-16 11:48 AM |
| The attached documents contain correction notes. Please take a look at the offered documents.                                                                                                                              |                     |
|  <a href="#">initial review 12.docx</a>                                                                                                 |                     |

## Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency

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### Abstract

*This study discusses the strategy of sustainable regional tourism governance that integrates the Digital Government and Community Based Tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Digital Government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance. Collaboration between local communities, local governments, academics, and industry players is an important prerequisite in realizing a sustainable smart tourism strategy. The Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism (DICBT) model is offered as an innovation that can increase the competitiveness of destinations while strengthening the welfare of local communities in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism; Governance; Digital Government; Community Based Tourism

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### Introduction

The welfare of local communities at the village level, environmental issues, and sustainable tourism are important elements that are interrelated in creating inclusive development. Sustainable tourism, for example, not only aims to promote local economic growth, but also maintains the natural ecosystem and local culture that are the attractions of tourism itself (Bagus Prabowo, 2021; Sri Subawa & Gusti Ayu Agung Nadya Leonita, 2024). The tourism sector depends on the number of tourist visits, which has implications for the Regional Gross Domestic Product and the sustainability of the local tourism industry. (Hanafi Ahmad, 2022; Sentanu & Mahadiansar, 2020).

The Regional Government certainly has an important role in improving welfare and the Regional Gross Domestic Product from the tourism sector. However, from 2019 to 2024, there was a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency. A sharp decline occurred in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, while in the following years, the increase in the number of tourists was slow and insignificant. This condition shows the need for more adaptive strategic efforts in managing the tourism sector, especially by integrating digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is a

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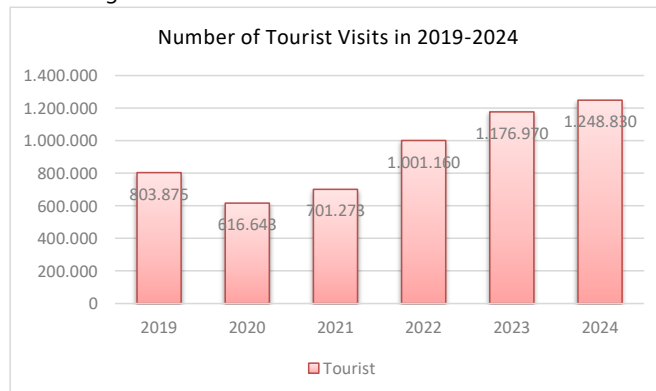
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potential solution to increase the efficiency of tourism services, expand the reach of digital promotion, and open up space for community participation in managing tourist destinations.

This will create a more inclusive and democratic tourism ecosystem, where destination management decisions can be data-based and actively involve multiple actors in the planning and evaluation process of tourism policies. On the other hand, the synergy between Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) opens up space for social transformation in destination management. Digital technology can be utilized by local communities to promote tourism potential based on culture, nature, and local wisdom more widely through social media, digital marketplaces, and online reservation systems. In addition, training and mentoring facilitated by the government are important keys so that the community has digital literacy and technical capacity in managing quality tourism services. Thus, the role of the community is not only as a field implementer, but also as a strategic actor in the digital tourism value chain.

The success of digital and community-based tourism governance strategies is highly dependent on public policy support, the political will of local governments, and the sustainability of assistance from external actors such as academics and the private sector. In the context of Ciamis Regency, this approach can be the foundation for a smart tourism model that not only emphasizes technological innovation but also upholds socio-cultural values and environmental sustainability. The integration of technology and local community empowerment is the main strength in realizing a resilient, adaptive, and competitive tourist destination in the era of digital transformation.

With an integrated information system and the use of real-time tourist data, local governments can design more responsive and evidence-based policies to encourage sustainable tourism growth. The number of tourist visits is as follows:



**Figure 1 Number of Tourist Visits to Ciamis Regency**

Source: [www.data.ciamiskab.go.id](http://www.data.ciamiskab.go.id), 2025.

Based on Figure 1, there is a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits, namely in 2020 it decreased by 30.36% and in 2024 it increased by 6.11%. The data shows that the increase in the number of tourists did not increase significantly. This indicates that recovery of the regional tourism sector is needed to face various challenges. (Wahyuni, 2021). Factors such as government policies, economic conditions, destination attractiveness, community participation, and tourism promotion can influence the level

of tourist visits (Ahmadi & Natasya Giyar Dwisyafitri, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024).

Sustainable tourism is one of the steps in efforts to improve the economy in the tourism sector (Palazzo et al., 2022). Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility, as well as community participation, are alternatives for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The cohesion of the role of local communities or societies in tourism governance results in dynamics in the creation of tourism opportunities based on local resources (Sharpley, 2023).

Smart tourism is a framework for improving resources, information accessibility, and management in tourist destinations (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022). However, for regional tourism industry actors, this has not been fully utilized and developed in optimizing digital-based services, utilizing big data for analyzing tourist trends, and integrating technology in destination promotion and management (Nur Aini Afifa & Setyo Nugroho, 2022; Satyaninggrat et al., 2023). Lack of digital infrastructure, limited technological literacy, and minimal collaboration between stakeholders are the main challenges in implementing smart tourism at the local level (Ab Rahman & Dura, 2021; Marham Jupri Hadi et al., 2022).

Local rural communities in Ciamis Regency dominate the initiation in the formation of pioneering tourist attractions. Local communities and innovations in developing tourist destinations begin in the form of pioneering tourist attractions (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the role of social capital, community involvement, local innovation, and the influence of technology and government policies in encouraging the formation of community-based tourist destinations (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022).

Community-based Based Tourism (CBT) is one of the supporters of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 1 on No Poverty, number 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and number 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems. Community-based Based Tourism (CBT) has the potential to improve community welfare and environmental preservation, and there are negative impacts if not managed properly (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is relevant to Asta Cita number 6 regarding building in the village.

Participation of local rural communities in regional tourism development and improving welfare, as well as improving community institutions, are key factors in creating sustainable and community-based tourism (Permatasari, 2022; Widya Darmayanti et al., 2020). The role of the government is also inseparable from efforts to support and facilitate tourism development through strategic policies, assistance, and the use of technology within the framework of digital government (Kononova, 2020; Pawan Kumar et al., 2022). However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires in-depth research.

However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires a more in-depth study, especially in the context of the ongoing digital transformation. The process of cultural diffusion is not only related to the preservation of local values, but also to how these values are adapted and disseminated through digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is an important factor in encouraging the spread of local culture through official digital platforms, tourism information systems, and integrated public service applications.

Through this strategy, local governments can optimize the role of technology in facilitating community participation, accelerating the dissemination of information, and

supporting the management of community-based tourism objects in a transparent and accountable manner. Therefore, the integration between cultural diffusion and Digital Government is key to creating inclusive and sustainable tourism governance.

### Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology and case study methods. Data were obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The research location was focused on Cihaurbeuti, Sadananya, and Sukamantri Districts, Ciamis Regency. Primary data collection techniques came from community leaders, tourism managers, and local government officials. The data analysis process was carried out by triangulation and thematic coding of the data obtained to find relevant patterns (Alodia et al., 2025; Fajrul & Fita Saptyana, 2025; Meriatami et al., 2025).

This technique allows researchers to identify the relationship between the role of local actors, forms of cultural diffusion, and the dynamics of Digital Government implementation in the context of tourism management. Each category that emerges is analyzed based on the social and policy context, resulting in a holistic understanding of the real conditions in the field. Data from in-depth interviews, field observations, and supporting documents are combined to strengthen the validity of the findings. This approach not only reveals how local communities participate in the initiation of tourism objects, but also how digital technology is gradually adopted in supporting community-based tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

This study was conducted to formulate a strategy for sustainable regional tourism management based on digital government and community-based tourism in Ciamis Regency through a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. The stages begin with determining the focus and formulation of the problem, followed by a literature review of the concept of government digitalization, community-based tourism, and sustainability. The research location is focused on several leading destinations in Ciamis, with research subjects including local governments, local tourism actors, tourists, and academics. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation studies, and focus group discussions (FGD) to explore actual practices and shared aspirations.

The collected data were analyzed using triangulation techniques, thematic coding, and SWOT analysis to identify internal and external factors that influence tourism governance. Validation was carried out through member checks and peer reviews, to ensure the validity of the findings. The results of this analysis were used to formulate strategies that integrate the use of digital technology in destination management by strengthening the role of local communities, as well as to develop applicable policy recommendations to support inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

### Results and Discussion

The study found that the process of local community cultural diffusion occurs through social media, tourist interactions, and adaptation to new values introduced through tourism experiences. Local communities play a central role in creating and managing pioneering tourism objects, although their participation is generally still limited to operational aspects such as facility management and visitor services. Meanwhile, strategic aspects such as digital management, online promotion, and data utilization are still dominated by external parties or have not been maximized. This is due

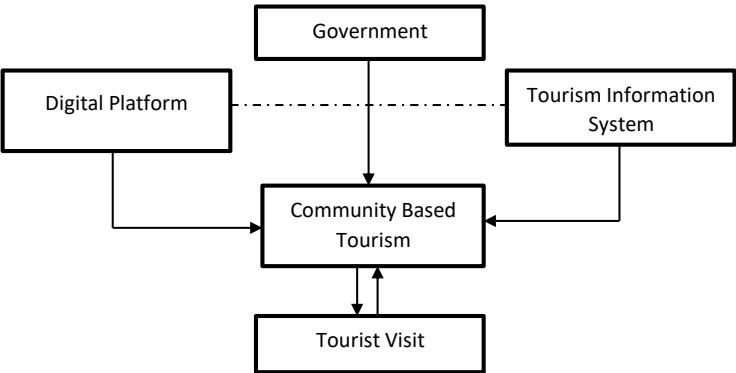
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to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and suboptimal support from the government in providing an inclusive digital platform for local tourism actors (Arief Rachman Afandy et al., 2025; Astuti et al., 2025).

In this context, the role of local government becomes crucial, not only in terms of regulation and promotion, but also in building a digital ecosystem that supports strengthening the capacity of local communities. Effective implementation of Digital Government in the tourism sector allows the government to provide public digital services such as online licensing systems, tourist attraction databases, and real-time data-based tourist information dashboards (Herawati & Handrianus Pranatawijaya, 2025). The government can also facilitate digital literacy training for tourism actors, create integrated tourism promotion applications, and establish partnerships with academics and industry players to develop service innovations (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022; Hariman & Syahputra, 2024; Hawadah, 2025).

In practice, there is still a gap between digital policies and the technical and social readiness of local communities, which hinders the realization of adaptive and sustainable tourism governance. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model formulated in this study is presented as an answer to this complexity. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism model is described as follows:



**Picture. 2 Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism Model**  
Source: Research Results, 2025.

DICBT integrates aspects of cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and the use of digital technology in a participatory and sustainability-oriented tourism governance framework. In this model, Digital Government acts as the main facilitator connecting the interests of the community, government, academics, and industry players through the Quadruple Helix approach. With the implementation of DICBT, it is hoped that a community-based tourism management system will be born that not only prioritizes local wisdom but is also able to compete in the digital era, making Ciamis Regency an example of the implementation of smart tourism based on collaboration and technology.

Community-based tourism management within the DICBT (Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism) framework emphasizes the importance of active participation of local communities as the main subject in destination development. This construct not only prioritizes the utilization of cultural potential and local wisdom, but also integrates the empowerment process so that communities have the capacity and

independence to manage and develop tourism sustainably. Through this approach, the community is not just a complement, but becomes the center of tourism activities, from planning, management, to evaluation, so that a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the sustainability of the destination is created.

On the other hand, the use of digital technology is a key element in strengthening community-based tourism governance. In this context, the role of government is vital as the main facilitator in building digital infrastructure, formulating adaptive regulations, and bridging collaboration between Quadruple Helix elements: government, community, business actors, and academics. Technology enables service efficiency, data transparency, and broader and more measurable promotion and marketing. With the support of a progressive government that is oriented towards digital transformation, the tourism management system can be developed to be smarter, more collaborative, and more sustainable, as expected in the DICBT model in Ciamis Regency.

All parties do not fully understand the importance of implementing effective Digital Government in the tourism sector, which is one of the fundamental obstacles in realizing sustainable and adaptive tourism governance for the development of the times. This lack of understanding is not only found among tourism actors but also among some local government officials who still rely on conventional patterns in tourism services and promotions. This unpreparedness has a direct impact on the slow adoption of digital technology in managing tourist attractions, including in terms of promotion, information systems, and real-time tourist data collection, which is very crucial for formulating evidence-based policies.

The implementation of evidence-based policies in sustainable regional tourism management requires local governments to formulate strategies based on empirical data and verifiable field findings (Kusuwo Jumino et al., 2024). In the context of Ciamis Regency, the fluctuation in the number of tourist visits and the less-than-optimal use of digital technology show that tourism development policies cannot rely only on normative assumptions or top-down program approaches. The government needs to develop a digital tourism information system that is able to collect tourist visit data, feedback from tourism business actors, and map the potential and obstacles of each destination. This data is an important basis for determining the direction of promotional policies, infrastructure development, human resource training, and integration of digital services that are right on target and sustainable.

Furthermore, evidence-based policies also facilitate evaluation processes and decision-making that are more adaptive to local dynamics. Through this approach, government interventions can be directed at critical points, such as increasing digital literacy in tourism communities, strengthening the role of tourism villages, and developing applications and service platforms based on community needs. Empirical evidence from participatory research processes and policy impact evaluations allows the formulation of a digital tourism governance model that is not only technically responsive but also sensitive to local values. Thus, evidence-based policy becomes the main foundation in synergizing Digital Government, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and the principles of inclusive and contextual sustainable tourism development (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Another obstacle is the low digital literacy among local communities, especially in rural areas that are strategic locations for community-based tourism development. Many tourism actors are not yet able to access or manage digital platforms for promotions, online reservations, or visitor data management. In fact, within the Digital Government framework, digital collaboration between the government and the community is the key

to success in creating an inclusive and responsive system. This gap is exacerbated by limited information technology infrastructure in the regions, such as uneven internet networks, lack of technical training, and the absence of an integrated system that is easily accessible to users from various educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the strategy to strengthen the implementation of Digital Government must begin with a digital literacy program and comprehensive technical assistance to tourism actors and village government officials. Local governments also need to design affirmative policies in the form of digitalization incentives, development of user-friendly local tourism applications, and encourage the involvement of universities and technology industry players in building human resource capacity in this sector. Thus, the barriers to understanding the importance of Digital Government are not only overcome through a structural approach, but also through a cultural approach that changes people's perspectives and habits towards technology as a tool for empowerment in the tourism sector.

### **Conclusion**

Sustainable tourism governance strategies in Ciamis Regency require synergy between the use of digital technology (digital government) and strengthening the role of local communities (community-based tourism). The local government acts as a facilitator in providing digital platforms, regulations, and policies that are adaptive to technological developments and community needs. Meanwhile, local communities are the main key in maintaining the sustainability of destinations through active involvement in promotion, management, and provision of services based on local wisdom. Collaboration between the government, communities, and the private sector allows for the formation of a responsive, inclusive, and competitive tourism ecosystem.

The implementation of digital government in tourism governance in Ciamis can accelerate the process of information integration, facilitate access to services for tourists, and strengthen transparency and accountability in destination management. On the other hand, the community-based tourism approach strengthens the social and economic sustainability of local communities by making them the main actors in tourism development. For this reason, future strategies need to be directed at increasing the capacity of local human resources in utilizing technology, strengthening data-based regulations, and developing digital infrastructure that supports destination sustainability. With this approach, Ciamis has great potential to become a model for resilient and sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

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## **Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency**

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### **Abstract**

*This study discusses the strategy of sustainable regional tourism governance that integrates the Digital Government and Community Based Tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Digital Government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance. Collaboration between local communities, local governments, academics, and industry players is an important prerequisite in realizing a sustainable smart tourism strategy. The Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism (DICBT) model is offered as an innovation that can increase the competitiveness of destinations while strengthening the welfare of local communities in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism; Governance; Digital Government; Community Based Tourism

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### **Introduction**

The welfare of local communities at the village level, environmental issues, and sustainable tourism are important elements that are interrelated in creating inclusive development. Sustainable tourism, for example, not only aims to promote local economic growth, but also maintains the natural ecosystem and local culture that are the attractions of tourism itself (Bagus Prabowo, 2021; Sri Subawa & Gusti Ayu Agung Nadya Leonita, 2024). The tourism sector depends on the number of tourist visits, which has implications for the Regional Gross Domestic Product and the sustainability of the local tourism industry (Hanafi Ahmad, 2022; Sentanu & Mahadiansar, 2020).

The Regional Government certainly has an important role in improving welfare and the Regional Gross Domestic Product from the tourism sector. However, from 2019 to 2024, there was a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency. A sharp decline occurred in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, while in the following years, the increase in the number of tourists was slow and insignificant. This condition shows the need for more adaptive strategic efforts in managing the tourism sector, especially by integrating digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is a potential solution to increase the efficiency of tourism services, expand the reach of

digital promotion, and open up space for community participation in managing tourist destinations.

This will create a more inclusive and democratic tourism ecosystem, where destination management decisions can be data-based and actively involve multiple actors in the planning and evaluation process of tourism policies. On the other hand, the synergy between Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) opens up space for social transformation in destination management. Digital technology can be utilized by local communities to promote tourism potential based on culture, nature, and local wisdom more widely through social media, digital marketplaces, and online reservation systems. In addition, training and mentoring facilitated by the government are important keys so that the community has digital literacy and technical capacity in managing quality tourism services. Thus, the role of the community is not only as a field implementer, but also as a strategic actor in the digital tourism value chain.

The success of digital and community-based tourism governance strategies is highly dependent on public policy support, the political will of local governments, and the sustainability of assistance from external actors such as academics and the private sector. In the context of Ciamis Regency, this approach can be the foundation for a smart tourism model that not only emphasizes technological innovation but also upholds socio-cultural values and environmental sustainability. The integration of technology and local community empowerment is the main strength in realizing a resilient, adaptive, and competitive tourist destination in the era of digital transformation.

With an integrated information system and the use of real-time tourist data, local governments can design more responsive and evidence-based policies to encourage sustainable tourism growth. The number of tourist visits is as follows:



**Figure 1 Number of Tourist Visits to Ciamis Regency**

Source: [www.data.ciamiskab.go.id](http://www.data.ciamiskab.go.id), 2025.

Based on Figure 1, there is a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits, namely in 2020 it decreased by 30.36% and in 2024 it increased by 6.11%. The data shows that the increase in the number of tourists did not increase significantly. This indicates that recovery of the regional tourism sector is needed to face various challenges. (Wahyuni, 2021). Factors such as government policies, economic conditions, destination attractiveness, community participation, and tourism promotion can influence the level of tourist visits (Ahmadi & Natasya Giyar Dwisyafitri, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024).

Sustainable tourism is one of the steps in efforts to improve the economy in the tourism sector (Palazzo et al., 2022). Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility, as well as community participation, are alternatives for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The cohesion of the role of local communities or societies in tourism governance results in dynamics in the creation of tourism opportunities based on local resources (Sharples, 2023).

Smart tourism is a framework for improving resources, information accessibility, and management in tourist destinations (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022). However, for regional tourism industry actors, this has not been fully utilized and developed in optimizing digital-based services, utilizing big data for analyzing tourist trends, and integrating technology in destination promotion and management (Nur Aini Afifa & Setyo Nugroho, 2022; Satyaningrat et al., 2023). Lack of digital infrastructure, limited technological literacy, and minimal collaboration between stakeholders are the main challenges in implementing smart tourism at the local level (Ab Rahman & Dura, 2021; Marham Jupri Hadi et al., 2022).

Local rural communities in Ciamis Regency dominate the initiation in the formation of pioneering tourist attractions. Local communities and innovations in developing tourist destinations begin in the form of pioneering tourist attractions (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the role of social capital, community involvement, local innovation, and the influence of technology and government policies in encouraging the formation of community-based tourist destinations (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022).

Community-based Tourism (CBT) is one of the supporters of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 1 on No Poverty, number 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and number 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems. Community-based Tourism (CBT) has the potential to improve community welfare and environmental preservation, but there are negative impacts if not managed properly (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is relevant to Asta Cita number 6 regarding building in the village.

Participation of local rural communities in regional tourism development and improving welfare, as well as improving community institutions, are key factors in creating sustainable and community-based tourism (Permatasari, 2022; Widya Darmayanti et al., 2020). The role of the government is also inseparable from efforts to support and facilitate tourism development through strategic policies, assistance, and the use of technology within the framework of digital government (Kononova, 2020; Pawan Kumar et al., 2022). However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires in-depth research.

Research on the integration of digital technology in tourism has developed rapidly worldwide, for example in the development of smart destination management in Spain, which emphasizes governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, and accessibility (Andrades et al., 2024). Governance emphasizes cross-sector collaboration and data-driven decision-making through transparent and participatory mechanisms (Kim et al., 2022). Innovation focuses on developing an innovation ecosystem through collaboration among government, academia, and industry stakeholders to create new solutions in tourism services (Biz & Grechi, 2021). Technology serves as the backbone of the system through the implementation of integrated digital platforms, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance management efficiency and the tourist experience (Fernández-Díaz et al., 2023).

Sustainability ensures that every tourism policy considers the balance between environmental, social, and economic sustainability through the preservation of cultural heritage, environmentally friendly resource management, and the empowerment of local communities (García-Avilés, 2020). Meanwhile, accessibility ensures inclusivity by applying the principle of "tourism for all," guaranteeing ease of access for all groups, including persons with disabilities.

The implementation of e-tourism platforms in South Korea underscores the role of digital technology as a key catalyst in the development of smart tourism, which shares similar principles with the Smart Destination Management model in Spain. Through an integrated platform, the South Korean government utilizes big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) to provide personalized tourism services, enhance destination management efficiency, and strengthen global tourism promotion (Cardoso & Ruiz, 2021; Singh & Bashar, 2023).

In the ASEAN region, the implementation of digital governance for rural tourism in Thailand represents a national strategy that integrates digital technology into village tourism governance to strengthen the local economy and preserve cultural sustainability. Through the Thailand 4.0 policy and the Digital Tourism Thailand initiative, the government has developed an integrated tourism information system that enables community-based destination promotion through online platforms, mobile applications, and digital marketing jointly managed by local governments and communities (Anna et al., 2024; Pattanapokinsakul et al., 2024; Sasirin et al., 2024).

Most studies still focus on the technological aspects and digital promotion rather than on the collaboration between digital governance and local community empowerment. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which integrates the concepts of Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a strategy for sustainable regional tourism governance. The synergy between these two concepts has rarely been explored in the context of local government in Indonesia.

There are several research gaps that need to be addressed in the context of regional tourism governance. The digital tourism institutional framework at the local level has not yet been fully integrated with the Digital Government system, resulting in fragmented management of tourist data, promotion, and destination performance evaluation. Moreover, the role of local communities within the framework of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) tends to be limited to operational aspects, with minimal involvement in data-driven decision-making or digital collaboration. The low level of digital literacy among rural tourism communities, coupled with the lack of optimal government support in training and capacity building, weakens their adaptive capacity toward digital transformation. This study aims to analyze the conditions and dynamics of tourism governance in Ciamis Regency within the context of implementing Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism, and to identify the inhibiting and supporting factors in integrating digital technology with local community participation.

However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires a more in-depth study, especially in the context of the ongoing digital transformation. The process of cultural diffusion is not only related to the preservation of local values, but also to how these values are adapted and disseminated through digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is an important factor in encouraging the spread of local culture through official digital platforms, tourism information systems, and integrated public service applications.

Through this strategy, local governments can optimize the role of technology in facilitating community participation, accelerating the dissemination of information, and

supporting the management of community-based tourism objects in a transparent and accountable manner. Therefore, the integration between cultural diffusion and Digital Government is key to creating inclusive and sustainable tourism governance.

## **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology and case study methods. Data were obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The research location was focused on Cihaurbeuti, Sadananya, and Sukamantri Districts, Ciamis Regency. Primary data collection techniques came from community leaders, tourism managers, and local government officials. The data analysis process was carried out by triangulation and thematic coding of the data obtained to find relevant patterns (Alodia et al., 2025; Fajrul & Fita Sptyana, 2025; Meriatami et al., 2025).

This technique allows researchers to identify the relationship between the role of local actors, forms of cultural diffusion, and the dynamics of Digital Government implementation in the context of tourism management. Each category that emerges is analyzed based on the social and policy context, resulting in a holistic understanding of the real conditions in the field. Data from in-depth interviews, field observations, and supporting documents are combined to strengthen the validity of the findings. This approach not only reveals how local communities participate in the initiation of tourism objects, but also how digital technology is gradually adopted in supporting community-based tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

This study was conducted to formulate a strategy for sustainable regional tourism management based on digital government and community-based tourism in Ciamis Regency through a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. The stages begin with determining the focus and formulation of the problem, followed by a literature review of the concept of government digitalization, community-based tourism, and sustainability. The research location is focused on several leading destinations in Ciamis, with research subjects including local governments, local tourism actors, tourists, and academics. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation studies, and focus group discussions (FGD) to explore actual practices and shared aspirations.

The collected data were analyzed using triangulation techniques, thematic coding, and SWOT analysis to identify internal and external factors that influence tourism governance. Validation was carried out through member checks and peer reviews, to ensure the validity of the findings. The results of this analysis were used to formulate strategies that integrate the use of digital technology in destination management by strengthening the role of local communities, as well as to develop applicable policy recommendations to support inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

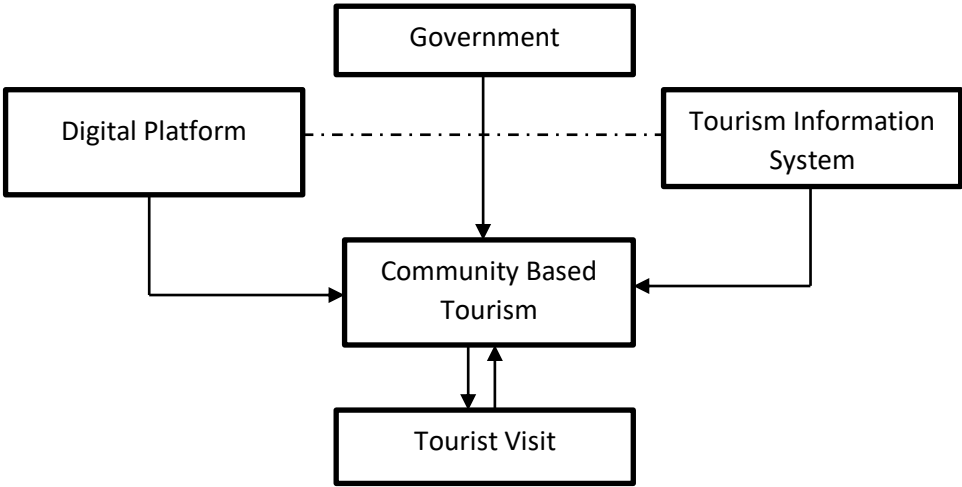
## **Results and Discussion**

The study found that the process of local community cultural diffusion occurs through social media, tourist interactions, and adaptation to new values introduced through tourism experiences. Local communities play a central role in creating and managing pioneering tourism objects, although their participation is generally still limited to operational aspects such as facility management and visitor services. Meanwhile, strategic aspects such as digital management, online promotion, and data utilization are still dominated by external parties or have not been maximized. This is due

to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and suboptimal support from the government in providing an inclusive digital platform for local tourism actors (Arief Rachman Afandy et al., 2025; Astuti et al., 2025).

In this context, the role of local government becomes crucial, not only in terms of regulation and promotion, but also in building a digital ecosystem that supports strengthening the capacity of local communities. Effective implementation of Digital Government in the tourism sector allows the government to provide public digital services such as online licensing systems, tourist attraction databases, and real-time data-based tourist information dashboards (Herawati & Handrianus Pranatawijaya, 2025). The government can also facilitate digital literacy training for tourism actors, create integrated tourism promotion applications, and establish partnerships with academics and industry players to develop service innovations (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022; Hariman & Syahputra, 2024; Hawadah, 2025).

In practice, there is still a gap between digital policies and the technical and social readiness of local communities, which hinders the realization of adaptive and sustainable tourism governance. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model formulated in this study is presented as an answer to this complexity. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism model is described as follows:



**Figure. 2 Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism Model**

Source: Research Results, 2025.

DICBT integrates aspects of cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and the use of digital technology in a participatory and sustainability-oriented tourism governance framework. In this model, Digital Government acts as the main facilitator connecting the interests of the community, government, academics, and industry players through the Quadruple Helix approach. With the implementation of DICBT, it is hoped that a community-based tourism management system will be born that not only prioritizes local wisdom but is also able to compete in the digital era, making Ciamis Regency an example of the implementation of smart tourism based on collaboration and technology.

Community-based tourism management within the DICBT (Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism) framework emphasizes the importance of active participation of local communities as the main subject in destination development. This construct not only prioritizes the utilization of cultural potential and local wisdom, but also integrates the empowerment process so that communities have the capacity and

independence to manage and develop tourism sustainably. Through this approach, the community is not just a complement, but becomes the center of tourism activities, from planning, management, to evaluation, so that a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the sustainability of the destination is created. The research findings indicate several factors that drive smart and sustainable tourism, as follows:

**Table 1. Driving Factors of Smart and Sustainable Tourism Governance**

| Dimension         | Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governance        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strategic vision and policy implementation.</li> <li>b. Efficient management.</li> <li>c. Accountability and control mechanisms.</li> <li>d. Transparency and public participation.</li> </ul>                                                             |
| Innovation        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Innovation in management and governance.</li> <li>b. Innovative activities and initiatives.</li> <li>c. Innovation-supporting ecosystem.</li> </ul>                                                                                                        |
| Technology        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Application of technology in governance.</li> <li>b. Technological infrastructure and connectivity.</li> <li>c. Technology for smart tourism management.</li> </ul>                                                                                        |
| Sustainability    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Tourism sustainability management.</li> <li>b. Preservation, enhancement, and restoration of cultural heritage.</li> <li>c. Socio-economic development and circular economy.</li> <li>d. Preservation and improvement of environmental quality.</li> </ul> |
| Cultural Identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Protection of local cultural values and traditions.</li> <li>b. Collaboration among cultural communities in destination management.</li> </ul>                                                                                                             |
| Leadership        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Leaders' ability to formulate long-term regional tourism goals.</li> <li>b. Ability to assess situations, manage risks, and determine appropriate actions based on data and intuition in regional tourism development.</li> </ul>                          |
| Resilience        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Data-driven mitigation and risk management systems.</li> <li>b. Adaptive policies toward climate and market changes.</li> <li>c. Economic and social resilience of tourism communities.</li> </ul>                                                         |

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The results of the study indicate that tourism governance in Ciamis Regency is starting to move towards smart governance practices that emphasize the importance of strategic vision and targeted policy implementation starting from the establishment of the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2017-2027 and contained in Ciamis Regency Regional Regulation Number 16 of 2016. There is also the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Promotion Agency as an institution that aims to expand tourism promotion. There are several research results that are synergistic with tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

#### 1. Regional Tourism Governance

Tourism governance in Ciamis Regency still relies heavily on management capacity and inter-agency coordination. Transparency and public participation are beginning to be seen through the involvement of the community and local businesses in tourism planning. Transparency and public participation are beginning to be seen through the involvement of the community and local businesses in tourism planning, which is the foundation for sustainable tourism. Community involvement, the professional capabilities of destination managers, and information transparency have been shown to contribute significantly to increased accountability in tourism financial management (Seputro & Mustafida, 2023). Institutional control and accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened to ensure governance is more accountable and integrated with the regional digital government system.

## 2. Regional Tourism Innovation

Innovation describes the dynamic adaptation of tourism actors to tourist needs and global challenges (Beryl Farahdiba et al., 2024). Research found that some destinations in Ciamis have developed community-based management innovations, such as in homestay management and digital promotion. Various local initiatives have also emerged, such as the development of thematic tourism products and creative entrepreneurship training. However, the innovation ecosystem has not yet been systematically developed due to collaboration between the government, academics, and industry players.

## 3. Technology

The use of technology is a crucial aspect in promoting smart tourism. In Ciamis Regency, technology has begun to be implemented in promotions through social media and digital tourism maps, but the implementation of integrated tourism information systems remains limited. Digital infrastructure, such as internet access in rural tourist areas, remains uneven, hampering connectivity between destinations (Achsa et al., 2020). The development of technology for smart tourism management, such as e-tourism platforms and data analytics, is needed to ensure a more data-driven decision-making process (Hanum et al., 2020).

## 4. Regional Tourism Sustainability

Sustainability has become the main focus of tourism development in Ciamis Regency, particularly in maintaining the balance between economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects. The research indicates a strong commitment to cultural heritage preservation and ecotourism through conservation activities and community-based destination management. However, the integration of circular economy principles and sustainability evaluation systems remains limited. Efforts to enhance environmental awareness and implement green policies in the tourism sector need to be consistently expanded to create a sustainable tourism ecosystem, where tourism activities are not only oriented toward economic growth but also maintain ecological balance, preserve natural resources, and strengthen the social responsibility of communities and tourism industry actors toward the environment (Kusumawidjaya et al., 2022).

## 5. Local Cultural Identity

Local cultural identity serves as a distinctive strength in the development of tourism in Ciamis Regency. The protection of values and traditions, such as regional arts and traditional rituals, is carried out by local communities with government support. Collaboration among cultural practitioners, tourism communities, and destination managers plays an essential role in strengthening the narrative of local identity. The main challenge lies in how these cultural values can be presented in engaging digital formats without losing their authenticity and meaning (Praditha & Made Bagus Wibisana, 2024).

## 6. Leadership

Leadership is a strategic factor in determining the direction of regional tourism development. The research findings show that the role of local leaders, both at the government and community levels, greatly influences the success of stakeholder coordination. Leaders with a long-term vision and the ability to make data-driven decisions are better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern tourism. However, further capacity building is needed to foster broader implementation of digital and collaborative leadership (Nurfaridah et al., 2025).

## 7. Resilience

Resilience has emerged as a prominent dimension in the post-pandemic era, emphasizing the importance of destinations' ability to adapt to crises and market changes. In Ciamis Regency, several initiatives have been undertaken, such as diversifying tourism products and strengthening the local creative economy. However, risk mitigation systems and climate change adaptation strategies still need further development. The social resilience of tourism communities also needs to be reinforced through continuous training and empowerment so that tourism not only recovers but also grows stronger and more resilient (Wulandari et al., 2020).

Strengthening smart and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency requires a holistic synergy across multiple dimensions visionary leadership, technology-driven innovation, and socio-cultural sustainability. Visionary leadership serves as a strategic compass and data-driven decision-maker to ensure the integration of tourism policies with regional development agendas. Technological innovation acts as a catalyst for achieving management efficiency, information transparency, and market expansion through adaptive digital systems responsive to global dynamics. Meanwhile, socio-cultural sustainability provides the moral foundation and local identity that maintain the balance between economic progress and the preservation of local wisdom values. When these three dimensions are harmoniously integrated, they can create an inclusive and resilient tourism ecosystem with global competitiveness rooted in local potential and sustainability-oriented governance. Further results related to the dominant factors in the initiation of smart tourism in Ciamis Regency are as follows:



**Figure. 3 Smart and Sustainability Tourism Factor in Ciamis Regency**

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The dominance of leadership, governance, and cultural identity serves as the key determinant in initiating the transformation toward *smart tourism* in Ciamis Regency, as these three dimensions form the strategic foundation for decision-making, policy implementation, and social legitimacy in tourism development. Visionary leadership

provides a clear development direction through data-driven policies, cross-sector collaboration, and digital innovation in destination management. Meanwhile, transparent and participatory governance ensures equitable distribution of tourism benefits, strengthens stakeholder trust, and allows greater adaptability to global market dynamics. Together, these aspects foster efficiency and accountability within the tourism system, core prerequisites for achieving *smart tourism*. At the same time, local cultural identity acts as the unifying element that defines and differentiates Ciamis as a distinctive tourism destination. Integrating cultural values into the digital design of tourism enables the creation of experiences that are both authentic and modern, enhancing attraction while preserving cultural heritage.

On the other hand, the use of digital technology is a key element in strengthening community-based tourism governance. In this context, the role of government is vital as the main facilitator in building digital infrastructure, formulating adaptive regulations, and bridging collaboration between Quadruple Helix elements: government, community, business actors, and academics. Technology enables service efficiency, data transparency, and broader and more measurable promotion and marketing. With the support of a progressive government that is oriented towards digital transformation, the tourism management system can be developed to be smarter, more collaborative, and more sustainable, as expected in the DICBT model in Ciamis Regency.

All parties do not fully understand the importance of implementing effective Digital Government in the tourism sector, which is one of the fundamental obstacles in realizing sustainable and adaptive tourism governance for the development of the times. This lack of understanding is not only found among tourism actors but also among some local government officials who still rely on conventional patterns in tourism services and promotions. This unpreparedness has a direct impact on the slow adoption of digital technology in managing tourist attractions, including in terms of promotion, information systems, and real-time tourist data collection, which is very crucial for formulating evidence-based policies.

The implementation of evidence-based policies in sustainable regional tourism management requires local governments to formulate strategies based on empirical data and verifiable field findings (Kusuwo Jumino et al., 2024). In the context of Ciamis Regency, the fluctuation in the number of tourist visits and the less-than-optimal use of digital technology show that tourism development policies cannot rely only on normative assumptions or top-down program approaches. The government needs to develop a digital tourism information system that is able to collect tourist visit data, feedback from tourism business actors, and map the potential and obstacles of each destination. This data is an important basis for determining the direction of promotional policies, infrastructure development, human resource training, and integration of digital services that are right on target and sustainable.

Furthermore, evidence-based policies also facilitate evaluation processes and decision-making that are more adaptive to local dynamics. Through this approach, government interventions can be directed at critical points, such as increasing digital literacy in tourism communities, strengthening the role of tourism villages, and developing applications and service platforms based on community needs. Empirical evidence from participatory research processes and policy impact evaluations allows the formulation of a digital tourism governance model that is not only technically responsive but also sensitive to local values. Thus, evidence-based policy becomes the main foundation in synergizing Digital Government, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and the

principles of inclusive and contextual sustainable tourism development (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Another obstacle is the low digital literacy among local communities, especially in rural areas that are strategic locations for community-based tourism development. Many tourism actors are not yet able to access or manage digital platforms for promotions, online reservations, or visitor data management. In fact, within the Digital Government framework, digital collaboration between the government and the community is the key to success in creating an inclusive and responsive system. This gap is exacerbated by limited information technology infrastructure in the regions, such as uneven internet networks, lack of technical training, and the absence of an integrated system that is easily accessible to users from various educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the strategy to strengthen the implementation of Digital Government must begin with a digital literacy program and comprehensive technical assistance to tourism actors and village government officials. Local governments also need to design affirmative policies in the form of digitalization incentives, development of user-friendly local tourism applications, and encourage the involvement of universities and technology industry players in building human resource capacity in this sector. Thus, the barriers to understanding the importance of Digital Government are not only overcome through a structural approach, but also through a cultural approach that changes people's perspectives and habits towards technology as a tool for empowerment in the tourism sector.

## **Conclusion**

Sustainable tourism governance strategies in Ciamis Regency require synergy between the use of digital technology (digital government) and strengthening the role of local communities (community-based tourism). The local government acts as a facilitator in providing digital platforms, regulations, and policies that are adaptive to technological developments and community needs. Meanwhile, local communities are the main key in maintaining the sustainability of destinations through active involvement in promotion, management, and provision of services based on local wisdom. Collaboration between the government, communities, and the private sector allows for the formation of a responsive, inclusive, and competitive tourism ecosystem.

The implementation of digital government in tourism governance in Ciamis can accelerate the process of information integration, facilitate access to services for tourists, and strengthen transparency and accountability in destination management. On the other hand, the community-based tourism approach strengthens the social and economic sustainability of local communities by making them the main actors in tourism development. For this reason, future strategies need to be directed at increasing the capacity of local human resources in utilizing technology, strengthening data-based regulations, and developing digital infrastructure that supports destination sustainability. With this approach, Ciamis has great potential to become a model for resilient and sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to express our gratitude to the Ciamis Regency Government for the support, cooperation, and openness of information provided during the research process. Contributions from various regional apparatuses, especially those related to the tourism sector, are invaluable in enriching data and providing a deeper understanding of tourism governance practices in this region. The local government's commitment to

encouraging digital-based innovation and community empowerment is the main inspiration for developing sustainable strategies. We also express our highest appreciation to the Government Studies Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Galuh, for academic guidance, methodological direction, and institutional support during the implementation of this research.

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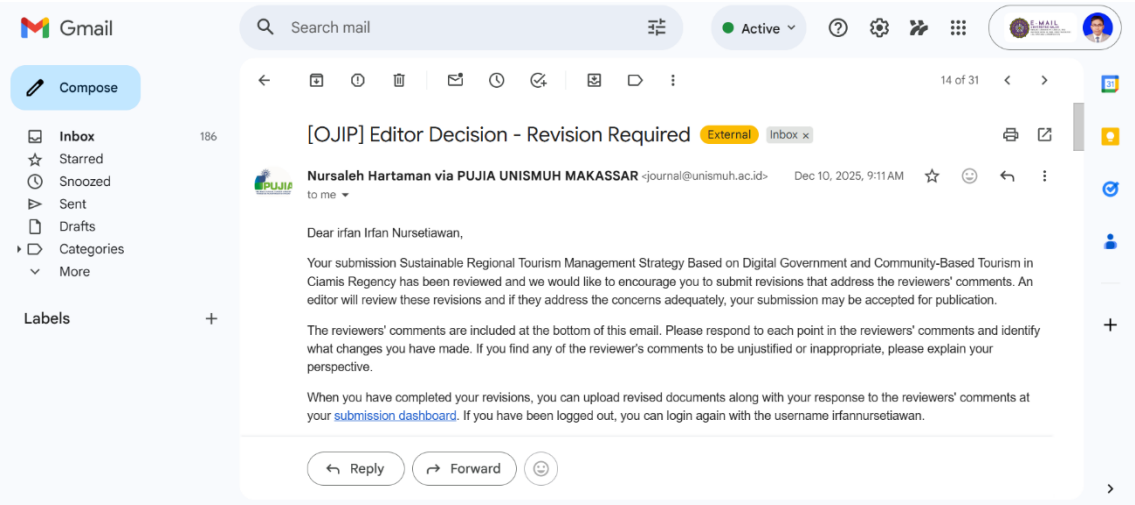
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4. Bukti konfirmasi review dan hasil review kedua (10 Desember 2025)



[OJIP] Editor Decision - Revision Required ✕

Participants

Nursaleh Hartaman (nhartaman)

irfan Irfan Nursetiawan (irfannursetiawan)

| Messages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Note                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | From                                     |
| <p>Dear irfan Irfan Nursetiawan,</p> <p>Your submission Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency has been reviewed and we would like to encourage you to submit revisions that address the reviewers' comments. An editor will review these revisions and if they address the concerns adequately, your submission may be accepted for publication.</p> <p>The reviewers' comments are included at the bottom of this email. Please respond to each point in the reviewers' comments and identify what changes you have made. If you find any of the reviewer's comments to be unjustified or inappropriate, please explain your perspective.</p> <p>When you have completed your revisions, you can upload revised documents along with your response to the reviewers' comments at your <a href="#">submission dashboard</a>. If you have been logged out, you can login again with the username irfannursetiawan.</p> <p>If you have any questions, please contact me from your <a href="#">submission dashboard</a>.</p> <p>We look forward to receiving your revised submission.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>Nursaleh Hartaman</p> | <p>nhartaman<br/>2025-12-10 10:11 AM</p> |



Irfan Nursetiawan &lt;irfan\_nursetiawan10@unigal.ac.id&gt;

**[OJIP] Editor Decision - Revision Required**

1 message

Nursaleh Hartaman via PUJIA UNISMUH MAKASSAR &lt;journal@unismuh.ac.id&gt;

Wed, Dec 10, 2025 at 9:11 AM

Reply-To: Nursaleh Hartaman &lt;nursaleh.hartaman@unismuh.ac.id&gt;

To: irfan Irfan Nursetiawan &lt;irfan\_nursetiawan10@unigal.ac.id&gt;

Dear irfan Irfan Nursetiawan,

Your submission Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency has been reviewed and we would like to encourage you to submit revisions that address the reviewers' comments. An editor will review these revisions and if they address the concerns adequately, your submission may be accepted for publication.

The reviewers' comments are included at the bottom of this email. Please respond to each point in the reviewers' comments and identify what changes you have made. If you find any of the reviewer's comments to be unjustified or inappropriate, please explain your perspective.

When you have completed your revisions, you can upload revised documents along with your response to the reviewers' comments at your [submission dashboard](#). If you have been logged out, you can login again with the username irfannursetiawan.

If you have any questions, please contact me from your [submission dashboard](#).

We look forward to receiving your revised submission.

Kind regards,

Nursaleh Hartaman

The following comments were received from reviewers.

**Reviewer 1:****Recommendation: Revisions Required**

In generally, this manuscript offers a timely and relevant contribution by linking sustainable regional tourism governance with the integration of Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in the specific context of Ciamis Regency. The conceptual ambition is clear: the authors aim to move beyond purely promotional or technological accounts of "smart tourism" and instead foreground governance, collaboration, and local community empowerment as core dimensions of sustainable tourism. The strength of the paper lies in its attempt to develop the Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model and to frame it within the broader debates on smart tourism, sustainability, and digital governance. The manuscript also demonstrates familiarity with international and regional literature, and it situates Ciamis in dialogue with cases from Spain, South Korea, and Thailand, which helps to justify the relevance of the topic beyond a purely local case.

However, there are several substantive issues that limit the analytical sharpness and originality of the study. Conceptually, the paper sometimes reads more like a policy essay than a tightly argued academic article: key concepts such as "digital government", "smart tourism", "cultural diffusion", and "community-based tourism" are all introduced, but their interrelationships are not always clearly theorised, and the DICBT model is more descriptive than analytical. The introduction and literature review sections are relatively long and occasionally repetitive, and they tend to stack references rather than use them to build a clear theoretical argument or identify a precise research puzzle. Methodologically, the paper claims to use a qualitative phenomenological and case study approach, yet the explanation of how phenomenology is actually operationalised in the field is thin, and there is a degree of duplication between the two "Research Methods" passages, which can confuse readers about the exact design. Sampling strategies, interview protocols, and the coding process are only briefly outlined, making it difficult to fully assess the reliability and depth of the empirical findings.

The results and discussion section succeeds in mapping a broad range of governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, cultural identity, leadership, and resilience factors, but the analysis remains largely descriptive and typological. Many claims about "gaps", "challenges", or "needs" are plausible, yet they are often presented at a high level of generality, with limited use of direct empirical evidence (e.g., quotes, concrete episodes, or process tracing) to substantiate how specific actors negotiate or contest digital governance arrangements in practice. The DICBT model is promising as a heuristic, but it is not sufficiently distinguished from existing frameworks such as smart tourism

destinations or digital governance models already discussed in the literature; as a result, its added value appears more incremental than innovative. Furthermore, the paper pays relatively little attention to power relations, conflicts of interest, or potential exclusion within community-based tourism, which are critical issues in the CBT literature. The conclusion reiterates the importance of integrating digital government and CBT but does not fully engage with the limitations of the study or articulate a strong agenda for future research.

In my view, the manuscript would benefit significantly from revision that sharpens its conceptual, methodological, and empirical contributions. Substantively, I recommend that the authors more clearly articulate the central research question and theoretical contribution early in the introduction, and then streamline the literature review to focus on the most relevant debates (e.g., smart tourism governance, digital government in local contexts, and critical CBT studies) rather than covering too many adjacent themes. Methodologically, the research design section should be consolidated into a single, coherent account that justifies the choice of phenomenology and case study, explains the selection of sites and respondents, and provides a more transparent description of data collection and thematic coding procedures. Empirically, the discussion would be stronger if it incorporated more concrete field evidence and used it to critically interrogate, not only illustrate, the DICBT model to clarifying how this model extends or challenges existing frameworks. Finally, I suggest adding a dedicated limitations and future research subsection, tightening language to reduce repetition, and polishing the English (e.g., consistency of terms, sentence structure), so that the paper can better meet the standards of an international readership and fully realise its potential contribution to the study of digital, community-based, and sustainable tourism governance.

## Reviewer 2:

### Recommendation: Revisions Required

The article addresses a timely and significant theme at the intersection of sustainable tourism, digital government, and community-based tourism (CBT), situated in the concrete context of Ciamis Regency. Conceptually, the manuscript has an appealing ambition: it seeks to integrate Digital Government with community-driven tourism initiatives and offers the Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model as an innovative framework. The attention to sustainable development, community welfare, and the digital transformation of governance is highly relevant to contemporary debates in public administration and tourism studies. The use of a qualitative approach focusing on local actors, cultural diffusion, and governance practices represents a promising research direction and demonstrates sensitivity to local socio-cultural dynamics. The paper's recognition of the role of the Quadruple Helix (government, community, business, and academia) and its emphasis on evidence-based policy further underscore its normative and policy relevance.

However, despite these important strengths, the manuscript contains substantial loopholes that limit its academic robustness and clarity. One of the most critical weaknesses lies in the methodological section. While the article states that it uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology and case study methods, and mentions observations, in-depth interviews, documentation, and even focus group discussions, it does not provide sufficient detail on sampling, participants, or procedures. There is no clear information on how many interviews were conducted, who the respondents were in terms of position and role, how they were selected, or how long data collection took. The paper also mentions triangulation, thematic coding, member checks, and peer review, yet these are presented as declarative statements rather than explained procedures. This lack of methodological transparency undermines the reliability and replicability of the study and leaves the reader unable to assess the depth or breadth of empirical engagement.

Another major loophole concerns the articulation of the research design and analytical framework. The manuscript states that it aims to analyze the conditions and dynamics of tourism governance in Ciamis within the context of Digital Government and CBT, but it does not formulate explicit research questions or a clear conceptual model at the outset. Key concepts—such as digital government, smart tourism, cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and resilience—are used frequently but are not systematically defined or operationalized. As a result, the relationships among these concepts remain implicit and sometimes conflated, and the reader is left to infer the analytical lens rather than see it clearly laid out. A stronger theoretical framing that explicitly connects digital governance, CBT, and sustainable tourism, supported by a diagram or conceptual model and clear research questions, would greatly enhance the clarity and coherence of the study.

The presentation of findings also reveals several weaknesses that need careful attention. The article claims to have identified patterns of cultural diffusion, community participation, governance dimensions, and driving factors of smart and sustainable tourism, but these claims are not adequately grounded in empirical evidence. There is almost no use of direct quotations from interviews, no detailed descriptions of observational moments, and very little specific reference to documents or concrete events in Ciamis. The sections on governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, cultural identity, leadership, and resilience read more like thematic essays than empirically substantiated results. Table 1 and Figure 3 present dimensions and factors of smart and sustainable tourism but do not explain how these were derived from the data, what coding process produced them, or what criteria were used to assess their "dominance." This disconnect between claimed findings and presented evidence is a central gap that needs to be addressed.

There is also a structural issue in the organization of the manuscript. The introduction is overly long and gradually shifts from background and literature review into prescriptive discussion and policy orientation before the research problem and questions are clearly defined. The methods section is fragmented and repetitive, with partly overlapping descriptions of the research design. The results and discussion are intertwined, making it difficult to distinguish between empirical findings, literature-driven assertions, and the authors' normative reflections. Moreover, the DICBT

model is introduced rather abruptly, with limited explanation of how it emerged from the field data rather than from normative reasoning or pre-existing frameworks. This structural blurring weakens the logical progression from context and theory to method, findings, and implications.

Conceptual clarity is another area where the manuscript requires strengthening. The notion of “cultural diffusion” is central in the introduction, but its meaning remains vague across the text. It is unclear whether the authors refer to the diffusion of local culture to visitors, the internalization of exogenous values by local communities, or the circulation of cultural narratives through digital platforms. Similarly, the distinctions between “digital government,” “smart tourism,” and “e-tourism platforms” are not clearly drawn. Sometimes these ideas appear to be used interchangeably, whereas in the literature they refer to distinct though related domains. The same applies to the terms governance, management, and development, which are often conflated in the narrative. Without precise definitions and consistent usage, the conceptual contributions of the paper become difficult to ascertain.

The empirical context, though implicitly rich, is not sufficiently developed in the text. Ciamis Regency is presented as a case, but the reader receives almost no basic descriptive information about the region: its demographic profile, economic characteristics, existing tourism infrastructure, or administrative structure. The article repeatedly refers to “pioneering tourism objects” and “tourism villages,” yet these are not concretely described; no specific example of a destination is given, nor are the stages of its development explained. Similarly, while digital infrastructure gaps and low digital literacy are mentioned as important obstacles, there is no supporting data on internet penetration, device access, or specific digital skills deficits among tourism actors. This lack of contextual detail reduces the value of the study as a case-based contribution and makes the Ciamis experience difficult to generalize or compare.

The literature review demonstrates a commendable effort to draw on both international and Indonesian sources, especially recent works on smart destinations and digital tourism. However, it appears somewhat unbalanced and, in parts, under-theorized. There is relatively limited engagement with seminal works on community-based tourism, participatory governance, or digital government, and many references are very recent, which raises questions about the breadth and depth of literature coverage. The manuscript would benefit from more systematic positioning of its argument within established scholarly debates, clarifying what is genuinely new about the DICBT model and how it adds to or challenges existing frameworks in sustainable tourism governance and digital public administration.

At the same time, it is important to recognize the strengths that the manuscript already exhibits. The topic choice is highly relevant and responds to pressing challenges in regional development, digital transformation, and community empowerment. The paper shows sensitivity to the interplay between local cultural identity and technology and recognizes the risk that digitalization might overshadow local wisdom if not handled carefully. The proposed DICBT model, although not yet fully empirically grounded, shows the authors' attempt to move beyond descriptive case study work and to offer a structured framework integrating digital government tools, participatory community mechanisms, and sustainable tourism principles. The emphasis on evidence-based policy and the call for integrated digital tourism information systems, capacity building, and collaborative governance are well aligned with contemporary policy discourse and could be useful for practitioners if further elaborated.

In order to strengthen the manuscript, several concrete improvements are advisable. First, the methodology needs to be rewritten with full transparency: the authors should clearly state the number of participants, their roles, the sampling strategy, the duration and mode of interviews and observations, the timeline of fieldwork, and the actual analytic steps taken (coding procedures, theme generation, triangulation, and validation methods). A brief table summarizing participant profiles and data sources would be very useful. Second, the authors should formulate explicit research questions and provide a clear conceptual framework early in the manuscript, showing how Digital Government, CBT, cultural diffusion, sustainability, and smart tourism are theoretically linked in this study. Third, the results section should be reworked to integrate concrete empirical evidence: including direct quotations from interviews, narrative vignettes from observations, or specific examples from documents that illustrate each of the major themes.

Furthermore, the presentation of the DICBT model should be more clearly linked to empirical insights. Instead of presenting it as an almost self-evident outcome, the authors should explain how each component of the model emerged from the field data and how it addresses specific challenges observed in Ciamis. A more sophisticated visual representation of the model, showing feedback loops, power relations, and actor interactions, would also be beneficial. The comparative references to Spain, South Korea, and Thailand could be transformed into a focused comparative discussion that highlights similarities and divergences, thereby clarifying the distinctive contribution of the Ciamis case. Finally, the manuscript requires thorough language editing to correct grammatical errors, improve sentence structure, and ensure consistency in tense and terminology, as well as a careful review and verification of all references.

In summary, the article has a strong and relevant thematic focus, a potentially valuable conceptual ambition through the DICBT model, and a commendable policy orientation that integrates sustainability, digital transformation, and community participation. At the same time, it exhibits significant weaknesses in methodological rigor, empirical grounding, conceptual precision, and structural organization. If the authors can address these loopholes by clarifying the research design, deepening the empirical presentation, tightening the conceptual framework, and reorganizing the narrative structure, the paper could evolve into a substantive contribution to the literature on sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

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Article Text

# Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency

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## Abstract

*This study discusses the strategy of sustainable regional tourism governance that integrates the Digital Government and Community Based Tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Digital Government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance. Collaboration between local communities, local governments, academics, and industry players is an important prerequisite in realizing a sustainable smart tourism strategy. The Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism (DICBT) model is offered as an innovation that can increase the competitiveness of destinations while strengthening the welfare of local communities in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism; Governance; Digital Government; Community Based Tourism

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## Introduction

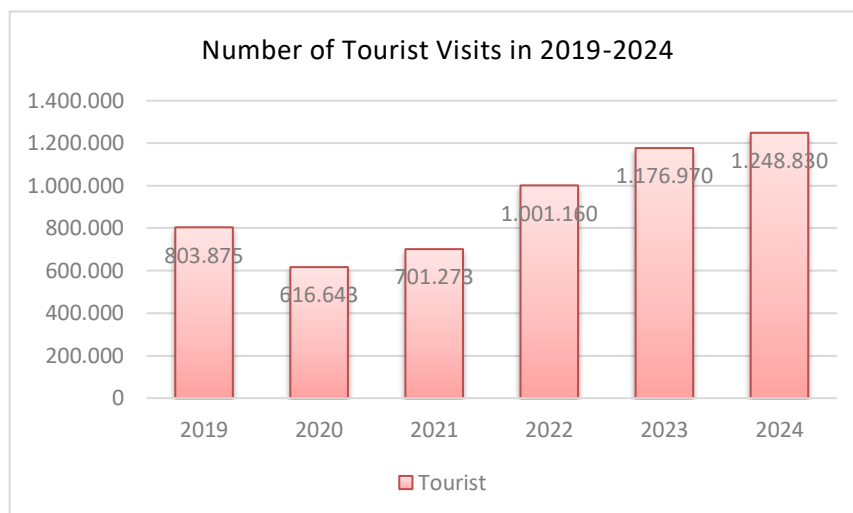
The welfare of local communities at the village level, environmental issues, and sustainable tourism are important elements that are interrelated in creating inclusive development. Sustainable tourism, for example, not only aims to promote local economic growth, but also maintains the natural ecosystem and local culture that are the attractions of tourism itself (Bagus Prabowo, 2021; Sri Subawa & Gusti Ayu Agung Nadya Leonita, 2024). The tourism sector depends on the number of tourist visits, which has implications for the Regional Gross Domestic Product and the sustainability of the local tourism industry (Hanafi Ahmad, 2022; Sentanu & Mahadiansar, 2020).

The Regional Government certainly has an important role in improving welfare and the Regional Gross Domestic Product from the tourism sector. However, from 2019 to 2024, there was a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency. A sharp decline occurred in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, while in the following years, the increase in the number of tourists was slow and insignificant. This condition shows the need for more adaptive strategic efforts in managing the tourism sector, especially by integrating digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is a potential solution to increase the efficiency of tourism services, expand the reach of

digital promotion, and open up space for community participation in managing tourist destinations.

The integration of digital government and community-based tourism (CBT) has the potential to create an inclusive and participatory tourism ecosystem, in which destination management decisions are data-driven and actively involve multiple actors in the planning and evaluation of tourism policies. Within this framework, digital technology functions not only as an instrument of smart tourism but also as a medium of cultural diffusion, enabling local communities to promote tourism potential grounded in local culture and wisdom through digital platforms. However, to move beyond a merely normative orientation, key concepts such as digital government, smart tourism, cultural diffusion, and CBT must be clearly theorized and operationalized, so that the DICBT model is not merely descriptive but analytically capable of explaining the strategic role of communities as central actors in the digital tourism value chain, supported by public policy, digital capacity building, and sustainable governance.

Strengthening community-based tourism through a digital government approach must be accompanied by transparent, accountable, and power-sensitive governance, so that digitalization does not widen social inequalities but instead functions as an instrument to broaden participation, enhance distributive justice, and ensure social sustainability in tourism development. With an integrated information system and the use of real-time tourist data, local governments can design more responsive and evidence-based policies to encourage sustainable tourism growth. The number of tourist visits is as follows:



**Figure 1 Number of Tourist Visits to Ciamis Regency**

Source: [www.data.ciamiskab.go.id](http://www.data.ciamiskab.go.id), 2025.

Based on Figure 1, there is a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits, namely, in 2020 it decreased by 30.36% and in 2024 it increased by 6.11%. The data shows that the increase in the number of tourists did not increase significantly. This indicates that recovery of the regional tourism sector is needed to face various challenges. (Wahyuni, 2021). Factors such as government policies, economic conditions, destination attractiveness, community participation, and tourism promotion can influence the level of tourist visits (Ahmadi & Natasya Giyar Dwisyafitri, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024).

Sustainable tourism is one of the steps in efforts to improve the economy in the tourism sector (Palazzo et al., 2022). Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility, as well as community participation, are alternatives for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The cohesion of the role of local communities

or societies in tourism governance results in dynamics in the creation of tourism opportunities based on local resources (Sharpley, 2023).

Smart tourism is a framework for improving resources, information accessibility, and management in tourist destinations (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022). However, for regional tourism industry actors, this has not been fully utilized and developed in optimizing digital-based services, utilizing big data for analyzing tourist trends, and integrating technology in destination promotion and management (Nur Aini Afifa & Setyo Nugroho, 2022; Satyaninggrat et al., 2023). Lack of digital infrastructure, limited technological literacy, and minimal collaboration between stakeholders are the main challenges in implementing smart tourism at the local level (Ab Rahman & Dura, 2021; Marham Jupri Hadi et al., 2022).

Local rural communities in Ciamis Regency dominate the initiation of the formation of pioneering tourist attractions. Local communities and innovations in developing tourist destinations begin in the form of pioneering tourist attractions (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the role of social capital, community involvement, local innovation, and the influence of technology and government policies in encouraging the formation of community-based tourist destinations (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022).

Community-based Tourism (CBT) is one of the supporters of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 1 on No Poverty, number 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and number 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems. Community-based Tourism (CBT) has the potential to improve community welfare and environmental preservation, but there are negative impacts if not managed properly (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is relevant to Asta Cita number 6 regarding building in the village.

Participation of local rural communities in regional tourism development and improving welfare, as well as improving community institutions, are key factors in creating sustainable and community-based tourism (Permatasari, 2022; Widya Darmayanti et al., 2020). The role of the government is also inseparable from efforts to support and facilitate tourism development through strategic policies, assistance, and the use of technology within the framework of digital government (Kononova, 2020; Pawan Kumar et al., 2022). However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires in-depth research.

Research on the integration of digital technology in tourism has developed rapidly worldwide, for example, in the development of smart destination management in Spain, which emphasizes governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, and accessibility (Andrades et al., 2024). Governance emphasizes cross-sector collaboration and data-driven decision-making through transparent and participatory mechanisms (Kim et al., 2022). Innovation focuses on developing an innovation ecosystem through collaboration among government, academia, and industry stakeholders to create new solutions in tourism services (Biz & Grechi, 2021). Technology serves as the backbone of the system through the implementation of integrated digital platforms, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance management efficiency and the tourist experience (Fernández-Díaz et al., 2023).

Sustainability ensures that every tourism policy considers the balance between environmental, social, and economic sustainability through the preservation of cultural heritage, environmentally friendly resource management, and the empowerment of local communities (García-Avilés, 2020). Meanwhile, accessibility ensures inclusivity by

applying the principle of "tourism for all," guaranteeing ease of access for all groups, including persons with disabilities.

The implementation of e-tourism platforms in South Korea underscores the role of digital technology as a key catalyst in the development of smart tourism, which shares similar principles with the Smart Destination Management model in Spain. Through an integrated platform, the South Korean government utilizes big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) to provide personalized tourism services, enhance destination management efficiency, and strengthen global tourism promotion (Cardoso & Ruiz, 2021; Singh & Bashar, 2023).

In the ASEAN region, the implementation of digital governance for rural tourism in Thailand represents a national strategy that integrates digital technology into village tourism governance to strengthen the local economy and preserve cultural sustainability. Through the Thailand 4.0 policy and the Digital Tourism Thailand initiative, the government has developed an integrated tourism information system that enables community-based destination promotion through online platforms, mobile applications, and digital marketing jointly managed by local governments and communities (Anna et al., 2024; Pattanapokinsakul et al., 2024; Sasirin et al., 2024).

Most studies still focus on the technological aspects and digital promotion rather than on the collaboration between digital governance and local community empowerment. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which integrates the concepts of Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a strategy for sustainable regional tourism governance. The synergy between these two concepts has rarely been explored in the context of local government in Indonesia. This study addresses key gaps in regional tourism governance, particularly the weak integration between local digital tourism institutions and Digital Government systems, which results in fragmented data management, promotion, and destination performance evaluation, as well as the limited strategic involvement of local communities in Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Low digital literacy among rural tourism actors and insufficient government support for capacity building further constrain community participation in digital transformation.

Focusing on Ciamis Regency, the study examines the dynamics of tourism governance under the integration of Digital Government, CBT, and cultural diffusion, emphasizing how digital technology can support the dissemination of local values, strengthen community participation, and foster transparent, inclusive, and sustainable tourism governance. More specifically, this study explores the following question: how can the integration of digital government and community-based tourism be strategically designed and implemented to achieve sustainable regional tourism management in Ciamis Regency?

## **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology. Data were obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Primary data collection techniques came from community leaders, tourism managers, and local government officials. The data analysis process was carried out by triangulation and thematic coding of the data obtained to find relevant patterns (Alodia et al., 2025; Fajrul & Fita Saptiyana, 2025; Meriatami et al., 2025).

The study was conducted in Cihaurbeuti and Sadananya Districts, which were purposively selected as representations of emerging and developing tourism villages. The research involved 18 participants, consisting of tourism village managers and

Pokdarwis members, community leaders, local government officials in tourism and planning agencies, as well as academics and tourism facilitators, selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in tourism planning, management, or facilitation.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, document analysis, and one focus group discussion, and then analyzed using a staged thematic coding process. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation and member checking, and the findings were used to critically examine the DICBT model and to formulate inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable regional tourism management strategies in Ciamis Regency.

The research findings were then interpreted contextually by linking the results of thematic coding to the dynamics of tourism governance, actor roles, and the implementation of digital technology at the local level. This analysis enabled the study to identify patterns in the interaction between digital government and community-based tourism, assess the extent to which the DICBT model operates in practice, and reveal key constraints and enabling factors in regional tourism management. Accordingly, the findings are not merely descriptive, but are used analytically to formulate policy recommendations and strategies for strengthening more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

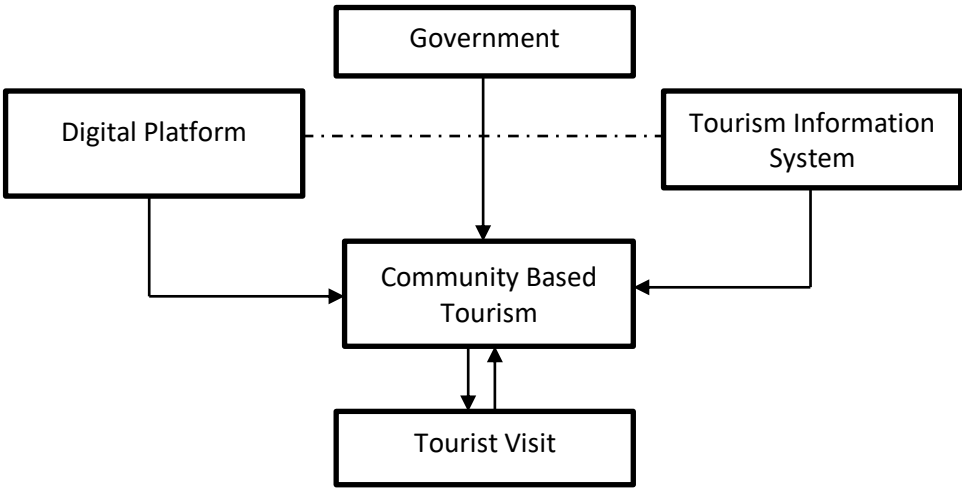
## **Results and Discussion**

Field findings indicate that cultural diffusion in tourism management in Ciamis Regency occurs through direct interaction with tourists 45%, social media utilization 35%, and the adaptation of new values from tourism experiences 20%. Local communities dominate operational aspects of tourism management 70%. However, their involvement in strategic dimensions remains limited, as digital management, online promotion, and the use of tourism data are largely controlled by external actors and the government, with community participation accounting for only about 30% and remaining insufficiently integrated. This is due to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and suboptimal support from the government in providing an inclusive digital platform for local tourism actors (Arief Rachman Afandy et al., 2025; Astuti et al., 2025).

In this context, the role of local government becomes crucial, not only in terms of regulation and promotion, but also in building a digital ecosystem that supports strengthening the capacity of local communities. Effective implementation of Digital Government in the tourism sector allows the government to provide public digital services such as online licensing systems, tourist attraction databases, and real-time data-based tourist information dashboards (Herawati & Handrianus Pranatawijaya, 2025). The government can also facilitate digital literacy training for tourism actors, create integrated tourism promotion applications, and establish partnerships with academics and industry players to develop service innovations (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022; Hariman & Syahputra, 2024; Hawadah, 2025).

In practice, there is still a gap between digital policies and the technical and social readiness of local communities, which hinders the realization of adaptive and sustainable tourism governance. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model formulated in this study is presented as an answer to this complexity. A conceptual framework was developed based on empirical findings from research in Ciamis Regency to explain interactions among actors, the use of digital technology, and the dynamics of community-based tourism governance. This model is not intended as a purely normative construct, but rather as an analytical representation that illustrates how government,

digital platforms, tourism information systems, and local communities interact in shaping destination management and tourist visits. By positioning community-based tourism at its core, the DICBT model highlights mechanisms of digital integration while also revealing power relations, capacity constraints, and collaboration needs that emerge in tourism governance practices in Ciamis, thereby distinguishing it from smart tourism models applied in other national contexts. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism model is described as follows:



**Figure 2 Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism Model**  
Source: Research Results, 2025.

DICBT integrates cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and digital technology through Digital Government as a Quadruple Helix facilitator, aiming to strengthen competitive, community-based smart tourism in Ciamis Regency. Interview findings indicate that community-based tourism management within the DICBT framework in Ciamis Regency is reflected in community involvement from the planning stage, particularly in determining tourism attractions and managing facilities. Field observations and regional planning documents demonstrate the active role of community-based tourism groups in daily operational management; however, interviews with local government officials reveal that the strategic aspect, especially digital platform management and tourism data analysis, remains largely dependent on government authorities and external partners. These findings underscore that although local communities dominate operational levels, their repositioning as strategic actors in digital tourism governance, as envisioned in the DICBT model, still requires capacity strengthening, policy support, and more structured collaborative mechanisms. The research findings indicate several factors that drive smart and sustainable tourism, as follows:

**Table 1. Driving Factors of Smart and Sustainable Tourism Governance**

| Integrated Dimension      | Research Findings                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governance and Leadership | Tourism governance is supported by a long-term policy vision, accountability mechanisms, and the role of regional leadership in coordinating government actors, local communities, and external partners. |

| Integrated Dimension                               | Research Findings                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Innovation and Technology                          | Institutional innovation and the use of digital technologies contribute to destination management, online promotion, and tourism information services, although community digital capacity remains uneven. |
| Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability | Tourism management is oriented toward cultural preservation, community economic development, and environmental protection through a community-based tourism approach.                                      |
| Cultural Identity and Community Participation      | Local cultural values and traditions form the foundation of destination development, with strong community involvement at the operational level, but limited participation                                 |

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The results of the study indicate that tourism governance in Ciamis Regency is starting to move towards smart governance practices that emphasize the importance of strategic vision and targeted policy implementation, starting from the establishment of the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2017-2027 and contained in Ciamis Regency Regional Regulation Number 16 of 2016. There is also the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Promotion Agency as an institution that aims to expand tourism promotion. There are several research results that are synergistic with tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

#### 1. Regional Tourism Governance

Tourism governance in Ciamis Regency remains largely dependent on management capacity and inter-agency coordination, while transparency and public participation are gradually emerging through community and local business involvement in tourism planning, contributing to improved accountability and sustainable tourism governance. (Seputro & Mustafida, 2023). Institutional control and accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened to ensure governance is more accountable and integrated with the regional digital government system.

#### 2. Regional Tourism Innovation

Innovation describes the dynamic adaptation of tourism actors to tourist needs and global challenges (Beryl Farahdiba et al., 2024). The research shows that several destinations in Ciamis have introduced community-based innovations in homestay management and digital promotion, as well as thematic tourism products and creative entrepreneurship initiatives, although the innovation ecosystem remains underdeveloped due to limited cross-sector collaboration.

#### 3. Technology

The use of technology is a crucial aspect in promoting smart tourism. In Ciamis Regency, technology has begun to be implemented in promotions through social media and digital tourism maps, but the implementation of integrated tourism information systems remains limited. Digital infrastructure, such as internet access in rural tourist areas, remains uneven, hampering connectivity between destinations (Achsa et al., 2020). The development of technology for smart tourism management, such as e-tourism platforms and data analytics, is needed to ensure a more data-driven decision-making process (Hanum et al., 2020).

#### 4. Regional Tourism Sustainability

Sustainability is a key focus of tourism development in Ciamis Regency, reflected in commitments to cultural heritage preservation and ecotourism, although the integration of circular economy principles, sustainability evaluation systems, and consistent green policies remains limited (Kusumawidjaya et al., 2022).

#### 5. Local Cultural Identity

Local cultural identity serves as a distinctive strength in the development of tourism in Ciamis Regency. The protection of values and traditions, such as regional arts and traditional rituals, is carried out by local communities with government support. Collaboration among cultural practitioners, tourism communities, and destination managers plays an essential role in strengthening the narrative of local identity. The main challenge lies in how these cultural values can be presented in engaging digital formats without losing their authenticity and meaning (Praditha & Made Bagus Wibisana, 2024).

#### 6. Leadership

Leadership is a strategic factor in determining the direction of regional tourism development. The research findings show that the role of local leaders, both at the government and community levels, greatly influences the success of stakeholder coordination. Leaders with a long-term vision and the ability to make data-driven decisions are better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern tourism. However, further capacity building is needed to foster broader implementation of digital and collaborative leadership (Nurfaridah et al., 2025).

#### 7. Resilience

Resilience has emerged as a prominent dimension in the post-pandemic era, emphasizing the importance of destinations' ability to adapt to crises and market changes. In Ciamis Regency, several initiatives have been undertaken, such as diversifying tourism products and strengthening the local creative economy. However, risk mitigation systems and climate change adaptation strategies still need further development. The social resilience of tourism communities also needs to be reinforced through continuous training and empowerment so that tourism not only recovers but also grows stronger and more resilient (Wulandari et al., 2020).

The strengthening of smart and sustainable tourism in Ciamis Regency is determined by the integration of digital government as a governance framework, smart tourism as a strategic approach to destination development, and e-tourism platforms as supporting technical instruments. The findings indicate that visionary leadership, technology-based innovation, and socio-cultural sustainability are the dominant factors, while local communities remain strong in operational roles but limited in strategic ones. Thus, the success of smart tourism in Ciamis depends not merely on technology but on digital governance capacity to coordinate actors, strengthen community participation, and ensure destination sustainability.

The transformation toward smart tourism in Ciamis Regency is primarily driven by the dominance of leadership, governance, and cultural identity as the strategic foundation for policy direction, accountability, and social legitimacy, while digital technology functions as a key enabler of community-based tourism governance. Visionary leadership and participatory governance support data-driven decision-making, efficiency, and equitable benefit distribution, and the integration of local cultural identity strengthens destination differentiation and authenticity. However, a limited understanding of Digital Government among tourism actors and some local officials remains a major constraint, resulting in slow adoption of digital infrastructure, promotion systems, and data utilization, which hampers the development of smart, collaborative, and sustainable tourism governance as envisioned in the DICBT model.

The implementation of evidence-based policies in sustainable regional tourism management requires local governments to formulate strategies based on empirical data and verifiable field findings (Kusuwo Jumino et al., 2024). In the context of Ciamis Regency, the fluctuation in the number of tourist visits and the less-than-optimal use of digital technology show that tourism development policies cannot rely only on normative assumptions or top-down program approaches. The government needs to develop a digital tourism information system that is able to collect tourist visit data, feedback from tourism business actors, and map the potential and obstacles of each destination. This data is an important basis for determining the direction of promotional policies, infrastructure development, human resource training, and integration of digital services that are right on target and sustainable.

Furthermore, evidence-based policies also facilitate evaluation processes and decision-making that are more adaptive to local dynamics. Through this approach, government interventions can be directed at critical points, such as increasing digital literacy in tourism communities, strengthening the role of tourism villages, and developing applications and service platforms based on community needs. Empirical evidence from participatory research processes and policy impact evaluations allows the formulation of a digital tourism governance model that is not only technically responsive but also sensitive to local values. Thus, evidence-based policy becomes the main foundation in synergizing Digital Government, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and the principles of inclusive and contextual sustainable tourism development (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Another obstacle is the low digital literacy among local communities, especially in rural areas that are strategic locations for community-based tourism development. Many tourism actors are not yet able to access or manage digital platforms for promotions, online reservations, or visitor data management. In fact, within the Digital Government framework, digital collaboration between the government and the community is the key to success in creating an inclusive and responsive system. This gap is exacerbated by limited information technology infrastructure in the regions, such as uneven internet networks, a lack of technical training, and the absence of an integrated system that is easily accessible to users from various educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the strategy to strengthen the implementation of Digital Government must begin with a digital literacy program and comprehensive technical assistance to tourism actors and village government officials. Local governments also need to design affirmative policies in the form of digitalization incentives, development of user-friendly local tourism applications, and encourage the involvement of universities and technology industry players in building human resource capacity in this sector. Thus, the barriers to understanding the importance of Digital Government are not only overcome through a structural approach, but also through a cultural approach that changes people's perspectives and habits towards technology as a tool for empowerment in the tourism sector.

To address these barriers, it is recommended that local governments institutionalize multi-actor collaboration through formal coordination mechanisms that integrate tourism offices, village administrations, community-based tourism groups, universities, and technology providers. This collaboration should be operationalized through clear role distribution, shared performance indicators, and continuous knowledge exchange platforms to ensure that digital government initiatives are not fragmented or project-based. Strengthening governance arrangements in this way will help align digital platforms, tourism information systems, and community practices, while

reducing power imbalances and dependency on a limited number of digitally skilled actors.

In addition, the sustainability of digital government implementation in the tourism sector requires a gradual and context-sensitive adoption strategy. Digital solutions should be designed based on local needs, infrastructure readiness, and community capacity, rather than replicating models from other regions or countries. Pilot programs, iterative evaluation, and feedback loops from tourism actors and visitors are essential to refine digital tools and build trust in their usefulness. By embedding adaptive learning and local ownership into the digital transformation process, digital government can function not merely as a technological intervention but as an enabling governance instrument that supports inclusive, resilient, and community-driven tourism development.

## Conclusion

Sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency requires the integration of digital government and community-based tourism, with local government acting as a facilitator of adaptive digital platforms and policies, and local communities as key actors in destination sustainability based on local wisdom. This synergy enhances information integration, transparency, accountability, and service access, while strengthening the social and economic resilience of communities through active participation in tourism development. Future strategies should therefore focus on improving local digital capacity, strengthening data-based regulations, and expanding supportive digital infrastructure to position Ciamis as a model of resilient and sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

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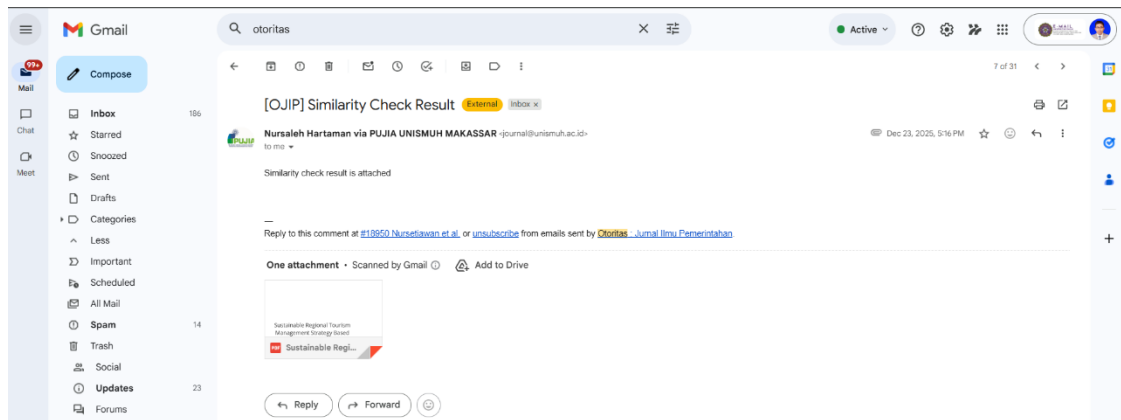
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## 6. Bukti Similarity Check Result (23 Desember 2025)



# Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency

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## Sustainable Regional Tourism Management Strategy Based on Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism in Ciamis Regency

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### Abstract

This study discusses the strategy of sustainable regional tourism governance that integrates the Digital Government and Community Based Tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Digital Government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance. Collaboration between local communities, local governments, academics, and industry players is an important prerequisite in realizing a sustainable smart tourism strategy. The Digital Integrated Community Based Tourism (DICBT) model is offered as an innovation that can increase the competitiveness of destinations while strengthening the welfare of local communities in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism; Governance; Digital Government; Community Based Tourism

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### Introduction

The welfare of local communities at the village level, environmental issues, and sustainable tourism are important elements that are interrelated in creating inclusive development. Sustainable tourism, for example, not only aims to promote local economic growth, but also maintains the natural ecosystem and local culture that are the attractions of tourism itself (Bagus Prabowo, 2021; Sri Subawa & Gusti Ayu Agung Nadya Leonita, 2024). The tourism sector depends on the number of tourist visits, which has implications for the Regional Gross Domestic Product and the sustainability of the local tourism industry (Hanafi Ahmad, 2022; Sentanu & Mahadiansar, 2020).

The Regional Government certainly has an important role in improving welfare and the Regional Gross Domestic Product from the tourism sector. However, from 2019 to 2024, there was a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency. A sharp decline occurred in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, while in the following years, the increase in the number of tourists was slow and insignificant. This condition shows the need for more adaptive strategic efforts in managing the tourism sector, especially by integrating digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is a potential solution to increase the efficiency of tourism services, expand the reach of

digital promotion, and open up space for community participation in managing tourist destinations.

The integration of digital government and community-based tourism (CBT) has the potential to create an inclusive and participatory tourism ecosystem, in which destination management decisions are data-driven and actively involve multiple actors in the planning and evaluation of tourism policies. Within this framework, digital technology functions not only as an instrument of smart tourism but also as a medium of cultural diffusion, enabling local communities to promote tourism potential grounded in local culture and wisdom through digital platforms. However, to move beyond a merely normative orientation, key concepts such as digital government, smart tourism, cultural diffusion, and CBT must be clearly theorized and operationalized, so that the DICBT model is not merely descriptive but analytically capable of explaining the strategic role of communities as central actors in the digital tourism value chain, supported by public policy, digital capacity building, and sustainable governance.

Strengthening community-based tourism through a digital government approach must be accompanied by transparent, accountable, and power-sensitive governance, so that digitalization does not widen social inequalities but instead functions as an instrument to broaden participation, enhance distributive justice, and ensure social sustainability in tourism development. With an integrated information system and the use of real-time tourist data, local governments can design more responsive and evidence-based policies to encourage sustainable tourism growth. The number of tourist visits is as follows:



**Figure 1 Number of Tourist Visits to Ciamis Regency**

Source: [www.data.ciamiskab.go.id](http://www.data.ciamiskab.go.id), 2025.

Based on Figure 1, there is a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits, namely, in 2020 it decreased by 30.36% and in 2024 it increased by 6.11%. The data shows that the increase in the number of tourists did not increase significantly. This indicates that recovery of the regional tourism sector is needed to face various challenges. (Wahyuni, 2021). Factors such as government policies, economic conditions, destination attractiveness, community participation, and tourism promotion can influence the level of tourist visits (Ahmadi & Natasya Giyar Dwisyafitri, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024).

Sustainable tourism is one of the steps in efforts to improve the economy in the tourism sector (Palazzo et al., 2022). Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility, as well as community participation, are alternatives for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The cohesion of the role of local communities

or societies in tourism governance results in dynamics in the creation of tourism opportunities based on local resources (Sharpley, 2023).

Smart tourism is a framework for improving resources, information accessibility, and management in tourist destinations (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022). However, for regional tourism industry actors, this has not been fully utilized and developed in optimizing digital-based services, utilizing big data for analyzing tourist trends, and integrating technology in destination promotion and management (Nur Aini Afifa & Setyo Nugroho, 2022; Satyaninggrat et al., 2023). Lack of digital infrastructure, limited technological literacy, and minimal collaboration between stakeholders are the main challenges in implementing smart tourism at the local level (Ab Rahman & Dura, 2021; Marham Jupri Hadi et al., 2022).

Local rural communities in Ciamis Regency dominate the initiation of the formation of pioneering tourist attractions. Local communities and innovations in developing tourist destinations begin in the form of pioneering tourist attractions (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the role of social capital, community involvement, local innovation, and the influence of technology and government policies in encouraging the formation of community-based tourist destinations (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022).

Community-based Tourism (CBT) is one of the supporters of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 1 on No Poverty, number 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and number 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems. Community-based Tourism (CBT) has the potential to improve community welfare and environmental preservation, but there are negative impacts if not managed properly (Agung Prakoso et al., 2020; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is relevant to Asta Cita number 6 regarding building in the village.

Participation of local rural communities in regional tourism development and improving welfare, as well as improving community institutions, are key factors in creating sustainable and community-based tourism (Permatasari, 2022; Widya Darmayanti et al., 2020). The role of the government is also inseparable from efforts to support and facilitate tourism development through strategic policies, assistance, and the use of technology within the framework of digital government (Kononova, 2020; Pawan Kumar et al., 2022). However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires in-depth research.

Research on the integration of digital technology in tourism has developed rapidly worldwide, for example, in the development of smart destination management in Spain, which emphasizes governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, and accessibility (Andrades et al., 2024). Governance emphasizes cross-sector collaboration and data-driven decision-making through transparent and participatory mechanisms (Kim et al., 2022). Innovation focuses on developing an innovation ecosystem through collaboration among government, academia, and industry stakeholders to create new solutions in tourism services (Biz & Grechi, 2021). Technology serves as the backbone of the system through the implementation of integrated digital platforms, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance management efficiency and the tourist experience (Fernández-Díaz et al., 2023).

Sustainability ensures that every tourism policy considers the balance between environmental, social, and economic sustainability through the preservation of cultural heritage, environmentally friendly resource management, and the empowerment of local communities (García-Avilés, 2020). Meanwhile, accessibility ensures inclusivity by

applying the principle of “tourism for all,” guaranteeing ease of access for all groups, including persons with disabilities.

The implementation of e-tourism platforms in South Korea underscores the role of digital technology as a key catalyst in the development of smart tourism, which shares similar principles with the Smart Destination Management model in Spain. Through an integrated platform, the South Korean government utilizes big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) to provide personalized tourism services, enhance destination management efficiency, and strengthen global tourism promotion (Cardoso & Ruiz, 2021; Singh & Bashar, 2023).

In the ASEAN region, the implementation of digital governance for rural tourism in Thailand represents a national strategy that integrates digital technology into village tourism governance to strengthen the local economy and preserve cultural sustainability. Through the Thailand 4.0 policy and the Digital Tourism Thailand initiative, the government has developed an integrated tourism information system that enables community-based destination promotion through online platforms, mobile applications, and digital marketing jointly managed by local governments and communities (Anna et al., 2024; Pattanapokinsakul et al., 2024; Sasirin et al., 2024).

Most studies still focus on the technological aspects and digital promotion rather than on the collaboration between digital governance and local community empowerment. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which integrates the concepts of Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a strategy for sustainable regional tourism governance. The synergy between these two concepts has rarely been explored in the context of local government in Indonesia. This study addresses key gaps in regional tourism governance, particularly the weak integration between local digital tourism institutions and Digital Government systems, which results in fragmented data management, promotion, and destination performance evaluation, as well as the limited strategic involvement of local communities in Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Low digital literacy among rural tourism actors and insufficient government support for capacity building further constrain community participation in digital transformation.

Focusing on Ciamis Regency, the study examines the dynamics of tourism governance under the integration of Digital Government, CBT, and cultural diffusion, emphasizing how digital technology can support the dissemination of local values, strengthen community participation, and foster transparent, inclusive, and sustainable tourism governance. More specifically, this study explores the following question: how can the integration of digital government and community-based tourism be strategically designed and implemented to achieve sustainable regional tourism management in Ciamis Regency?

## Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology. Data were obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Primary data collection techniques came from community leaders, tourism managers, and local government officials. The data analysis process was carried out by triangulation and thematic coding of the data obtained to find relevant patterns (Alodia et al., 2025; Fajrul & Fita Saptyana, 2025; Meriatami et al., 2025).

The study was conducted in Cihaurbeuti and Sadananya Districts, which were purposively selected as representations of emerging and developing tourism villages. The research involved 18 participants, consisting of tourism village managers and

Pokdarwis members, community leaders, local government officials in tourism and planning agencies, as well as academics and tourism facilitators, selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in tourism planning, management, or facilitation.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, document analysis, and one focus group discussion, and then analyzed using a staged thematic coding process. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation and member checking, and the findings were used to critically examine the DICBT model and to formulate inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable regional tourism management strategies in Ciamis Regency.

The research findings were then interpreted contextually by linking the results of thematic coding to the dynamics of tourism governance, actor roles, and the implementation of digital technology at the local level. This analysis enabled the study to identify patterns in the interaction between digital government and community-based tourism, assess the extent to which the DICBT model operates in practice, and reveal key constraints and enabling factors in regional tourism management. Accordingly, the findings are not merely descriptive, but are used analytically to formulate policy recommendations and strategies for strengthening more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

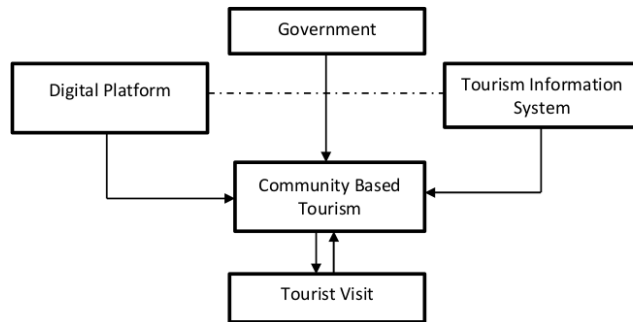
## Results and Discussion

Field findings indicate that cultural diffusion in tourism management in Ciamis Regency occurs through direct interaction with tourists 45%, social media utilization 35%, and the adaptation of new values from tourism experiences 20%. Local communities dominate operational aspects of tourism management 70%. However, their involvement in strategic dimensions remains limited, as digital management, online promotion, and the use of tourism data are largely controlled by external actors and the government, with community participation accounting for only about 30% and remaining insufficiently integrated. This is due to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and suboptimal support from the government in providing an inclusive digital platform for local tourism actors (Arief Rachman Afandy et al., 2025; Astuti et al., 2025).

In this context, the role of local government becomes crucial, not only in terms of regulation and promotion, but also in building a digital ecosystem that supports strengthening the capacity of local communities. Effective implementation of Digital Government in the tourism sector allows the government to provide public digital services such as online licensing systems, tourist attraction databases, and real-time data-based tourist information dashboards (Herawati & Handrianus Pranatawijaya, 2025). The government can also facilitate digital literacy training for tourism actors, create integrated tourism promotion applications, and establish partnerships with academics and industry players to develop service innovations (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022; Hariman & Syahputra, 2024; Hawadah, 2025).

In practice, there is still a gap between digital policies and the technical and social readiness of local communities, which hinders the realization of adaptive and sustainable tourism governance. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model formulated in this study is presented as an answer to this complexity. A conceptual framework was developed based on empirical findings from research in Ciamis Regency to explain interactions among actors, the use of digital technology, and the dynamics of community-based tourism governance. This model is not intended as a purely normative construct, but rather as an analytical representation that illustrates how government,

digital platforms, tourism information systems, and local communities interact in shaping destination management and tourist visits. By positioning community-based tourism at its core, the DICBT model highlights mechanisms of digital integration while also revealing power relations, capacity constraints, and collaboration needs that emerge in tourism governance practices in Ciamis, thereby distinguishing it from smart tourism models applied in other national contexts. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism model is described as follows:



**Figure 2 Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism Model**

Source: Research Results, 2025.

DICBT integrates cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and digital technology through Digital Government as a Quadruple Helix facilitator, aiming to strengthen competitive, community-based smart tourism in Ciamis Regency. Interview findings indicate that community-based tourism management within the DICBT framework in Ciamis Regency is reflected in community involvement from the planning stage, particularly in determining tourism attractions and managing facilities. Field observations and regional planning documents demonstrate the active role of community-based tourism groups in daily operational management; however, interviews with local government officials reveal that the strategic aspect, especially digital platform management and tourism data analysis, remains largely dependent on government authorities and external partners. These findings underscore that although local communities dominate operational levels, their repositioning as strategic actors in digital tourism governance, as envisioned in the DICBT model, still requires capacity strengthening, policy support, and more structured collaborative mechanisms. The research findings indicate several factors that drive smart and sustainable tourism, as follows:

**Table 1. Driving Factors of Smart and Sustainable Tourism Governance**

| Integrated Dimension      | Research Findings                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governance and Leadership | Tourism governance is supported by a long-term policy vision, accountability mechanisms, and the role of regional leadership in coordinating government actors, local communities, and external partners. |

| Integrated Dimension                               | Research Findings                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Innovation and Technology                          | Institutional innovation and the use of digital technologies contribute to destination management, online promotion, and tourism information services, although community digital capacity remains uneven. |
| Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability | Tourism management is oriented toward cultural preservation, community economic development, and environmental protection through a community-based tourism approach.                                      |
| Cultural Identity and Community Participation      | Local cultural values and traditions form the foundation of destination development, with strong community involvement at the operational level, but limited participation                                 |

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The results of the study indicate that tourism governance in Ciamis Regency is starting to move towards smart governance practices that emphasize the importance of strategic vision and targeted policy implementation, starting from the establishment of the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2017-2027 and contained in Ciamis Regency Regional Regulation Number 16 of 2016. There is also the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Promotion Agency as an institution that aims to expand tourism promotion. There are several research results that are synergistic with tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

#### 1. Regional Tourism Governance

Tourism governance in Ciamis Regency remains largely dependent on management capacity and inter-agency coordination, while transparency and public participation are gradually emerging through community and local business involvement in tourism planning, contributing to improved accountability and sustainable tourism governance. (Seputro & Mustafida, 2023). Institutional control and accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened to ensure governance is more accountable and integrated with the regional digital government system.

#### 2. Regional Tourism Innovation

Innovation describes the dynamic adaptation of tourism actors to tourist needs and global challenges (Beryl Farahdiba et al., 2024). The research shows that several destinations in Ciamis have introduced community-based innovations in homestay management and digital promotion, as well as thematic tourism products and creative entrepreneurship initiatives, although the innovation ecosystem remains underdeveloped due to limited cross-sector collaboration.

#### 3. Technology

The use of technology is a crucial aspect in promoting smart tourism. In Ciamis Regency, technology has begun to be implemented in promotions through social media and digital tourism maps, but the implementation of integrated tourism information systems remains limited. Digital infrastructure, such as internet access in rural tourist areas, remains uneven, hampering connectivity between destinations (Achsa et al., 2020). The development of technology for smart tourism management, such as e-tourism platforms and data analytics, is needed to ensure a more data-driven decision-making process (Hanum et al., 2020).

#### 4. Regional Tourism Sustainability

Sustainability is a key focus of tourism development in Ciamis Regency, reflected in commitments to cultural heritage preservation and ecotourism, although the integration of circular economy principles, sustainability evaluation systems, and consistent green policies remains limited (Kusumawidjaya et al., 2022).

#### 5. Local Cultural Identity

Local cultural identity serves as a distinctive strength in the development of tourism in Ciamis Regency. The protection of values and traditions, such as regional arts and traditional rituals, is carried out by local communities with government support. Collaboration among cultural practitioners, tourism communities, and destination managers plays an essential role in strengthening the narrative of local identity. The main challenge lies in how these cultural values can be presented in engaging digital formats without losing their authenticity and meaning (Praditha & Made Bagus Wibisana, 2024).

#### 6. Leadership

Leadership is a strategic factor in determining the direction of regional tourism development. The research findings show that the role of local leaders, both at the government and community levels, greatly influences the success of stakeholder coordination. Leaders with a long-term vision and the ability to make data-driven decisions are better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern tourism. However, further capacity building is needed to foster broader implementation of digital and collaborative leadership (Nurfarahidah et al., 2025).

#### 7. Resilience

Resilience has emerged as a prominent dimension in the post-pandemic era, emphasizing the importance of destinations' ability to adapt to crises and market changes. In Ciamis Regency, several initiatives have been undertaken, such as diversifying tourism products and strengthening the local creative economy. However, risk mitigation systems and climate change adaptation strategies still need further development. The social resilience of tourism communities also needs to be reinforced through continuous training and empowerment so that tourism not only recovers but also grows stronger and more resilient (Wulandari et al., 2020).

The strengthening of smart and sustainable tourism in Ciamis Regency is determined by the integration of digital government as a governance framework, smart tourism as a strategic approach to destination development, and e-tourism platforms as supporting technical instruments. The findings indicate that visionary leadership, technology-based innovation, and socio-cultural sustainability are the dominant factors, while local communities remain strong in operational roles but limited in strategic ones. Thus, the success of smart tourism in Ciamis depends not merely on technology but on digital governance capacity to coordinate actors, strengthen community participation, and ensure destination sustainability.

The transformation toward smart tourism in Ciamis Regency is primarily driven by the dominance of leadership, governance, and cultural identity as the strategic foundation for policy direction, accountability, and social legitimacy, while digital technology functions as a key enabler of community-based tourism governance. Visionary leadership and participatory governance support data-driven decision-making, efficiency, and equitable benefit distribution, and the integration of local cultural identity strengthens destination differentiation and authenticity. However, a limited understanding of Digital Government among tourism actors and some local officials remains a major constraint, resulting in slow adoption of digital infrastructure, promotion systems, and data utilization, which hampers the development of smart, collaborative, and sustainable tourism governance as envisioned in the DICBT model.

The implementation of evidence-based policies in sustainable regional tourism management requires local governments to formulate strategies based on empirical data and verifiable field findings (Kusuwo Jumino et al., 2024). In the context of Ciamis Regency, the fluctuation in the number of tourist visits and the less-than-optimal use of digital technology show that tourism development policies cannot rely only on normative assumptions or top-down program approaches. The government needs to develop a digital tourism information system that is able to collect tourist visit data, feedback from tourism business actors, and map the potential and obstacles of each destination. This data is an important basis for determining the direction of promotional policies, infrastructure development, human resource training, and integration of digital services that are right on target and sustainable.

Furthermore, evidence-based policies also facilitate evaluation processes and decision-making that are more adaptive to local dynamics. Through this approach, government interventions can be directed at critical points, such as increasing digital literacy in tourism communities, strengthening the role of tourism villages, and developing applications and service platforms based on community needs. Empirical evidence from participatory research processes and policy impact evaluations allows the formulation of a digital tourism governance model that is not only technically responsive but also sensitive to local values. Thus, evidence-based policy becomes the main foundation in synergizing Digital Government, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and the principles of inclusive and contextual sustainable tourism development (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Another obstacle is the low digital literacy among local communities, especially in rural areas that are strategic locations for community-based tourism development. Many tourism actors are not yet able to access or manage digital platforms for promotions, online reservations, or visitor data management. In fact, within the Digital Government framework, digital collaboration between the government and the community is the key to success in creating an inclusive and responsive system. This gap is exacerbated by limited information technology infrastructure in the regions, such as uneven internet networks, a lack of technical training, and the absence of an integrated system that is easily accessible to users from various educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the strategy to strengthen the implementation of Digital Government must begin with a digital literacy program and comprehensive technical assistance to tourism actors and village government officials. Local governments also need to design affirmative policies in the form of digitalization incentives, development of user-friendly local tourism applications, and encourage the involvement of universities and technology industry players in building human resource capacity in this sector. Thus, the barriers to understanding the importance of Digital Government are not only overcome through a structural approach, but also through a cultural approach that changes people's perspectives and habits towards technology as a tool for empowerment in the tourism sector.

To address these barriers, it is recommended that local governments institutionalize multi-actor collaboration through formal coordination mechanisms that integrate tourism offices, village administrations, community-based tourism groups, universities, and technology providers. This collaboration should be operationalized through clear role distribution, shared performance indicators, and continuous knowledge exchange platforms to ensure that digital government initiatives are not fragmented or project-based. Strengthening governance arrangements in this way will help align digital platforms, tourism information systems, and community practices, while

reducing power imbalances and dependency on a limited number of digitally skilled actors.

In addition, the sustainability of digital government implementation in the tourism sector requires a gradual and context-sensitive adoption strategy. Digital solutions should be designed based on local needs, infrastructure readiness, and community capacity, rather than replicating models from other regions or countries. Pilot programs, iterative evaluation, and feedback loops from tourism actors and visitors are essential to refine digital tools and build trust in their usefulness. By embedding adaptive learning and local ownership into the digital transformation process, digital government can function not merely as a technological intervention but as an enabling governance instrument that supports inclusive, resilient, and community-driven tourism development.

### Conclusion

Sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency requires the integration of digital government and community-based tourism, with local government acting as a facilitator of adaptive digital platforms and policies, and local communities as key actors in destination sustainability based on local wisdom. This synergy enhances information integration, transparency, accountability, and service access, while strengthening the social and economic resilience of communities through active participation in tourism development. Future strategies should therefore focus on improving local digital capacity, strengthening data-based regulations, and expanding supportive digital infrastructure to position Ciamis as a model of resilient and sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

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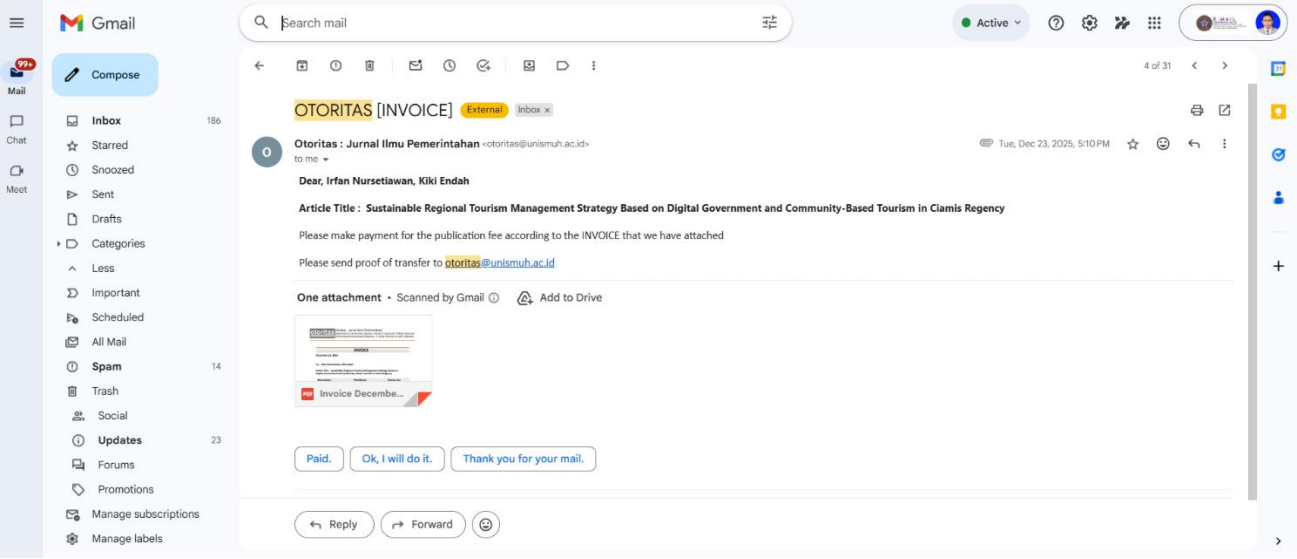
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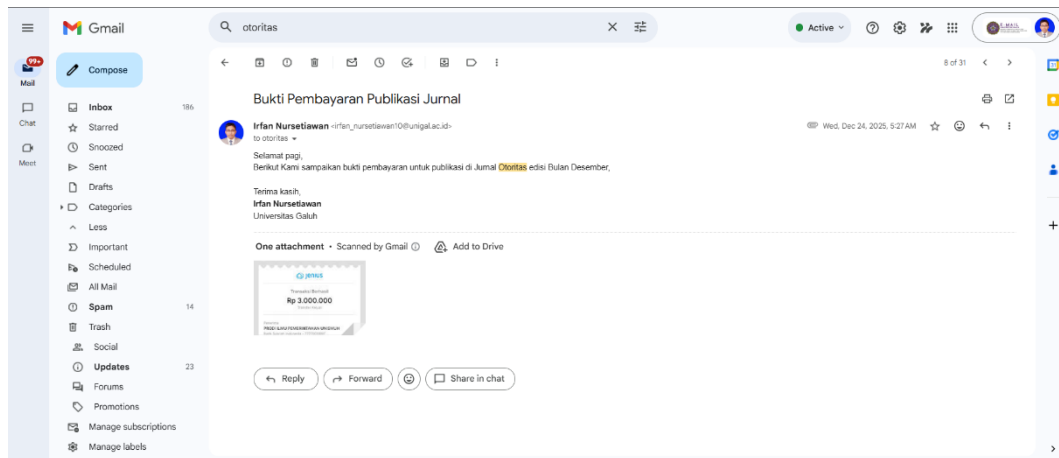
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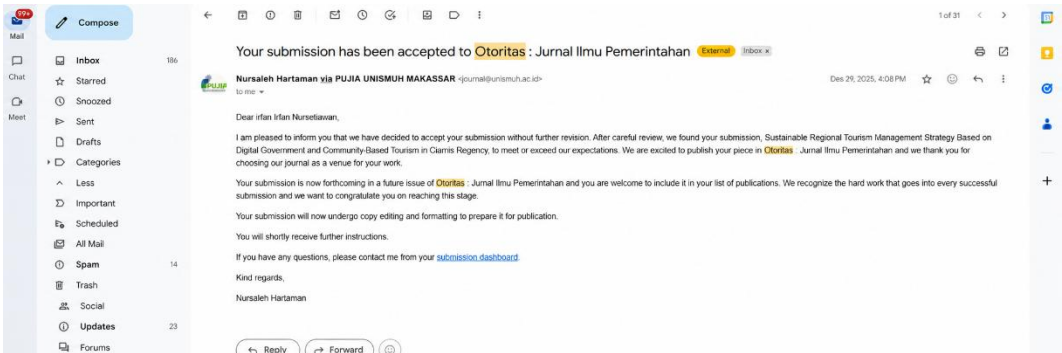


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### Sustainable local tourism on digital government-based and community-based in Ciamis, Indonesia

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#### ABSTRACT

*This study discusses the strategy of sustainable local tourism that integrates the digital government and community based tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the practices of digital government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance.*

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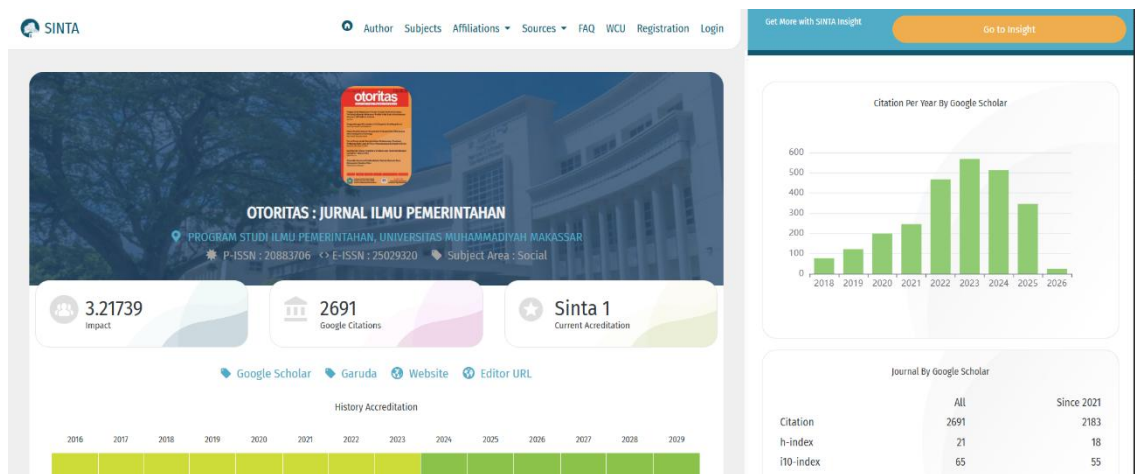
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## Sustainable local tourism on digital government-based and community-based in Ciamis, Indonesia

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### Abstract

*This study discusses the strategy of sustainable local tourism that integrates the digital government and community based tourism (CBT) approaches in Ciamis Regency. The diffusion of local culture and digitalization of the public sector are the main foundations in the formation and management of community-based pioneering tourism objects. Using a qualitative approach, this study reveals patterns of social interaction, the role of local actors, and the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders in tourism development. The results of the study indicate that the practices of digital government through a tourism information system, integrated digital services, and participatory platforms can strengthen more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive tourism governance. Collaboration between local communities, local governments, academics, and industry players is an important prerequisite in realizing a sustainable smart tourism strategy. the digital integrated community based tourism (DICBT) model is offered as an innovation that can increase the competitiveness of destinations while strengthening the welfare of local communities in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** sustainable local tourism, governance, digital government, community based

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### Introduction

The welfare of local communities at the village level, environmental issues, and sustainable tourism are important elements that are interrelated in creating inclusive development. Sustainable tourism, for example, not only aims to promote local economic growth, but also maintains the natural ecosystem and local culture that are the attractions of tourism itself (Prabowo & Sudrajat, 2021; Subawa & Nadya Leonita, 2024). The tourism sector depends on the number of tourist visits, which has implications for the Regional Gross Domestic Product and the sustainability of the local tourism industry (Ahmad, 2022; Sentanu & Mahadiansar, 2020).

The Regional Government certainly has an important role in improving welfare and the Regional Gross Domestic Product from the tourism sector. However, from 2019 to 2024, there was a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits to Ciamis Regency. A sharp decline occurred in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, while in the following years, the increase in the number of tourists was slow and insignificant. This condition shows the need for more adaptive strategic efforts in managing the tourism sector, especially by integrating digital technology. The implementation of Digital Government is a potential solution to increase the efficiency of tourism services, expand

the reach of digital promotion, and open up space for community participation in managing tourist destinations.

The integration of digital government and community-based tourism (CBT) has the potential to create an inclusive and participatory tourism ecosystem, in which destination management decisions are data-driven and actively involve multiple actors in the planning and evaluation of tourism policies. Within this framework, digital technology functions not only as an instrument of smart tourism but also as a medium of cultural diffusion, enabling local communities to promote tourism potential grounded in local culture and wisdom through digital platforms. However, to move beyond a merely normative orientation, key concepts such as digital government, smart tourism, cultural diffusion, and CBT must be clearly theorized and operationalized, so that the DICBT model is not merely descriptive but analytically capable of explaining the strategic role of communities as central actors in the digital tourism value chain, supported by public policy, digital capacity building, and sustainable governance.

Strengthening community-based tourism through a digital government approach must be accompanied by transparent, accountable, and power-sensitive governance, so that digitalization does not widen social inequalities but instead functions as an instrument to broaden participation, enhance distributive justice, and ensure social sustainability in tourism development. With an integrated information system and the use of real-time tourist data, local governments can design more responsive and evidence-based policies to encourage sustainable tourism growth. The number of tourist visits is as follows:



**Figure 1.** Number of Tourist Visits to Ciamis Regency  
*Source: [www.data.ciamiskab.go.id](http://www.data.ciamiskab.go.id), 2025.*

Based on Figure 1, there is a fluctuation in the number of tourist visits, namely, in 2020 it decreased by 30.36% and in 2024 it increased by 6.11%. The data shows that the increase in the number of tourists did not increase significantly. This indicates that recovery of the regional tourism sector is needed to face various challenges. (Wahyuni, 2021). Factors such as government policies, economic conditions, destination attractiveness, community participation, and tourism promotion can influence the level of tourist visits (Ahmadi & Natasya Giyar Dwisyafitri, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024).

Sustainable tourism is one of the steps in efforts to improve the economy in the tourism sector (Palazzo et al., 2022). Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility,

as well as community participation, are alternatives for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The cohesion of the role of local communities or societies in tourism governance results in dynamics in the creation of tourism opportunities based on local resources (Sharpley, 2023).

Smart tourism is a framework for improving resources, information accessibility, and management in tourist destinations (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022). However, for regional tourism industry actors, this has not been fully utilized and developed in optimizing digital-based services, utilizing big data for analyzing tourist trends, and integrating technology in destination promotion and management (Afifa et al., 2022; Satyaninggrat et al., 2023). Lack of digital infrastructure, limited technological literacy, and minimal collaboration between stakeholders are the main challenges in implementing smart tourism at the local level (Hadi et al., 2022; Rahman & Dura, 2022).

Local rural communities in Ciamis Regency dominate the initiation of the formation of pioneering tourist attractions. Local communities and innovations in developing tourist destinations begin in the form of pioneering tourist attractions (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the role of social capital, community involvement, local innovation, and the influence of technology and government policies in encouraging the formation of community-based tourist destinations (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Prakoso et al., 2020).

Community-based Tourism (CBT) is one of the supporters of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 1 on No Poverty, number 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and number 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems. Community-based Tourism (CBT) has the potential to improve community welfare and environmental preservation, but there are negative impacts if not managed properly. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is relevant to Asta Cita number 6 regarding building in the village.

Participation of local rural communities in regional tourism development and improving welfare, as well as improving community institutions, are key factors in creating sustainable and community-based tourism (Darmayanti & Oka, 2020; Permatasari, 2022). The role of the government is also inseparable from efforts to support and facilitate tourism development through strategic policies, assistance, and the use of technology within the framework of digital government (Kumar et al., 2022). However, the pattern of cultural diffusion in regional tourism development requires in-depth research.

Research on the integration of digital technology in tourism has developed rapidly worldwide, for example, in the development of smart destination management in Spain, which emphasizes governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, and accessibility (Andrades et al., 2024). Governance emphasizes cross-sector collaboration and data-driven decision-making through transparent and participatory mechanisms (Kim et al., 2022). Innovation focuses on developing an innovation ecosystem through collaboration among government, academia, and industry stakeholders to create new solutions in tourism services (Biz & Grechi, 2021). Technology serves as the backbone of the system through the implementation of integrated digital platforms, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance management efficiency and the tourist experience (Fernández-Díaz et al., 2023).

Sustainability ensures that every tourism policy considers the balance between environmental, social, and economic sustainability through the preservation of cultural heritage, environmentally friendly resource management, and the empowerment of local communities (García-Avilés, 2020). Meanwhile, accessibility ensures inclusivity by

applying the principle of "tourism for all," guaranteeing ease of access for all groups, including persons with disabilities.

The implementation of e-tourism platforms in South Korea underscores the role of digital technology as a key catalyst in the development of smart tourism, which shares similar principles with the Smart Destination Management model in Spain. Through an integrated platform, the South Korean government utilizes big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) to provide personalized tourism services, enhance destination management efficiency, and strengthen global tourism promotion (Cardoso & Ruiz, 2021; Singh & Bashar, 2023).

In the ASEAN region, the implementation of digital governance for rural tourism in Thailand represents a national strategy that integrates digital technology into village tourism governance to strengthen the local economy and preserve cultural sustainability. Through the Thailand 4.0 policy and the Digital Tourism Thailand initiative, the government has developed an integrated tourism information system that enables community-based destination promotion through online platforms, mobile applications, and digital marketing jointly managed by local governments and communities (Sasirin et al., 2024).

Most studies still focus on the technological aspects and digital promotion rather than on the collaboration between digital governance and local community empowerment. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which integrates the concepts of Digital Government and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a strategy for sustainable regional tourism governance. The synergy between these two concepts has rarely been explored in the context of local government in Indonesia. This study addresses key gaps in regional tourism governance, particularly the weak integration between local digital tourism institutions and Digital Government systems, which results in fragmented data management, promotion, and destination performance evaluation, as well as the limited strategic involvement of local communities in Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Low digital literacy among rural tourism actors and insufficient government support for capacity building further constrain community participation in digital transformation.

Focusing on Ciamis Regency, the study examines the dynamics of tourism governance under the integration of Digital Government, CBT, and cultural diffusion, emphasizing how digital technology can support the dissemination of local values, strengthen community participation, and foster transparent, inclusive, and sustainable tourism governance. More specifically, this study explores the following question: how can the integration of digital government and community-based tourism be strategically designed and implemented to achieve sustainable regional tourism management in Ciamis Regency?

## **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenology. Data were obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Primary data collection techniques came from community leaders, tourism managers, and local government officials. The data analysis process was carried out by triangulation and thematic coding of the data obtained to find relevant patterns (Fajru & Saptiyana, 2025; Meriatami et al., 2025).

The study was conducted in Cihaurbeuti and Sadananya Districts, which were purposively selected as representations of emerging and developing tourism villages. The research involved 18 participants, consisting of tourism village managers and

Pokdarwis members, community leaders, local government officials in tourism and planning agencies, as well as academics and tourism facilitators, selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in tourism planning, management, or facilitation.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, document analysis, and one focus group discussion, and then analyzed using a staged thematic coding process. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation and member checking, and the findings were used to critically examine the DICBT model and to formulate inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable regional tourism management strategies in Ciamis Regency.

The research findings were then interpreted contextually by linking the results of thematic coding to the dynamics of tourism governance, actor roles, and the implementation of digital technology at the local level. This analysis enabled the study to identify patterns in the interaction between digital government and community-based tourism, assess the extent to which the DICBT model operates in practice, and reveal key constraints and enabling factors in regional tourism management. Accordingly, the findings are not merely descriptive, but are used analytically to formulate policy recommendations and strategies for strengthening more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

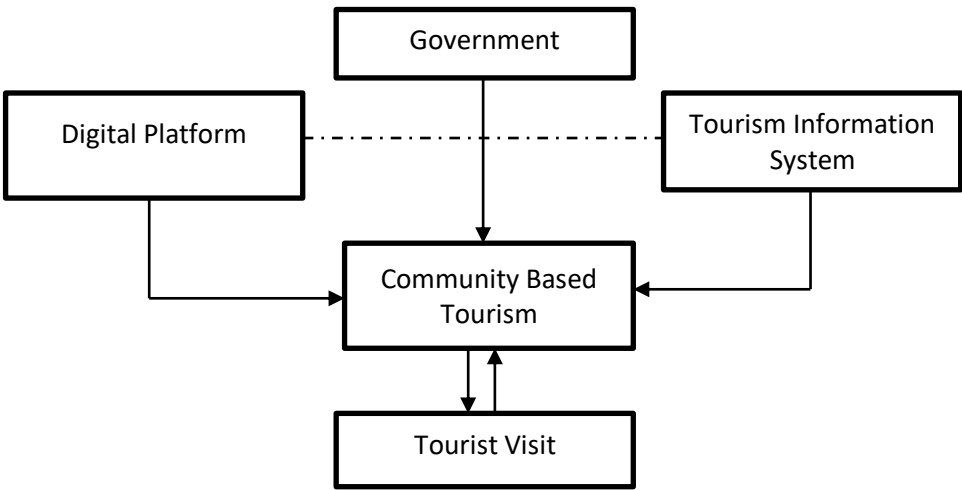
## **Results and Discussion**

Field findings indicate that cultural diffusion in tourism management in Ciamis Regency occurs through direct interaction with tourists 45%, social media utilization 35%, and the adaptation of new values from tourism experiences 20%. Local communities dominate operational aspects of tourism management 70%. However, their involvement in strategic dimensions remains limited, as digital management, online promotion, and the use of tourism data are largely controlled by external actors and the government, with community participation accounting for only about 30% and remaining insufficiently integrated. This is due to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and suboptimal support from the government in providing an inclusive digital platform for local tourism actors (Afandy et al., 2025; Astuti et al., 2025).

The role of local government becomes crucial, not only in terms of regulation and promotion, but also in building a digital ecosystem that supports strengthening the capacity of local communities. Effective implementation of Digital Government in the tourism sector allows the government to provide public digital services such as online licensing systems, tourist attraction databases, and real-time data-based tourist information dashboards (Herawati & Pranatawijaya, 2025). The government can also facilitate digital literacy training for tourism actors, create integrated tourism promotion applications, and establish partnerships with academics and industry players to develop service innovations (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022).

In practice, there is still a gap between digital policies and the technical and social readiness of local communities, which hinders the realization of adaptive and sustainable tourism governance. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism (DICBT) model formulated in this study is presented as an answer to this complexity. A conceptual framework was developed based on empirical findings from research in Ciamis Regency to explain interactions among actors, the use of digital technology, and the dynamics of community-based tourism governance. This model is not intended as a purely normative construct, but rather as an analytical representation that illustrates how government, digital platforms, tourism information systems, and local

communities interact in shaping destination management and tourist visits. By positioning community-based tourism at its core, the DICBT model highlights mechanisms of digital integration while also revealing power relations, capacity constraints, and collaboration needs that emerge in tourism governance practices in Ciamis, thereby distinguishing it from smart tourism models applied in other national contexts. The Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism model is described as follows:



**Figure 2.** Digital Integrated Community-Based Tourism Model  
*Source: research results, 2025.*

| Table 1. Driving Factors of Smart and Sustainable Tourism Governance |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Integrated Dimension                                                 | Research Findings                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Governance and Leadership                                            | Tourism governance is supported by a long-term policy vision, accountability mechanisms, and the role of regional leadership in coordinating government actors, local communities, and external partners.  |
| Innovation and Technology                                            | Institutional innovation and the use of digital technologies contribute to destination management, online promotion, and tourism information services, although community digital capacity remains uneven. |
| Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability                   | Tourism management is oriented toward cultural preservation, community economic development, and environmental protection through a community-based tourism approach.                                      |
| Cultural Identity and Community Participation                        | Local cultural values and traditions form the foundation of destination development, with strong community involvement at the operational level, but limited participation                                 |

*Source: research results, 2025.*

DICBT integrates cultural diffusion, community empowerment, and digital technology through Digital Government as a Quadruple Helix facilitator, aiming to strengthen competitive, community-based smart tourism in Ciamis Regency. Interview findings indicate that community-based tourism management within the DICBT framework in Ciamis Regency is reflected in community involvement from the planning stage, particularly in determining tourism attractions and managing facilities. Field observations and regional planning documents demonstrate the active role of

community-based tourism groups in daily operational management; however, interviews with local government officials reveal that the strategic aspect, especially digital platform management and tourism data analysis, remains largely dependent on government authorities and external partners. These findings underscore that although local communities dominate operational levels, their repositioning as strategic actors in digital tourism governance, as envisioned in the DICBT model, still requires capacity strengthening, policy support, and more structured collaborative mechanisms. The research findings indicate several factors that drive smart and sustainable tourism, as follows Table 1.

The results of the study indicate that tourism governance in Ciamis Regency is starting to move towards smart governance practices that emphasize the importance of strategic vision and targeted policy implementation, starting from the establishment of the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2017-2027 and contained in Ciamis Regency Regional Regulation Number 16 of 2016. There is also the Ciamis Regency Regional Tourism Promotion Agency as an institution that aims to expand tourism promotion. There are several research results that are synergistic with tourism governance in Ciamis Regency.

#### *Regional Tourism Governance*

Tourism governance in Ciamis Regency remains largely dependent on management capacity and inter-agency coordination, while transparency and public participation are gradually emerging through community and local business involvement in tourism planning, contributing to improved accountability and sustainable tourism governance. (Seputro & Mustafida, 2023). Institutional control and accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened to ensure governance is more accountable and integrated with the regional digital government system.

#### *Regional Tourism Innovation*

Innovation describes the dynamic adaptation of tourism actors to tourist needs and global challenges (Beryl et al., 2024). The research shows that several destinations in Ciamis have introduced community-based innovations in homestay management and digital promotion, as well as thematic tourism products and creative entrepreneurship initiatives, although the innovation ecosystem remains underdeveloped due to limited cross-sector collaboration.

#### *Technology*

The use of technology is a crucial aspect in promoting smart tourism. In Ciamis Regency, technology has begun to be implemented in promotions through social media and digital tourism maps, but the implementation of integrated tourism information systems remains limited. Digital infrastructure, such as internet access in rural tourist areas, remains uneven, hampering connectivity between destinations. The development of technology for smart tourism management, such as e-tourism platforms and data analytics, is needed to ensure a more data-driven decision-making process (Hanum, 2020).

#### *Regional Tourism Sustainability*

Sustainability is a key focus of tourism development in Ciamis Regency, reflected in commitments to cultural heritage preservation and ecotourism, although the integration of circular economy principles, sustainability evaluation systems, and consistent green policies remains limited (Kusumawidjaya et al., 2022).

### *Local Cultural Identity*

Local cultural identity serves as a distinctive strength in the development of tourism in Ciamis Regency. The protection of values and traditions, such as regional arts and traditional rituals, is carried out by local communities with government support. Collaboration among cultural practitioners, tourism communities, and destination managers plays an essential role in strengthening the narrative of local identity. The main challenge lies in how these cultural values can be presented in engaging digital formats without losing their authenticity and meaning (Praditha & Wibisana, 2024).

### *Leadership*

Leadership is a strategic factor in determining the direction of regional tourism development. The research findings show that the role of local leaders, both at the government and community levels, greatly influences the success of stakeholder coordination. Leaders with a long-term vision and the ability to make data-driven decisions are better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern tourism. However, further capacity building is needed to foster broader implementation of digital and collaborative leadership (Dewi et al., 2025).

### *Resilience*

Resilience has emerged as a prominent dimension in the post-pandemic era, emphasizing the importance of destinations' ability to adapt to crises and market changes. In Ciamis Regency, several initiatives have been undertaken, such as diversifying tourism products and strengthening the local creative economy. However, risk mitigation systems and climate change adaptation strategies still need further development. The social resilience of tourism communities also needs to be reinforced through continuous training and empowerment so that tourism not only recovers but also grows stronger and more resilient (Wulandari et al., 2020).

The strengthening of smart and sustainable tourism in Ciamis Regency is determined by the integration of digital government as a governance framework, smart tourism as a strategic approach to destination development, and e-tourism platforms as supporting technical instruments. The findings indicate that visionary leadership, technology-based innovation, and socio-cultural sustainability are the dominant factors, while local communities remain strong in operational roles but limited in strategic ones. Thus, the success of smart tourism in Ciamis depends not merely on technology but on digital governance capacity to coordinate actors, strengthen community participation, and ensure destination sustainability.

The transformation toward smart tourism in Ciamis Regency is primarily driven by the dominance of leadership, governance, and cultural identity as the strategic foundation for policy direction, accountability, and social legitimacy, while digital technology functions as a key enabler of community-based tourism governance. Visionary leadership and participatory governance support data-driven decision-making, efficiency, and equitable benefit distribution, and the integration of local cultural identity strengthens destination differentiation and authenticity. However, a limited understanding of Digital Government among tourism actors and some local officials remains a major constraint, resulting in slow adoption of digital infrastructure, promotion systems, and data utilization, which hampers the development of smart, collaborative, and sustainable tourism governance as envisioned in the DICBT model.

The implementation of evidence-based policies in sustainable regional tourism management requires local governments to formulate strategies based on empirical data and verifiable field findings. In the context of Ciamis Regency, the fluctuation in the number of tourist visits and the less-than-optimal use of digital technology show that tourism development policies cannot rely only on normative assumptions or top-down program approaches. The government needs to develop a digital tourism information system that is able to collect tourist visit data, feedback from tourism business actors, and map the potential and obstacles of each destination. This data is an important basis for determining the direction of promotional policies, infrastructure development, human resource training, and integration of digital services that are right on target and sustainable.

Furthermore, evidence-based policies also facilitate evaluation processes and decision-making that are more adaptive to local dynamics. Through this approach, government interventions can be directed at critical points, such as increasing digital literacy in tourism communities, strengthening the role of tourism villages, and developing applications and service platforms based on community needs. Empirical evidence from participatory research processes and policy impact evaluations allows the formulation of a digital tourism governance model that is not only technically responsive but also sensitive to local values. Thus, evidence-based policy becomes the main foundation in synergizing Digital Government, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and the principles of inclusive and contextual sustainable tourism development.

Another obstacle is the low digital literacy among local communities, especially in rural areas that are strategic locations for community-based tourism development. Many tourism actors are not yet able to access or manage digital platforms for promotions, online reservations, or visitor data management. In fact, within the Digital Government framework, digital collaboration between the government and the community is the key to success in creating an inclusive and responsive system. This gap is exacerbated by limited information technology infrastructure in the regions, such as uneven internet networks, a lack of technical training, and the absence of an integrated system that is easily accessible to users from various educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the strategy to strengthen the implementation of Digital Government must begin with a digital literacy program and comprehensive technical assistance to tourism actors and village government officials. Local governments also need to design affirmative policies in the form of digitalization incentives, development of user-friendly local tourism applications, and encourage the involvement of universities and technology industry players in building human resource capacity in this sector. Thus, the barriers to understanding the importance of Digital Government are not only overcome through a structural approach, but also through a cultural approach that changes people's perspectives and habits towards technology as a tool for empowerment in the tourism sector.

Overcoming these barriers requires local governments to institutionalize multi-stakeholder collaboration through formal coordination mechanisms that integrate tourism offices, village administrations, community-based tourism groups, universities, and technology providers. This collaboration should be implemented through clear role sharing, shared performance indicators, and a sustainable knowledge exchange platform to ensure that digital government initiatives are not fragmented or project-based. Improved governance in this way will help align digital platforms, tourism

information systems, and community practices, while reducing power imbalances and dependence on a small number of actors with digital skills.

In addition, the sustainability of digital government implementation in the tourism sector requires a gradual and context-sensitive adoption strategy. Digital solutions should be designed based on local needs, infrastructure readiness, and community capacity, rather than replicating models from other regions or countries. Pilot programs, iterative evaluation, and feedback loops from tourism actors and visitors are essential to refine digital tools and build trust in their usefulness. By embedding adaptive learning and local ownership into the digital transformation process, digital government can function not merely as a technological intervention but as an enabling governance instrument that supports inclusive, resilient, and community-driven tourism development.

## Conclusion

Sustainable local tourism governance in Ciamis Regency requires the integration of digital government and community-based tourism, with local government acting as a facilitator of adaptive digital platforms and policies, and local communities as key actors in destination sustainability based on local wisdom. This synergy enhances information integration, transparency, accountability, and service access, while strengthening the social and economic resilience of communities through active participation in tourism development. Future strategies should therefore focus on improving local digital capacity, strengthening data-based regulations, and expanding supportive digital infrastructure to position Ciamis as a model of resilient and sustainable regional tourism governance in the digital era.

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