

Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Promotion through Natural and Cultural Tourism Documentation in Tuapeijat, Mentawai Islands

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the implementation of sustainable tourism promotion through the documentation of natural and cultural tourism in Tuapeijat Village, North Sipora District, Mentawai Islands Regency. The activity was carried out as part of the Padang State University's Community Service Program (KKN), focusing on tourism potential, including Awer Beach, Berkat Beach, Putoutogat Island, mangrove ecotourism with traditional toek cuisine, and the cultural attraction of sago worm consumption. The method used was a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of field observations, visual documentation, and brief interviews with tourism actors and the local community. The results of the activity showed that tourism documentation was able to increase public awareness of the importance of preserving nature and local culture, while also serving as an effective promotional medium for the development of sustainable tourism. The conclusion of this study is that tourism promotion based on documentation can be a synergistic strategy between environmental conservation, community economic empowerment, and the introduction of Mentawai culture.

Keywords: *Sustainable Tourism, Documentation, Mentawai, Sustainable Cities and Communities*

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the important sectors that has a strategic role in encouraging economic, social, and cultural development of a region. This sector is able to create jobs, introduce local culture to the global level, and become a driving force for regional economic growth. In the era of globalization and information technology advances, the success of tourism does not only depend on natural beauty, but also on creative management, digital promotion, and the active involvement of local communities (Sari & Hartono, 2024).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018), sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that takes full account of economic, social, and environmental impacts—both current and future—and meets the needs of tourists, the tourism industry, the environment, and the local community. The concept emphasizes three main pillars: environmental conservation, appreciation of socio-cultural values, and long-term economic benefits. Sustainable tourism aims to maintain a balance between tourism development and the preservation of natural resources so that future generations can still enjoy the same potential.

In addition, the concept of community-based tourism (CBT) is an important part of sustainable tourism development. CBT emphasizes the active involvement of local communities in planning, managing, and benefiting from tourism activities (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Through this approach, people gain direct economic and social benefits, while

Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Promotion through Natural and Cultural Tourism Documentation in Tuapeijat, Mentawai Islands maintaining their cultural identity and strengthening their sense of belonging to their tourist destinations.

Meanwhile, cultural documentation has an important role in supporting the sustainability and authenticity of tourism. Through photos, videos, and narratives, documentation is not only a means of promotion, but also serves as a medium for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage such as local traditions, rituals, and culinary (Smith, 2006). The integration of cultural documentation in sustainable tourism strategies helps bridge the gap between promotion and conservation, as well as create meaningful and educational tourism experiences for tourists and local communities alike.

In an archipelago such as Mentawai, tourism has great potential thanks to its unique natural wealth, culture, and local wisdom. However, this potential requires sustainable management so as not to damage the environment or eliminate local cultural identity. The Sustainable Cities and Communities principles listed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of developing inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities, including through the tourism sector.

Tuapeijat, as the capital of Mentawai Islands Regency located in North Sipora District, has various tourist destinations that combine natural beauty and cultural wealth. Berkat Beach offers sunset views, Awera Island with white sand and snorkeling spots, and Potoutogat Island, which is known as a hidden paradise for diving, has become an attraction for domestic and foreign tourists (Nurhidayah & Sari, 2024). In addition, there is mangrove forest ecotourism, traditional toek culinary, and sago caterpillar consumption attractions that add to the attraction of Mentawai culture-based tourism (Asrul & Hidayat, 2024).

Unfortunately, tourism promotion in Tuapeijat is still limited so many destinations are not widely known. In fact, if managed and promoted appropriately by paying attention to sustainability principles, tourism can have a direct economic impact such as increasing community income, MSME growth, and expanding job opportunities in the fields of transportation, lodging, and tourism services (Central Statistics Agency [BPS], 2024).

This approach focuses on how promotional strategies can be designed to increase the visibility of destinations, utilize digital media as the main means of disseminating information, and involve local communities as important actors in conveying tourism narratives. Through interesting and authentic documentation, it is hoped that Tuapeijat can build a strong image of the destination, increase the number of tourist visits, and at the same time maintain the sustainability of the environment and the preservation of the culture that is the identity of Mentawai.

METHOD

This activity uses a qualitative descriptive method to describe in detail the tourism potential in Tuapeijat and its contribution to the economic development of the local community. This approach was chosen because it is able to photograph real conditions in the field in depth, including social interactions, economic activities, and local cultural richness that are tourist attractions (Sari & Hartono, 2024).

During the implementation period, students not only act as researchers, but also become part of the life of the local community, so that they are able to observe and experience firsthand the dynamics of tourism in the region. The initiative runs from June 28, 2025 to July 28, 2025, and includes a series of field activities to explore the potential of natural tourism, cultural attractions, and the linkages between the two to the local economy. The method used in this activity is qualitative descriptive, with the aim of describing in depth the process of implementing natural and cultural tourism documentation in Tuapeijat and its impact on the promotion of sustainable tourism.

The activity was carried out in Tuapeijat, North Sipora District, Mentawai Islands Regency, with a focus on five main destinations: Awera Beach, Berkat Beach, Potoutogat Island, mangrove forest ecotourism (toek), and sago caterpillar consumption cultural attractions. The research subjects involved 15 main informants consisting of local tourism

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actors, traditional leaders, village officials, tourists, and local artisans. They were selected purposively to obtain relevant data on tourism development potentials, constraints, and strategies.

The main instruments used include observation guidelines and semi-structured interview guidelines. In addition, documentation activities use digital cameras, drones, tripods, and voice recorders to produce high-quality photos and videos. The results of the documentation are then processed using video editing software and disseminated through social media (Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook) as a medium for sustainable tourism promotion.

The data collected were analyzed descriptively by identifying the main themes related to environmental conservation, cultural sustainability, and economic empowerment of local communities.

The research was carried out by a team of students of the Real Work Lecture (KKN) of Padang State University which was placed directly in Tuapeijat. While at the location, students not only act as researchers, but also become part of the life of the local community.

This provides an opportunity to observe and experience firsthand the dynamics of tourism in the area (BPS, 2024).

The research location includes five main destinations, namely Awer Beach, Berkat Beach, Potoutogat Island, mangrove forest ecotourism (toek), and sago caterpillar consumption cultural attractions. The stages of the research include:

Field Observation - KKN students visited various leading tourist locations such as Berkat Beach, Awer Island, and Potoutogat Island. In addition, they also participated in activities to take regional natural resources such as sago caterpillars and toek, to understand how these resources are part of the culinary and cultural tourism attractions. Observations also include supporting economic activities, such as boat rentals to local handicraft businesses.

In-Depth Interviews - Conducted face-to-face, both informally and structured, with tourism business actors, traditional leaders, village officials, tourists, and local artisans to find out the history of tourist sites, management challenges, and development potential.

Documentation - Collect photos, videos, field diaries, as well as promotional materials such as brochures and posters used to attract tourists.

Brief interviews - digging into information from local communities, tourism actors, and visitors regarding the potential, challenges, and expectations of tourism development.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively by identifying themes related to environmental conservation, cultural sustainability, and opportunities for local economic development. This analysis aims to provide a complete picture of the tourism potential of Tuapeijat as well as formulate a sustainable promotion strategy that involves the active participation of the community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the documentation carried out by the "Explore Mentawai" KKN team produced various forms of visual media that depict the potential of natural and cultural tourism in Tuapeijat. The documentation includes photos of natural tourist destinations such as the panorama of Awer Beach and Berkat Beach, videos of cultural activities such as the process of consuming sago caterpillars and taking toek in the mangrove forest, as well as digital promotional content uploaded through social media (Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok) of Padang State University.

Each form of documentation is designed not only to display visual beauty, but also to convey a message of environmental preservation and appreciation of local wisdom. For example, in a video about the tradition of eating sago caterpillars, the team added an educational narrative that explained the philosophy behind the habit as a form of human

Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Promotion through Natural and Cultural Tourism Documentation in Tuapeijat, Mentawai Islands harmony with nature. This content received a lot of attention from the online community, with more than 5,000 views and positive responses from social media users who appreciated the uniqueness of Mentawai culture.

In addition, the results of documentation in the form of photos of the beauty of beaches and mangrove forests were also exhibited in the closing activities of KKN with the local community. Residents expressed pride because their area was enshrined and promoted positively. Some tourism business actors have even started using these photos and videos as promotional materials on their social media accounts.

The response of tourists to the results of the documentation was also very good. Many tourists expressed interest in visiting after seeing visual content that highlighted the authenticity and natural beauty of Mentawai. Some comments on social media suggest that tourists think the documentation provides a real picture of an authentic and eco-friendly travel experience.

Through the results of the documentation, this activity not only succeeded in introducing Mentawai's tourism potential to a wide audience, but also increased the awareness of the local community on the importance of preserving and promoting their natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable manner.

In Tuapeijat, the center of activity of Mentawai Islands Regency, there is a marine tourism destination that is the pride of the local community, namely Awera Beach. This beach is located on Awera Island, only about 10-15 minutes away by sea using a small boat from the Tuapeijat pier. The beauty of Awera Beach is famous to foreign countries. Soft expanses of white sand stretch as far as the eye can see, combined with clear blue sea water and calm waves, creating a soothing tropical atmosphere.

Awera Beach is not only a place to relax, but also the main destination for tourists, both local and foreign, who want to enjoy the natural beauty of Mentawai. Many foreign tourists, especially from Australia, Europe, and America, visit this beach to swim, sunbathe, snorkel, or simply enjoy the panorama while sitting relaxed under the shade of coconut trees. Its popularity among international tourists has made Awera Beach one of the icons of Mentawai tourism which continues to be introduced through various promotional programs. In addition to its stunning natural scenery, the existence of inns, restaurants, and other supporting facilities around the beach makes tourists feel at home for a long time. Its tranquil atmosphere and away from the hustle and bustle of the city make Awera Beach the perfect escape for those who want to enjoy their time in peace.

The Explore Mentawai program run by the KKN Student team has successfully documented five main destinations in Tuapeijat which are the natural and cultural assets of the Mentawai Islands. This visual documentation not only serves as a promotional medium, but also as a reflection of the commitment to sustainable tourism that prioritizes environmental preservation and local community empowerment. Each destination offers a unique experience that synergistically supports the vision of responsible tourism. The documentation begins with the mesmerizing landscape of Awera Beach. Its soft white sand and relatively calm representation of the waves make it an ideal destination for family tourism. The existence of facilities such as relaxing huts and play areas strengthens its appeal for tourists looking for tranquility and natural beauty.

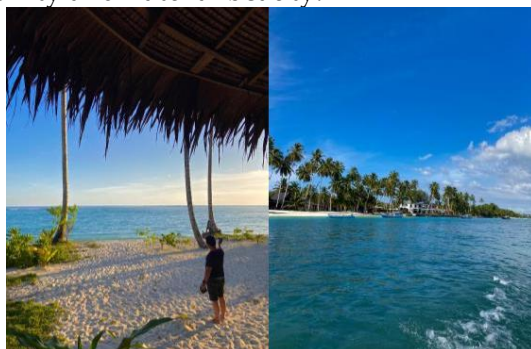


Figure 1. Awera Beach with White Sand and Calm Waves

Meanwhile, Berkat Beach captivates tourists with a spectacular sunset panorama. This beach is located in the coastal area of Tuapeijat and can be reached easily, either by two-wheeled vehicle or on foot from several nearby inns. Its strategic location makes this beach one of the favorite locations to enjoy the sunset atmosphere in the Mentawai Islands.

The main charm of Berkat Beach is the dramatic sunset view, when the sky changes color from orange to purple, creating a beautiful gradation that bounces off the sea level. Not only local tourists, many foreign tourists deliberately come here in the afternoon to capture the moment of the sunset. They usually sit by the beach or in the cottages provided, while enjoying a fresh drink and a sea breeze.

In addition to the sunset, Berkat Beach also has soft white sand and relatively calm waves, making it safe for swimming and water play. Adequate supporting facilities, such as relaxing huts, play areas, and small stalls selling snacks, add to the comfort of visitors. The peaceful beach atmosphere makes it ideal for tourists looking for a place to relax as well as a stunning visual experience at the end of the day.

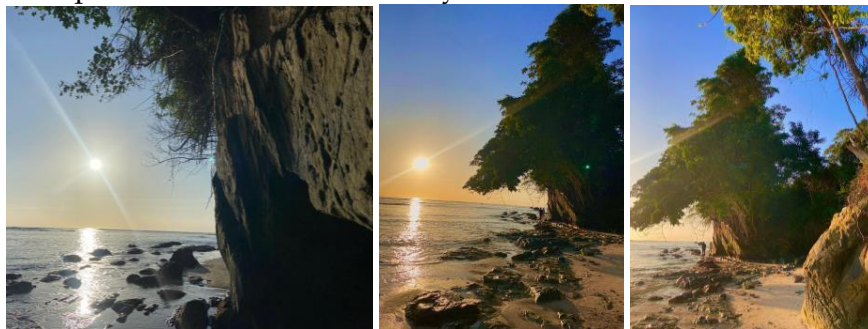


Figure 2. Sunset Panorama at Berkat Beach

In addition to the beauty of the land, the maritime potential of Tuapeijat is also clearly recorded. One of the highlights is Potoutogat Island, a hidden gem that is about a 20-minute sea ride from the center of Tuapeijat. This small island is known to have a stunning underwater charm and is a favorite destination for marine tourism lovers, both domestic and foreign.

Potoutogat Island has a coral reef ecosystem that is still very well preserved, inhabited by various types of colorful tropical fish. The clarity of the water allows tourists to see firsthand the beauty of the seabed even from the surface. This condition makes Potoutogat Island one of the best locations in Mentawai for snorkeling and diving activities. Many foreign tourists come specifically to dive in these waters, enjoying the natural coral scenery while capturing the moment with an underwater camera.

The documentation at this location focuses on the richness of marine life, from healthy coral reefs to free-swimming swarms of fish. Its underwater beauty is not only visually captivating, but also conveys an important message about environmental conservation. The promotion of this destination emphasizes that maintaining the cleanliness of the sea and the underwater ecosystem is the key so that the beauty of Potoutogat Island can be enjoyed sustainably by future generations.



Figure 3. The Beauty of the Sea of Potoutogat Island

The beauty of the tropical natural landscape, but it also has a vital function as a conservation area. This mangrove forest is spread across several coastal points of Tuapeijat and is easily accessible to tourists.

Ecologically, mangroves act as natural fortresses that protect coastlines from abrasion, resist seawater intrusion, and become important habitats for various types of fauna, such as shorebirds, fish, crabs, and other marine life. The beauty of this area makes it an ideal location for educational tourism and nature photography. Tourists, especially foreign tourists who care about sustainable ecotourism, often visit the area to enjoy the silence, walk on wooden trails amid mangrove trees, and observe wildlife up close.

In addition to its ecological value, the mangrove forest area in Tuapeijat also holds a unique traditional culinary richness, namely toek culinary. Toek is a type of shellfish that lives attached to the trunk of a mangrove tree and can only be found in certain areas. The process of finding toek is traditionally carried out by the local community by taking directly from the trunk or roots of the mangrove at low tide.

Visual documentation records the entire process, from search to processing into delicious dishes. Toek is usually cooked with simple spices or boiled to maintain its original savory flavor. For tourists, witnessing and tasting this culinary is an authentic experience that cannot be found in many other places. This is what makes Tuapeijat mangrove ecotourism different, a combination of natural beauty, environmental education, and the richness of Mentawai's traditional cuisine.



Figure 4. The Process of Picking Toek in Mangrove Forests

Finally, this documentation also succeeds in capturing one of the distinctive and unique cultural attractions in Tuapeijat, namely the tradition of consuming sago caterpillars. This tradition has been part of the local wisdom of the Mentawai people for a long time, reflecting their closeness to nature and sustainable use of resources. Sago caterpillars, which live inside the decayed sago tree trunks, are known as a source of high protein and are often consumed both as a daily meal and on certain traditional occasions.

The process of searching for sago caterpillars is usually done traditionally. The community will cut down the sago stalks that have been selected, then split them to take cream-white caterpillars that are fat and fresh. In this documentation, it is clearly recorded how the local community prepares sago caterpillars for consumption, some eat them directly in their raw state to maintain their original taste which is savory and slightly sweet, some grill or sauté them with simple spices.

For some tourists, especially foreign tourists, trying sago caterpillars is an extreme culinary form that is both challenging and interesting. Not a few were initially hesitant, but after trying, admitted that the taste was unique and not as bad as imagined. This attraction is one of the authentic experiences that not only satisfies curiosity, but also opens up insights into how the Mentawai people live in harmony with nature.

The cultural meaning behind the consumption of sago caterpillars is also important. For the local community, this food is not just a meal, but also a symbol of sustainability and harmony with the environment utilizing what is available in nature without damaging it. The resulting visual documentation emphasizes this message, while also promoting Mentawai's rich culture to the world.



Figure 5. Tourists Trying Sago Caterpillar Cuisine

The Explore Mentawai program in Tuapeijat has made a tangible contribution in introducing and promoting Mentawai's natural and cultural wealth through structured and informative visual documentation. Five main destinations were recorded, namely Avera Beach with its expanse of white sand and a calm atmosphere, Berkat Beach with its stunning sunset panorama, Potoutogat Island with its underwater charm that pampers divers and snorkeling lovers, mangrove forest ecotourism which is a real example of the harmony between conservation and tourism that presents the natural charm and exoticism typical of Mentawai. All of them display uniqueness that is a tourist attraction in itself.

In addition, the documentation of cultural attractions of sago caterpillar consumption adds promotional value that not only raises the potential for extreme culinary tourism, but also prioritizes the value of local wisdom which is full of philosophical meaning and sustainability of living in harmony with nature. The visual presentation produced not only displays the beauty and uniqueness of the destination, but also provides a narrative that is able to arouse the interest of tourists to get to know the life of the Mentawai people more closely.

With this documentation, it is hoped that the promotion of Tuapeijat tourism will be stronger, tourist attraction will increase, and the sustainability of natural and cultural potential can be maintained through a shared awareness of the importance of conservation. Explore Mentawai is not only a destination exploration activity, but also a strategic effort in building a positive image of Mentawai as a classy tourist destination that combines natural charm, culture, and local wisdom.

The Role of Documentation in the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism

Documentation has a very strategic role in promoting sustainable tourism in Tuapeijat. The results of the documentation, both in the form of photos and videos, are not only a medium to display the natural beauty and cultural richness of the Mentawai Islands, but also a means of conveying messages that educate tourists and local communities about the importance of preserving the environment and maintaining cultural identity.

For example, the mangrove ecotourism video in Tuapeijat not only shows a green and beautiful view of the mangrove forest, but is also accompanied by an invitation to maintain cleanliness, avoid littering, and not damage the existing ecosystem. This education is important considering that mangrove forests have vital functions, such as preventing coastal abrasion, becoming a habitat for various species, and playing a role in carbon sequestration. By integrating environmental preservation messages into documentation, tourists not only enjoy the beauty of nature, but also understand their responsibilities as visitors.

Similar things can be seen in the documentation about sago caterpillars, which is one of the traditional culinary specialties of Mentawai. This documentation not only showcases the

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process of extracting and processing sago caterpillars, but also provides a narrative about the cultural values, culinary history, and life philosophy of the local people that are in harmony with nature. The presentation of content like this makes tourists have a more meaningful travel experience, because they not only consume visual information, but also understand the story and value behind it.

In terms of sustainability, the documentation of these destinations supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By visually promoting local potential, the economic opportunities of the surrounding community can increase through the tourism sector, both from guide services, lodging, culinary, to the sale of handicrafts. In addition, the synergy between local governments, local communities, and tourism actors in utilizing the results of this documentation is a determining factor for the success of the promotion. Governments can integrate it into official tourism campaigns, while local communities can use the documentation to introduce their areas more widely through social media and other digital platforms.

Thus, the documentation of natural and cultural tourist destinations in Tuapeijat is not just a visual recording activity, but a strategic effort to build a competitive, sustainable, and local tourism image based on Mentawai's local wealth.

Local Community Involvement

The involvement of local communities is one of the important aspects in tourism development in Tuapeijat. Local residents not only act as resource persons who provide authentic information about the history, culture, and natural wealth of their area, but also act as tour guides who direct tourists to get to know the destination in depth. In addition, many residents are directly involved as tourist attraction actors, for example in traditional dance performances, demonstrations of Mentawai handicrafts making, or the introduction of local culinary.

This participation also includes initiatives to build tourism supporting facilities such as homestays, traditional food stalls, boat rentals, to businesses to provide snorkeling and diving equipment. The presence of community-managed homestays not only provides comfort for tourists, but also becomes a new source of income for local families. That way, people get direct economic benefits from tourist visits. Furthermore, this active involvement fosters a strong sense of belonging to tourist destinations in their area. Residents are becoming more aware of the importance of maintaining beach cleanliness, the preservation of mangrove forests, and the authenticity of local culture as the main attractions. This awareness encourages the realization of the concept of sustainable tourism, where the existence of tourists is actually a trigger to improve the quality of the environment and people's lives. Through this synergy, tourism in Tuapeijat is not only a visual consumption, but also a means of economic empowerment and cultural preservation that is in favor of the local community.

Such involvement has a positive impact on two sides: economic and social. From the economic side, people get additional income from guiding services, rental of tourist equipment, selling souvenirs, as well as culinary services and lodging. From the social side, this participation strengthens the sense of belonging to tourist destinations, thereby encouraging them to preserve their nature and culture. This awareness becomes an important foundation for the development of sustainable tourism, as people not only pursue short-term gains, but also understand the importance of conserving resources for future generations.

Challenges and Opportunities

In an effort to develop tourism potential in Tuapeijat, there are a number of challenges that need to be overcome strategically. One of the biggest obstacles is the limited tourism supporting infrastructure. Access to transportation to and around destinations is still limited, both in terms of the number of fleets, departure schedules, and the quality of land and sea transportation routes. This condition often makes it difficult for tourists to reach potential locations, especially for those who are visiting for the first time.

In addition, public facilities such as toilets, rest areas, tourist information centers, and directions are still minimal and have not been evenly distributed in strategic areas. Communication networks, including stable internet access, are also an obstacle for tourists and

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local business actors who want to promote destinations through digital platforms. These limitations have the potential to hinder the growth of the tourism sector if not addressed immediately.

However, the potential for tourism development in Tuapeijat is still very large. This area has extraordinary natural wealth, ranging from white sandy beaches, underwater beauty, to a well-maintained mangrove ecosystem. The unique culture of the local community, including art, traditions, and distinctive culinary, is a special attraction for tourists looking for an authentic experience. The increasingly global trend towards sustainable tourism and ecotourism also opens up great opportunities for Tuapeijat to attract a segment of tourists who care about nature and cultural preservation.

If managed properly through the collaboration of the government, the community, and business actors, existing challenges can be turned into strategic opportunities. Improving the quality of infrastructure, training local human resources, and the use of digital technology for promotion can encourage Tuapeijat to become one of the leading destinations in the Mentawai Islands which is widely known, both at the national and international levels.

CONCLUSIONS

In addition to being a strategy for promotion and cultural preservation, the resulting documentation has significant practical implications. The photos, videos, and digital content produced can be used by the Mentawai Islands Regency Tourism Office as official promotional materials to introduce regional tourism potential to the national and international levels. For local MSME actors, the results of this documentation can also be used as a medium to promote tourism-based products and services, such as lodging, traditional culinary, and Mentawai handicrafts. Thus, documentation not only serves as a means of education and preservation, but also provides real economic benefits for local communities through increasing the visibility of their businesses in the digital realm. This activity also shows that the integration of visual promotion, community involvement, and institutional support is able to create synergies that encourage the development of sustainable tourism in the Mentawai Islands. The implementation of sustainable tourism promotion through documentation of natural and cultural tourism in Tuapeijat, North Sipora District, Mentawai Islands, has proven to be an effective strategy in introducing regional potential to a wide audience as well as educating about the importance of environmental and cultural conservation. Documentation containing the beauty of Awera Beach, the charm of the sunset of Blessing Beach, the underwater clarity of Potoutogat Island, the mangrove ecosystem with traditional toek culinary, and the cultural attractions of sago caterpillar consumption not only serve as a visual promotion, but also as a learning medium that invites tourists and the community to maintain the sustainability of natural resources and local traditions. Through this approach, the promotion of sustainable tourism in Tuapeijat provides dual benefits, namely increasing tourist attractions that have an impact on local economic growth and preserving Mentawai nature and culture. Although it still faces obstacles such as limited infrastructure and accessibility, development opportunities remain wide open with synergistic support between the government, tourism actors, and the community. With the application of the principles of Sustainable Cities and Communities, this tourism documentation becomes a bridge between promotion, education, and preservation, so as to ensure that the beauty and richness of Mentawai culture remain sustainable for future generations to enjoy.

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