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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE GREEN TOURISM PRACTICES: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA

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Abstract

Indonesian urbanisation has led to increased pollution, waste, and a reduction in green spaces, resulting in environmental and public health problems. Implementing green tourism, which focuses on sustainability, conservation, and community engagement, as an integral part of future sustainable urban tourism planning can help address these issues. Given the strength of the concept, it is the aim of this research to explore the challenges and opportunities for innovative green tourism practices in major cities in Indonesia, offering practical solutions to promote sustainable urban tourism. The research methodology involved conducting semi-structured interviews with 8 informants and holding focus group discussions with 15 informants, drawn from policymakers, local communities, and tourism operators, respectively. Using thematic analysis revealed patterns and key topics that encapsulate major issues, including poor infrastructure, inconsistent policy enforcement, little public knowledge, and short-term economic pressures. Technological innovation, policy reform, and community engagement can overcome these obstacles. International case studies like Singapore and Copenhagen show how multi-stakeholder approaches and technology may improve urban sustainability. Addressing infrastructure and regulatory deficiencies, engaging communities, using technology, and encouraging public-private partnerships are needed to implement green tourism in Indonesia. Indonesia can balance environmental protection with economic and social well-being by enacting comprehensive legislation and boosting awareness, creating a sustainable and resilient tourism economy. This research gives policymakers and stakeholders concrete information to promote green tourism and sustainable urban development in Indonesia.

Keywords: Green Tourism, Innovation, Sustainability

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation and its environmental impacts pose significant threats to urban sustainability. In Indonesia, rapid urban growth has intensified issues such as pollution, waste accumulation, and the loss of green spaces, thereby jeopardising public health. Addressing these challenges requires the adoption of green tourism, which promotes sustainability, conservation, and community engagement. Recent studies underscore the importance of green tourism in urban areas, advocating for eco-friendly living and environmental stewardship (James, 2023). To mitigate carbon emissions and enhance sustainability, large cities must embrace green tourism. Evidence shows that green tourism can effectively reduce air pollution, improve waste management, and preserve green spaces, thereby benefiting urban environments (Ramaiah & Avtar, 2019). However, implementing green tourism in major urban centres is often hindered by stakeholder resistance, high costs, and the need for a robust policy framework (Ershad Sarabi et al., 2019).

This research highlights the necessity for innovative green tourism strategies in large Indonesian cities. Urban areas in Indonesia face significant challenges related to air pollution, waste management, and the loss of green spaces due to development (Ismail & Amin, 2020; Li et al., 2019). The absence of comprehensive policies and inadequate stakeholder coordination exacerbate these problems, indicating a need for effective methods and policies to promote green tourism. Solutions to these challenges often involve crafting and implementing policies that engage government agencies, business entities, and local communities. Effective green tourism requires collaboration, integrating sustainable practices into urban design, and incentives for businesses to adopt green measures. As such, this paper proposes solutions based on successful case studies and empirical evidence from previous research. For instance, green tourism regulations in Singapore and Copenhagen highlight how multi-stakeholder approaches can enhance urban sustainability (Soma et al., 2018). These cities have established comprehensive green tourism frameworks featuring stringent environmental regulations, financial incentives for sustainable practices, and active community involvement in tourism planning and management.

Besides, technological advancements, such as smart waste management systems and green infrastructure, have also contributed to urban sustainability. IoT-based waste management systems in some European cities have improved waste collection and reduced pollution (Pardini et al., 2019). Additionally, green roofs and vertical gardens have mitigated the urban heat island effect and improved air quality in densely populated areas. Although there is extensive literature on urban green tourism strategies, especially in the context of highly developed nations, developing countries like Indonesia require more focused

research, given their niche socio-economic and environmental contexts. As such, this research aims to address this gap by examining the obstacles and opportunities for green tourism in Indonesia and offering practical implementation options. The study discusses the challenges and drivers of green tourism in Indonesian cities, proposes policy-based strategies involving all key stakeholders, and suggests collaborative approaches for fostering sustainable urban tourism in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories in the Realm of Green Tourism

A range of theories contributes to understanding sustainable tourism growth and the need for innovative green tourism practices. One key theory is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which posits that tourists' intentions toward sustainable tourism are shaped by their attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms. Integrating social responsibility and environmental knowledge into the TPB framework provides a deeper insight into tourists' green behaviours (Ismail et al., 2023). This approach fosters sustainable beliefs through education and awareness. Engaging tourism stakeholders is crucial for enhancing sustainability, community welfare, and environmental protection (Luongo et al., 2023). The Social Exchange Theory explores the dynamics between local communities and tourism development, highlighting that the perceived benefits influence residents' support for sustainable tourism. Research indicates that tangible benefits, such as improved quality of life and economic gains, increase community support for sustainable tourism. Therefore, tourism planners should actively involve local communities to address their needs and integrate their feedback. Greater ownership and involvement lead to more sustainable tourism development, benefiting visitors and residents (Han et al., 2023). Finally, the Stakeholder Theory emphasises the role of various stakeholders in advancing green tourism. It asserts that collaboration among local communities, businesses, and governments is essential for achieving sustainable tourism goals. Tourism planning should reflect the interests and perspectives of all stakeholders. This inclusive approach can enhance environmental, social, and economic policies, leading to a more sustainable and responsible tourism industry that supports environmental and human health (Gosling et al., 2023).

Innovation and Green Tourism

Innovation and green tourism are increasingly interconnected as the travel sector seeks environmentally responsible solutions to mitigate its impact. Innovation drives sustainable tourism by reducing pollution and fostering economic growth. To achieve sustainable development goals, tourism stakeholders must prioritise innovation, which not only protects the environment but also boosts the economy

(Ahmad et al., 2022). Another important concept is the development of "smart tourism destinations," which leverage digital technologies to manage tourism activities. This approach aligns with the smart city paradigm by utilising information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance both tourism and sustainability (Sonuç & Süer, 2023). Innovative technologies enable destinations to better meet guest needs and improve operational efficiency. The integration of ICT transforms tourism services and enhances stakeholder interaction, leading to more sustainable solutions (Sustacha et al., 2023). In the competitive global economy, adopting smart tourism practices is essential.

Moreover, integrating green digital technologies with green human resource management (GHRM) is vital for advancing green tourism. This relationship is highlighted by the increasing recognition of GHRM as a strategic approach that enhances employee engagement and aligns with broader sustainability goals in the hospitality industry (Nurimansjah, 2023; Haeruddin et al., 2023). Digital technologies can enhance service quality and streamline operations for these enterprises, thereby promoting sustainable tourism (Mior Shariffuddin et al., 2023). The research underscores that focusing on GHRM and digital innovation is crucial for developing sustainable tourism practices that align with global sustainability goals. Environmentally responsible tourism methods are essential for achieving these objectives.

Green Tourism Practices

Tourists who prioritise environmental sustainability are more likely to engage in green tourism. As environmental awareness grows, these tourists increasingly choose eco-friendly accommodations and support regional conservation efforts (Luongo et al., 2023). In green tourism, local residents' support for sustainable tourism initiatives is equally important. When residents perceive financial benefits and improvements in their quality of life, they are more likely to support and actively participate in green tourism. This reciprocal relationship underscores the need for tourism planners to consider the social and economic impacts of tourism on local communities to foster the growth of green tourism (Han et al., 2023; Yanti et al., 2023). Additionally, individual sustainable actions, such as minimising waste or supporting local businesses, can influence broader community practices. As more tourists embrace green tourism, they can inspire local residents to adopt similar practices, creating a culture of sustainability that benefits both visitors and the local community. This communal commitment to sustainable tourism not only enhances environmental protection but also preserves cultural heritage, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between tourism and local communities (Han et al., 2023; Luongo, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study explores the complex dynamics of green tourism in Indonesia. The descriptive approach enables an in-depth examination of the challenges and drivers of green tourism. The research employs semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with policymakers, local communities, and tourism operators to capture diverse perspectives and experiences, which are crucial for analysing the potential and obstacles to developing sustainable tourism in Indonesian urban centres. Triangulation of data sources derived from both approaches enhances the robustness of the findings and ensures a comprehensive investigation. For this study, the three cities of Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar were chosen as the research setting. Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar are justified as research contexts for studying green tourism in Indonesia due to their diverse urban dynamics, economic significance, and geographical representation (refer Figure 1).

Bandung's focus on creative industries and sustainable urban planning contrasts with Jakarta's complex challenges as the capital city, including severe air pollution and waste management issues. Makassar, as a major urban centre in eastern Indonesia, adds a coastal and regional perspective, highlighting challenges in coastal tourism and environmental preservation. These cities represent different regions of Indonesia, offering a comprehensive view of the varying conditions and challenges across the country. Their significance in policy-making, tourism, and economic development, combined with the unique environmental challenges they face, make them ideal for analysing the hurdles and opportunities in implementing green tourism across different urban contexts in Indonesia.

Data collection involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with tourism stakeholders in the cities of Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar to explore their views on green tourism practices, challenges, and opportunities. The number of informants for each city of Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar includes 1) one civil servant from the Tourism Office, 2) one representative from a hotel or tourism business, 3) one representative from a travel agency, and 4) one member from a tourism activist community. The total number of respondents who participated in the semi-structured interview phase was 12. The semi-structured format provides flexibility, allowing for the exploration of emerging themes. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted to gather collective insights and facilitate dialogue among 15 participants from various spectrums of tourism stakeholders across the three cities of Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar on green tourism issues and solutions.

Interview guides and conversation prompts were created to ensure consistency and thoroughness in data collection. Piloting these tools helped refine the questions and methods, ensuring clarity and relevance. The data collection

process involved scheduling interviews and focus groups, obtaining consent, and recording sessions for subsequent analysis. Strict protocols were followed to ensure data security and confidentiality. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes within the data, revealing key challenges in green tourism. Data coding involved developing themes and categories and organising and analysing findings in several steps: transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Iterative comparisons were used to refine categories and interpretations. NVivo software was utilised to organise and analyse the qualitative data. The research also includes a thorough review of Indonesian green tourism literature and policy documents, contextualising regulatory frameworks and sustainable practices. This literature review aims to identify knowledge gaps in green tourism and highlight successful case studies that can serve as models for other regions.

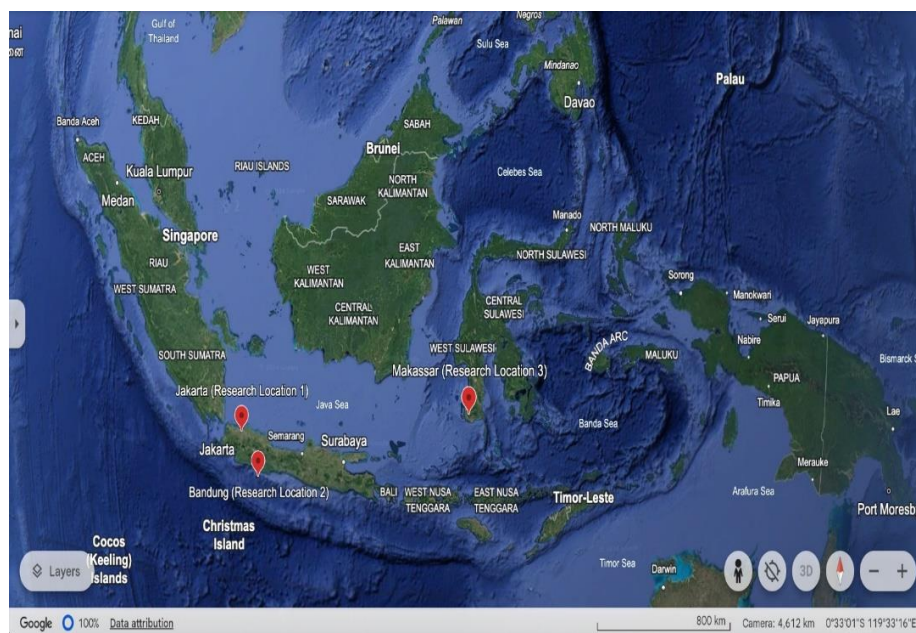


Figure 1: Research Location of Three Cities

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges of Green Tourism Implementation

Based on the results of interview data processing using the NVivo application, the following results were obtained:

Table 1: Challenges of Green Tourism Implementation in Bandung

Stakeholders	Key points
Government	Lack of public awareness
Entrepreneur	High investment cost Lack of government support
Community	Limited budget Lack of government coordination with the private sector

Table 1 illustrates the challenges and stakeholder involvement in implementing green tourism in Bandung. The government faces the need for public awareness and robust policy support, while green technology entrepreneurs require funding and incentives. Local communities struggle with limited resources and inadequate coordination between the government and the private sector. A significant barrier for the government is the general public's lack of understanding of green tourism's long-term environmental and economic benefits, often due to insufficient education and information. To address this, the government can enhance awareness through educational programmes, training, and outreach initiatives, as community involvement is crucial for the success of sustainable tourism (Gumede & Nzama, 2021; Chan et al., 2021).

From a business perspective, high investment costs pose a major obstacle to adopting green tourism practices. Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bandung's tourism sector struggle to secure the necessary funding for infrastructure, green technology, and staff training (Soderholm, 2020). To overcome this, there is an urgent need for more flexible and accessible financing options for SMEs, along with government and international funding to support initial investments in sustainable practices. Additionally, businesses face challenges related to insufficient government support, such as a lack of fiscal incentives, restrictive regulations, and bureaucratic hurdles. Enhanced government policy support, including clear legislation, financial incentives, and easier access to best practices, could significantly boost green tourism adoption among entrepreneurs (Maniu et al., 2021).

Tourism activists also encounter financial challenges, as green tourism initiatives require substantial funding, which is often scarce in local communities. To address this, collaboration among communities, governments, and the private sector is essential for mobilising funds and resources. Effective partnerships can help green tourism initiatives overcome budget constraints (Clark et al., 2018). Furthermore, miscommunication between the government and the private sector hampers progress, leading to overlapping policies, inefficiencies, and a lack of programme synchronisation. Improved communication and cooperation among all stakeholders are crucial to overcoming these challenges, with government-private sector forums serving as a platform to enhance coordination and collaboration in promoting sustainable tourism (Gargano, 2021).

Table 2: Challenges for Green Tourism Implementation in Jakarta

Stakeholders	Key points
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive policy on green tourism 2. Implementation of existing policies 3. Community education
Entrepreneur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Lack of public awareness of green tourism 5. Budget constraints 6. Resistance to green tourism business practices 7. Lack of coordination between sectors
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Low financial support 9. Mindset change 10. Lack of understanding about green tourism

Table 2 highlights the significant challenge Jakarta faces due to the absence of well-defined green tourism policies. The lack of clear and established policies hampers the promotion and implementation of sustainable tourism practices across all stakeholders. While various green tourism policies exist, their implementation remains inadequate, often obstructed by bureaucratic hurdles and poor collaboration between ministries. This is further exacerbated by a lack of supervision and evaluation in policy enforcement (Bouckaert et al., 2022).

Another critical issue is the insufficient public awareness and education about green tourism. The government must enhance public education through campaigns and programmes to foster a broader understanding and adoption of sustainable tourism practices (Roxas et al., 2020). Additionally, many tourism entrepreneurs lack a clear understanding of green tourism, which prevents them from adopting sustainable strategies. To address this, businesses need training and workshops that emphasise the benefits and practical aspects of green tourism implementation. Financial constraints are another barrier, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often struggle to secure the necessary funding to adopt green tourism practices (Calisto et al., 2021). Resistance to business transformation is also prevalent, with many companies fearing the costs and complexities associated with changing their operations. Furthermore, the lack of inter-sectoral cooperation, such as between the tourism and environmental sectors, poses a significant obstacle to green tourism development (Khan et al., 2020).

Local communities often desire to support green tourism but lack the financial resources to do so. Empowering local economies and providing financial assistance are essential to overcoming this issue. A key challenge is also transforming the mindset of community members, many of whom do not fully grasp the long-term benefits of green tourism. Therefore, improving education and socialisation regarding the environmental and communal advantages of green tourism is crucial. Finally, there remains a widespread lack of understanding and implementation of green tourism practices in many areas, underscoring the need for better education and awareness campaigns (Khalid et al., 2019).

Table 3: Challenges of Green Tourism Implementation in Makassar

Stakeholders	Key points
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness and understanding by the community and business actors 2. Budget constraints 3. Coordination between parties 4. Business resistance to innovation
Entrepreneur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. High initial investment in green technology 6. Lack of government incentives and support 7. Customer demand for use of environmentally unfriendly technology
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Lack of government and business support 9. Limited resources 10. Low public awareness of green tourism

Green tourism is gaining momentum globally as a response to environmental crises. However, its implementation in Makassar is complex, involving various stakeholders, including the government, businesses, and local communities, as outlined in Table 3. The Makassar administration faces significant challenges due to widespread ignorance about green tourism among the public and private sectors. Education and awareness are essential for fostering sustainable tourism, yet many residents and businesses in Makassar are hesitant to engage in green tourism because they do not fully understand its long-term benefits (Cheng et al., 2019). The execution of sustainable policies is further hindered by budget constraints and poor coordination among involved parties. The Makassar government struggles to secure adequate funding for green tourism initiatives, and the lack of effective cooperation between the government, private sector, and civil society hampers the development of a comprehensive green tourism strategy (Malik et al., 2021).

Businesses in Makassar also encounter difficulties in adopting green tourism technologies. The reluctance to implement these technologies stems from concerns over high costs, the need for operational adjustments, the significant initial investment required for green technology, and the absence of sufficient government incentives. Financial incentives and supportive policies are crucial to encouraging the adoption of green technologies. Another critical issue is the low awareness and support for green tourism within local communities. Active community involvement is vital for the success of green tourism, yet Makassar’s communities have limited resources and require support from both the government and private sector. The low level of public awareness about green tourism makes it challenging to build grassroots movements that could drive sustainable practices (Torres-Delgado et al., 2023).

Opportunities for Green Tourism Implementation

Table 4: Opportunities for Green Tourism Implementation in Bandung

Stakeholders	Key points
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased private sector and community cooperation 2. Implementation of routine monitoring and evaluation 3. Implementation of incentives and sanctions
Entrepreneur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Mutually beneficial collaboration 5. Resource sharing opportunities 6. Can accelerate innovation
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. More and more environmental programmes

From a government perspective, there are several key opportunities for implementing green tourism, as highlighted in Table 4. First, enhancing cooperation between the private sector and local communities is crucial. Public-private partnerships can significantly accelerate the adoption of sustainable tourism practices by improving resource utilisation and fostering policy innovation (Azinuddin et al., 2022). Second, the implementation of regular monitoring and evaluation is essential for supporting green tourism. Continuous oversight allows for more targeted strategic adjustments and increases transparency in managing tourist destinations. Third, the government can encourage commitment to environmentally friendly practices by introducing incentives for positive actions and sanctions for non-compliance. For green tourism entrepreneurs, forming win-win partnerships is key. By collaborating, tourism businesses can optimise resource usage and enhance the competitiveness of their destinations (Azinuddin et al., 2023). Opportunities for resource sharing are also significant; local businesses can reduce costs and improve efficiency through shared resources. Additionally, green tourism presents a chance for product and service innovation, allowing entrepreneurs to adopt green technologies and best practices from other sectors (Kuo et al., 2022). Moreover, increasing environmental awareness programmes within local communities offers a valuable opportunity for green tourism. These programmes can educate residents on the importance of environmental and cultural preservation, thereby enhancing the overall tourist experience. As Shafieisabet and Haratifard (2020) suggest, community involvement in environmental initiatives can strengthen the relationship between tourists and local communities while also bolstering the destination’s reputation for sustainability.

Table 5: Opportunities for Green Tourism Implementation in Jakarta

Stakeholders	Key points
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrading of waste treatment facilities 2. The use of environmentally friendly transportation is required 3. Development of more green open spaces
Entrepreneur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Application of environmentally friendly technology 5. Public-private collaboration 6. Increased consumer awareness and demand
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Increased public education and awareness 8. Collaboration with government and businesses 9. Infrastructure and financial development

Table 5 highlights the growing relevance of green tourism opportunities in Jakarta, particularly as urbanisation intensifies and sustainability awareness rises. Based on interviews with three key stakeholder groups—government, business, and community—several key opportunities have been identified. From a government perspective, policy and infrastructure development are crucial to supporting green tourism. Recent studies, such as Obersteiner et al. (2021), emphasise that improved sewage treatment systems can significantly reduce the environmental impact of mass tourism, while responsible waste management in large cities further supports sustainable tourism. The implementation of green transportation options, like electric buses and bike lanes, is also vital. The Jakarta government can leverage these policies to enhance green tourism initiatives. For entrepreneurs, the adoption of green technology plays a pivotal role. Research by Nieti et al. (2019) shows that renewable energy systems and clean water treatment technologies can increase efficiency and reduce costs, making businesses more sustainable. Public-private partnerships offer additional benefits, as co-financing and information sharing can foster sustainable tourism practices, as demonstrated by Heijer and Coppens (2023). Moreover, growing consumer demand for green products and services incentivises entrepreneurs to adopt more sustainable business practices.

Local communities are essential in raising awareness and education about green tourism. Educational programmes that empower communities to protect their environment and cultural heritage are important. Collaboration among communities, government, and businesses is key to success. Programmes that involve local communities in destination development can boost community participation and support for sustainable tourism. Additionally, infrastructure development and financial support from government and non-government organisations can enhance the capacity of communities to independently manage green tourism destinations.

Table 6. Opportunities for Green Tourism Implementation in Makassar

Stakeholders	Key points
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure upgrades 2. Education and incentive programmes 3. Partnership with the private sector
Entrepreneur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Green technology investment 5. Digital education and promotion 6. Public-private partnership
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Expanding education programmes and environmental awareness campaigns 8. Partnerships with schools and organisations 9. Create opportunities for financial and logistical support

Makassar's tourism potential underscores the importance of green tourism as a pathway to sustainable development. Table 6 outlines various strategies for establishing green tourism in Makassar, based on stakeholder interviews. A key requirement for green tourism is robust infrastructure, which the Makassar government prioritises. This includes the construction of green facilities such as efficient public transportation and bike lanes. Additionally, education and incentive programmes are essential for businesses and communities. For instance, offering green training and tax incentives to enterprises that adopt green technologies can encourage broader participation. Research by Paiano et al. (2020) highlights that investing in green technologies, like energy management systems and waste treatment, can significantly reduce the tourism sector's carbon footprint. However, in Makassar, there is a notable lack of entrepreneurs who recognise the competitive advantage of such investments. Digital education and promotion are also crucial, as is using digital platforms to inform tourists about the benefits of green tourism.

Partnerships between the government and the private sector are seen as vital for successfully implementing green tourism (Azinuddin et al., 2023a; 2023b). In Makassar, such collaborations can expedite the adoption of green technologies and support the development of sustainable tourism programmes, including those that prioritise environmental conservation and local culture.

Communities in Makassar can actively contribute by expanding educational programmes and campaigns focused on environmental conservation. Collaborations with schools and local organisations will help disseminate information and inspire community-level action. Finally, financial support is essential. Tambovceva et al. (2020) emphasise the importance of financial and logistical backing in promoting green tourism. In Makassar, such support could come from government grants, private investments, or international partnerships, enabling tourism industry players to implement sustainable solutions without the burden of high initial costs.

CONCLUSION

Implementing green tourism in Indonesian cities such as Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar face significant challenges from various stakeholders. In Bandung, the key issues are a lack of public awareness, high investment costs, and limited budget and coordination. Jakarta struggles with non-comprehensive policies, resistance to green business practices, and inadequate public education. In Makassar, challenges include low awareness among the public and businesses, budget constraints, and a lack of government incentives. Despite these challenges, several opportunities can support the successful implementation of green tourism. These include enhancing cooperation between the public and private sectors, implementing regular monitoring and evaluation, providing incentives, and fostering collaboration between businesses and communities. The government can improve waste treatment facilities, promote environmentally friendly transportation, and develop green open spaces. Businesses can adopt green technologies and engage in public-private partnerships, while local communities can contribute by increasing education and awareness about green tourism. To address these challenges and capitalise on the opportunities, it is crucial to focus on improving coordination, collaboration, and partnerships among stakeholders. Additionally, increasing public awareness and education about green tourism, providing financial support and incentives for entrepreneurs, and developing environmentally friendly infrastructure will be essential for advancing green tourism in these cities.

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