

Socialization of Tokka Nature Tourism MSMEs in Maros Regency

Petrus^{1*}, Nurmillah², Arga³, Muh. Darwis Nur Tinri³, Suwardi⁵

¹²Universitas Indonesia Timur, Makassar, Indonesia

³⁴Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia, Makassar, Indonesia

⁵Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

pettramana@gmail.com, nurmillahilyas@yahoo.com, arga.arga.mpd@gmail.com,
mdarwisnurtinri@gmail.com, suwardi6603@unm.ac.id

*Corresponding Author: pettramana@gmail.com

Received: 25-11-2025; Revised: 28-12-2025; Accepted: 30-01-2026

Abstrak

Pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran dan kapasitas pelaku UMKM dalam mengembangkan sektor wisata alam Tokka di Kabupaten Maros, Sulawesi Selatan. Wisata alam Tokka memiliki potensi besar sebagai destinasi ekowisata dengan keindahan alam karst yang khas, gua-gua alam, dan keanekaragaman hayati yang tinggi. Namun, potensi tersebut belum dimanfaatkan secara optimal oleh masyarakat lokal, khususnya pelaku UMKM yang bergerak di sektor pariwisata. Metode yang digunakan dalam pengabdian ini adalah pendekatan partisipatif melalui sosialisasi, pelatihan, dan pendampingan kepada pelaku UMKM lokal. Kegiatan dilaksanakan dengan melibatkan Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Maros, komunitas wisata lokal, serta akademisi dari Universitas Islam Makassar. Hasil pengabdian menunjukkan bahwa setelah mengikuti program sosialisasi, para pelaku UMKM memiliki pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang pentingnya promosi wisata berbasis digital, pengemasan produk lokal, dan pelayanan yang ramah lingkungan. Selain itu, kegiatan ini juga mendorong kolaborasi antar pelaku UMKM untuk menciptakan paket wisata terintegrasi yang menggabungkan kuliner, kerajinan tangan, dan jasa pemandu wisata lokal. Program ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kunjungan wisatawan, membuka lapangan kerja baru, serta meningkatkan kesejahteraan ekonomi masyarakat sekitar kawasan wisata Tokka.

Kata Kunci: UMKM; Wisata Alam Tokka; Ekowisata; Pengembangan Pariwisata; Ekonomi Kreatif.

Abstract

This community service aims to increase awareness and capacity of MSME actors in developing the Tokka natural tourism sector in Maros Regency, South Sulawesi. Tokka natural tourism has great potential as an ecotourism destination with distinctive karst

natural beauty, natural caves, and high biodiversity. However, this potential has not been optimally utilized by local communities, especially MSME actors engaged in the tourism sector. The method used in this service is a participatory approach through socialization, training, and mentoring to local MSME actors. The activity was carried out involving the Maros Regency Tourism Office, local tourism communities, and academics from the Islamic University of Makassar. The results of the service show that after participating in the socialization program, MSME actors have a better understanding of the importance of digital-based tourism promotion, local product packaging, and environmentally friendly services. In addition, this activity also encourages collaboration among MSME actors to create integrated tourism packages that combine culinary, handicrafts, and local tour guide services. This program is expected to increase tourist visits, create new jobs, and improve the economic welfare of communities around the Tokka tourism area.

Keywords: MSMEs; Tokka Natural Tourism; Ecotourism; Tourism Development; Creative Economy.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has extraordinary natural resources and great potential to be developed as a tourist destination (Petrus, Darwis Nur Tinri, et al., 2025). One of the areas that has promising natural tourism potential is Maros Regency, South Sulawesi. The Tokka area in Maros Regency is known for its spectacular karst landscapes, beautiful natural caves, and high biodiversity (South Sulawesi Tourism Office, 2023). This natural beauty is the main attraction for domestic and foreign tourists who are looking for nature-based tourism experiences and adventures.

The tourism sector is one of the important economic drivers in Indonesia. According to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2024), the tourism sector's contribution to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will reach 4.8% in 2023, with growth potential continuing to increase in line with economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. The development of natural tourism such as the Tokka area not only provides economic benefits, but also encourages environmental preservation and empowerment of local communities (Hasibuan et al., 2023; Hatta, 2018; Razak et al., 2022; Sujai, 2016).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in the tourism ecosystem. MSMEs in the tourism sector include various fields such as the provision of accommodation, local culinary, handicrafts, transportation services, and tour guides. According to Wibowo & Amir (2022), MSMEs contribute up to 60% to people's income in tourist areas and are the backbone of the local economy. However, many MSME actors in natural tourism areas such as Tokka still face various obstacles, including a lack of knowledge about digital marketing, unprofessional financial management, and lack of access to information and technology (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2023).

Based on the results of initial observations made by the service team from the Islamic University of Makassar in August 2025, it was found that MSME actors around the Tokka area have not been optimal in utilizing the existing tourism potential. The majority of business actors still rely on word-of-mouth promotion and have not taken advantage of social media or digital platforms to expand market reach. In addition, local products such as

handicrafts and typical culinary have not been attractively packaged, making them less competitive in the market.

Seeing these conditions, real efforts are needed to increase the capacity and competitiveness of MSME actors in the Tokka tourist area. The socialization program designed in community service activities aims to provide education and assistance to MSME actors so that they are able to better utilize economic opportunities from the tourism sector. This activity is also in line with the vision of the local government of Maros Regency which wants to make Tokka one of the leading tourism icons in South Sulawesi (Bappeda Maros Regency, 2024).

This service aims to describe the process of implementing the Tokka nature tourism MSME socialization program, identify changes that occur after the program is implemented, and provide recommendations for the sustainability of the program in the future. It is hoped that through this activity, MSME actors in the Tokka area can be more empowered, independent, and contribute positively to the development of sustainable tourism in Maros Regency.

The novelty of this program lies in its integrative approach that combines three interventions at once—digital literacy, eco-friendly product packaging, and the formation of collaborative tour packages—in one structured mentoring cycle that lasts for three months. Unlike previous tourism MSME empowerment programs that generally only focused on one aspect, such as digital training only (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2023) or product packaging only (Rahmawati & Saputra, 2023), this program designs interventions holistically by involving three elements of the triple helix simultaneously, namely academics, local governments, and local MSME communities. In addition, the unique context of the Tokka karst area that has not been widely researched in the community service literature makes this article one of the initial references for the development of MSMEs in geology-based ecotourism destinations in South Sulawesi.

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

This community service activity uses a participatory approach with a descriptive qualitative method. A participatory approach is chosen so that the community, especially MSME actors, can be actively involved in every stage of activities, starting from planning, implementation, to evaluation (Tinri et al., 2024). The descriptive qualitative method is used to describe in depth the initial condition of MSME actors, the process of socialization activities, and the impact produced after the program is implemented.

Location and Time of Implementation

The service activity was carried out in the Tokka natural tourism area, Maros Regency, South Sulawesi. The selection of this location is based on the great potential of natural tourism but has not been optimally managed by the local community. The activity lasted for three months, from September to November 2025, involving 45 MSME actors engaged in culinary, handicrafts, homestays, and tour guide services.

Subject of Activity

The subjects in this activity are MSME actors in the Tokka tourist area consisting of various educational backgrounds and business experiences. The majority of participants

were housewives and local youth who owned small businesses but were not well managed. In addition to MSME actors, this activity also involves the Maros Regency Tourism Office, community leaders, and the local tourism community as collaboration partners.

Stages of Implementation of Activities

The implementation of this service activity is carried out through four main stages, namely:

1. Preparation Stage and Need Identification

At this stage, the service team conducts an initial survey to identify the condition of local MSMEs, existing tourism potential, and problems faced by business actors. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with MSME actors, field observations, and discussions with local governments. The identification results show that the main needs of MSME actors are digital marketing training, product packaging, and simple financial management.

2. Socialization and Education Stage

Socialization activities were carried out in the form of seminars and workshops attended by all participants. The material presented included the importance of community-based tourism development, digital marketing strategies using social media such as Instagram and Facebook, local product packaging techniques to make it more attractive, and the basics of business financial management. The speakers came from academics from the Islamic University of Makassar, successful MSME practitioners, and representatives of the Maros Regency Tourism Office.



Figure 1. Education Resource Persons About Tokka Nature Tourism

3. Training and Mentoring Stage

After socialization, practical training was carried out involving participants directly. The training includes creating engaging social media content, product photography with simple lighting using smartphones, and product packaging practices using eco-friendly materials. The service team also provides continuous assistance through field visits and

consultations via WhatsApp groups to ensure that the knowledge gained can be applied properly by MSME actors.



Figure 2. Participants of Tokka Nature Tourism Socialization

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Stage

In the final stage, the service team conducts monitoring and evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the program. Evaluation was carried out through post-program interviews, observation of changes in business behavior, and analysis of an increase in the number of visitors or product sales. The collected data is then analyzed descriptively to illustrate the impact of the program on the capacity of MSME actors.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection instruments used include: (1) a semi-structured interview guideline consisting of 18 open-ended questions covering the dimensions of digital marketing knowledge, product packaging practices, business income, and perception of the program; (2) a structured observation sheet containing 12 indicators of business behavior observed before and after the intervention, such as the presence of active social media accounts, the visual quality of the product, and the diversity of sales channels; and (3) documentation record sheets used to record visual evidence of changes. This instrument was developed by a service team based on a literature review and has gone through content validation by two experts in the field of MSME empowerment and tourism. Data is collected through three main methods, namely:

1. Direct observation: Observation of MSME activities before and after the program is implemented, including how to promote, package products, and interaction with tourists.
2. In-depth interviews: Structured interviews with MSME actors to explore their experiences, challenges, and changes felt after participating in the program.
3. Visual documentation: Photos and videos of activities as evidence of program implementation and for further analysis purposes.

Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by sorting out information that is relevant to the purpose of service. The presentation of data is arranged in the form of a descriptive narrative supported by interview excerpts and visual documentation. Conclusions were drawn based on patterns that emerged from field data and were associated with the theory of community empowerment and MSME development.

More operationally, the data reduction process is carried out through: (1) transcription of all interview recordings, (2) thematic coding of each segment of the transcript according to the set category (digital marketing, packaging, collaboration, and revenue), and (3) sorting the most representative quotes per category. The data presentation was then carried out by compiling a comparison matrix of conditions before and after the intervention based on the indicators of the observation sheet visualized in the comparison table. Source triangulation was done by comparing interview data, observation notes, and visual documentation to ensure the consistency of findings. Conclusions were drawn using inductive thematic analysis referring to the guidance of Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2020).

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Results of Implementation of Activities

The socialization of MSMEs in Tokka nature tourism lasted for three months with the active participation of 45 local MSME actors. This program involves various activities ranging from seminars, workshops, practical training, to field assistance. The results achieved from this activity can be described as follows:

Increased Understanding of Digital Marketing

Before participating in the program, the majority of MSME actors (82%) had never used social media to promote their products or services. They only rely on word-of-mouth promotions or waiting for tourists to come spontaneously. After participating in digital marketing training, as many as 78% of participants began to actively create Instagram and Facebook accounts for their businesses. They also started posting product photos, pricing information, and customer testimonials on a regular basis. One of the participants, Mrs. Sitti Aminah (38 years old), the owner of a bamboo handicraft business, stated:

"Previously I didn't know how to sell on social media. Now I can post photos of my own crafts and some order from outside the area. Alhamdulillah, the turnover has increased."

Improved Product Packaging Quality

One of the main focuses of this program is to improve the quality of packaging of local products to make them more attractive and have a higher selling value. Previously, products such as pastries, cassava chips, and handicrafts were only packaged in plain plastic without attractive labels or designs. Through eco-friendly packaging training, participants are taught to use materials such as kraft paper, recycled cardboard boxes, and sticker labels with simple yet informative designs. As a result, the products of the participating MSMEs look more professional and attract the attention of tourists. This increase is in line with the findings of Rahmawati & Saputra (2023) who stated that good packaging can increase consumer purchasing power by up to 40%.

Collaboration Between MSME Actors

One of the unexpected but very positive results of this program is the formation of collaboration between MSME actors. During the activity, participants began to share information, ideas, and even work together in providing integrated tour packages. For example, homestay owners work with local food vendors and tour guides to offer a package that includes meals and tours around the Tokka area. This collaboration reflects the spirit of the community-based economy, which is very important in the development of sustainable tourism (Sunaryo, 2023).

Increasing Tourist Visits and MSME Income

Based on data collected one month after the program ended, there was an increase in tourist visits to the Tokka area by 25% compared to the previous month. This is inseparable from active promotion carried out by MSME actors through social media. In addition, the average income of participating MSMEs increased by 30-40%. This increase means a lot to local communities who still largely depend on the low-income agricultural sector.

Table 1. Comparison of MSME Performance Indicators Before and After the Socialization Program

Indicator	Before the Program	After the Program
Use of social media for business promotion	18% Participants	78% Participants
Average monthly income of MSMEs	Rp 1.200.000-1.800.000	Rp 1.600.000-2.500.000 (+30-40%)
Number of tourist visits per month	±320 Visitors	±400 Visitors (+25%)
Participants have professional product packaging	12% Participants	71% Participants
Engage in collaborative tour packages	0% Participants	53% Participants

Discussion

The Role of MSMEs in Community-Based Tourism Development

MSMEs have a strategic role in tourism development, especially in the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) model. This model emphasizes the active involvement of local communities in the management and utilization of tourism resources so that economic benefits can be felt directly by the community (Sunaryo, 2023). In the context of Tokka natural tourism, MSME actors not only play a role as providers of goods and services, but also as guardians of the preservation of the environment and local culture. This is in line with the principle of ecotourism that prioritizes ecological, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability (Wearing & Neil, 2020).

The Importance of Digital Literacy for MSMEs in the Modern Era

Digital transformation has changed the way consumers seek information and make transactions. Research by Hidayat & Nugroho (2023) shows that 87% of millennial travelers search for information on tourist destinations through social media before deciding to visit. Therefore, the ability of MSME actors to take advantage of digital platforms is very important. This socialization program has succeeded in increasing the digital literacy of MSME actors so that they can compete in an increasingly competitive market. However, digital literacy alone is not enough without being balanced with good product quality and service (Wibowo & Amir, 2022).

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in Tourism Development

The success of this program is inseparable from the solid collaboration between academics, local governments, and local communities. This kind of collaboration is referred to as the triple helix model in the development of the creative economy (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). The Maros Regency Tourism Office provides policy support and promotion, academics from the Islamic University of Makassar provide expertise and assistance, while the local community is the main actor who runs the business. This synergy creates an ecosystem that is conducive to the development of sustainable tourism in the Tokka area.

Challenges and Obstacles Faced

Although the program has shown positive results, there are still some challenges that need to be overcome. First, internet access in several areas of the Tokka area is still limited, which hinders MSME actors from conducting online promotions optimally. Second, some MSME actors still have a traditional mindset and are reluctant to change. Third, limited business capital is an obstacle in developing production scale. Therefore, a more comprehensive follow-up program is needed, including digital infrastructure improvements, intensive mentoring, and easier access to capital (Rahmawati & Saputra, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the implementation of the Tokka natural tourism MSME socialization program in Maros Regency, it can be concluded that several important things are as follows:

1. The socialization program has succeeded in improving the understanding and skills of MSME actors in digital marketing, product packaging, and simple business management.
2. There has been a significant increase in the use of social media as a promotional tool by MSME actors, which has an impact on increasing tourist visits and business income.
3. Collaboration between MSME actors is getting stronger, which encourages the creation of integrated tour packages and increases the competitiveness of the Tokka tourist area.
4. There are still several obstacles such as limited internet access, traditional mindsets, and business capital that need to be considered in advanced programs.
5. The sustainability of the program is needed through intensive assistance, digital infrastructure improvements, and support for access to capital from the government and financial institutions.

REFERENCE

- Bappeda Kabupaten Maros. (2024). Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah (RPJMD) Kabupaten Maros 2024-2029. Maros: Bappeda Kabupaten Maros.
- Chambers, R. (2020). Participatory Rural Appraisal: Challenges, Potentials and Paradigm. *World Development*, 42(10), 1437-1454.
- Dinas Pariwisata Sulawesi Selatan. (2023). Profil Destinasi Wisata Unggulan Sulawesi Selatan. Makassar: Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan.
- Etzkowitz, H., & Leydesdorff, L. (2000). The Dynamics of Innovation: From National Systems and 'Mode 2' to a Triple Helix of University-Industry-Government Relations. *Research Policy*, 29(2), 109-123.
- Hidayat, R., & Nugroho, A. (2023). Transformasi Digital UMKM Pariwisata di Era Post-Pandemic. *Jurnal Ekonomi Kreatif*, 15(3), 245-260.
- Hasibuan, I. M., Mutthaqin, S., Erianto, R., & Harahap, I. (2023). Kontribusi Sektor Pariwisata terhadap Perekonomian Nasional. *Jurnal Masharif Al-Syariah: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Perbankan Syariah*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.30651/jms.v8i2.19280>
- Hatta, D. (2018). Valuasi Ekonomi Nilai Guna Langsung Kawasan Wisata Alam Bantimurung-Bulusaraung Di Kawasan Karst Maros Pangkep (KKMP). *Jurnal Ekonomika*, IX(2), 1-12.
- Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif. (2024). Statistik Pariwisata Indonesia 2023. Jakarta: Kemenparekraf RI.
- Petrus, Darwis Nur Tinri, M., & Tahir, M. G. (2025). Administrative Management Training for Lembang Sarambu North Toraja Village Apparatus. 1(3), 38-48.
- Rahmawati, D., & Saputra, E. (2023). Pengemasan Produk Lokal sebagai Strategi Peningkatan Daya Saing UMKM. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 18(2), 112-128.
- Razak, I., Bazergan, A., Ulfiah, F., Utami, A. D., Kirana, N., & Irgi, M. (2022). PKM E-Tourism Desa Wisata Ekologi Organik Di Desa Bontomarannu, Kabupaten Maros. Seminar Nasional Penelitian & Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat 2022, 596-600. <http://bontomarannu.my.id/index.html>.
- Sujai, M. (2016). Strategi Pemerintah Indonesia Dalam Menarik Kunjungan Turis Mancanegara Government Strategy to Attract International Tourist. In *Kajian Ekonomi Keuangan* (Vol. 20, Number 1). <http://fiskal.depkeu.go.id/ejournal>
- Sunaryo, B. (2023). *Pengelolaan Pariwisata Berkelanjutan: Teori dan Praktik*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi
- Tinri, M. D. N., Anas, F., Arga, A., Rahmatullah, W., & Aulria, S. N. M. (2024). Penyuluhan Pengelolaan Konflik Sosial Masyarakat Rentan: Membangun Keluarga yang Sehat dan Produktif di Kecamatan Tallo Kota Makassar. *Bima Abdi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 4(4), 291-298.
- Tim Pengabdian Universitas Islam Makassar. (2025). Laporan Observasi Lapangan Kawasan Wisata Tokka. Makassar: UIM (Unpublished).
- Wearing, S., & Neil, J. (2020). *Ecotourism: Impacts, Potentials and Possibilities* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Wibowo, A., & Amir, S. (2022). Peran UMKM dalam Pengembangan Ekonomi Lokal di Kawasan Wisata. *Jurnal Pembangunan Daerah*, 12(4), 301-318.