LG and LGA's Collaboration in SDGs Implementation of the Geopark of Sawahlunto City, Indonesia

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Abstract

This article elucidates the significance of collaboration between the Local Government (LG) and the Local Government Association (LGA) in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation within Sawahlunto City Geopark, Indonesia that aims to explore the role of diverse stakeholders in shaping policy implementation in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Geopark tourism in Sawahlunto. The central issue at hand concerns how LGA can assist in surmounting challenges and bolstering Sawahlunto City's aspiration to elevate its status from a National Geopark to a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG). This research employs theoretical frameworks and adopts a qualitative approach using the quadruple helix investigator model. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and the acquisition of information from primary and secondary sources, including Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), Geopark documentation, Project Documents, and more. The research findings underscore the pivotal role played by UCLG ASPAC, as an LGA, in collaborating with LG to optimize the involvement of other stakeholders in advancing RPJMD, particularly in the realm of tourism aligned with SDG 11.4. Furthermore, this collaboration is crucial for aiding LG in realizing its aspiration to attain UGG status. Additionally, it emphasizes the imperative for regional governments with geopark potential to develop their regional assets.

Keywords: Localizing SDGs; Local Government Associations; Local Governments; Collaboration; Geopark.


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INTRODUCTION

Local governments are formed as third-level institutions responsible for managing small areas and municipalities in a region. Such small areas can be classified as villages, small towns, or large cities (Thapa, 2020). This process of transferring legislative power and policy from the central and state governments to local government authorities is considered decentralization. Local governments are indispensable partners; their full and active involvement is needed to maximize decentralization with minimum overlapping policies between local, regional, and national governments. When sectoral policy integration cannot be realized in most of the SDG’s targets, space for Local Government Associations (LGAs) to be involved emerges (Romeo, 2010), such as UCLG ASPAC, which supports Sawahlunto City with its geopark geotourism. One of the potentials of Sawahlunto tourism is its geological diversity, which should be a geological heritage and protected from generation to generation, also used sustainably. Geoparks were initially defined as territories with clear boundaries, sufficient surface area for natural territorial economic development, and a certain number of geosites of particular importance regarding their scientific quality, rarity, aesthetic appeal, and educational value. A geopark could also include sites with archaeological, ecological, historical, or cultural interests (McKeever & Zouros, 2005).

Seeing the tourism potential that can be developed, the Sawahlunto City Government began to revitalize the Sawahlunto area by referring to the Vision and Mission Regional Regulation (Perda) number 2 of 2001, which seeks to "Realize Sawahlunto in 2020 into a Cultured Mining Tourism City". Sawahlunto became one of three areas in West Sumatra that received the national geopark title in 2018 as an effort to develop the potential of the Sawahlunto Geopark; this geopark has been proposed to be a candidate for the UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG). As a UGG candidate, the geopark must meet various assessment criteria. One assessment criterion is sustainable development, referred to Indonesian Law No. 32/2009 on environmental protection and management.

Actors in the policy implementation stage can be from the government, private sector, or the community and are identified from the bureaucracy, legislature, judiciary, pressure groups, and community organizations (Lester & Stewart, 2000). The implementation function is to form an effort that allows the goals or objectives of public policy to be realized as outcomes. Therefore, implementation involves creating policy implementers to design and find tools specifically designed and sought in the desire to achieve these goals, which are translated into action programs that can achieve goals.

Having learned from the difficulties experienced by countries to achieve MDGs, it realized the importance of considering local government roles from the initial step. SDGs should be based on local government action and generate participation from all societal actors. There are three primary roles of non-state actors to assist local governments in achieving SDGs: advocacy, providing services, and facilitating through programs or projects.

The operation of the SDGs at the regional and sub-regional levels is considered necessary because they have a framework that can effectively push sustainable development policies into concrete actions at the national level. However, implementing the SDGs is a complex endeavor at the national and regional levels, often encountering coherence problems between the seventeen goals and existing plans, strategies, and goals. All SDGs have targets directly or indirectly related to the local governments and stakeholders’ daily work. While the SDGs are global in ambition, their achievement will depend more on local action and leadership. The process of adaptation, implementation, and monitoring of SDGs at the local level is called localizing the SDGs. The process of making SDGs a reality at the local level, in line with the national framework and with community priorities. To be successful, localization must be based on the principles of inclusion, partnership, and multilevel governance and built on adequate data and availability of financing at the local level.

West Sumatra Province already has three geopark areas with national geopark status among nine other national geoparks. One of these geoparks is the Sawahlunto National Geopark, where the Underground Mining Training Center (BDTBT) is located. Twenty-nine tourist objects are directly and indirectly related to the mining heritage in Sawahlunto. Tourism objects can be classified based on the ABC or Abiotic, Biotic, and Cultural concepts. Four of twenty-nine are mining-based tourism in Sawahlunto national geopark: Balai Diklat Tambang Bawah Tanah, Mbah Suro tunnel, Kandi animal park, and the forest area. In 1858, coal was found in the Ombilin Valley by Ir. De
After receiving the title of National Geopark, Sawahlunto was proposed to become a UGG candidate. The idea of combining mining and tourism was followed by the issuance of the Sawahlunto City Regional Regulation No.1/2019 concerning the Sawahlunto City Tourism Development Master Plan for 2019-2033, especially in article 7 point c, it is explained that one of the missions of the Sawahlunto City Government based on the Sawahlunto City Tourism Development Vision (article 6) is to increase the potential of the geopark, natural tourism, artificial tourism, religion, culture and history (heritage) holistically and sustainably by involving the active role of the community. To achieve this goal, the local government has four agendas, including institutional capacity, inter-regional cooperation, improving the quality of cities, and developing tourist areas.

Sawahlunto obtained status as a National Geopark in 2018. Naturally, the local government wants to upgrade its current status to become UGG. Unfortunately, this desire has not been realized because the journey has not gone smoothly. The efforts made have not been maximized. There are several limitations from human and non-human resources, such as financial resources management systems, not to mention the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last three years. In this stage, advocacy is needed to provide the understanding and promote UGG so that all parties can synergize in making Sawahlunto become UGG. A third party or actor other than the local government is needed to help carry out impactful advocacy. The findings in this study can be a recommendation for other LGs to explore the collaboration ways or activities between LGs and LGAs, specifically for any LGs interested in becoming UGG. Other LGs can use key takeaways as inputs to develop their policy agenda (RPJMD) aligned with SDG 11.4 and to advocate for their leaders.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a deductive thinking approach known as deductive reasoning or deductive logic. It started with theory, hypothesis, choosing the case, and then formulating data collection tools and continued with data analysis. To obtain the data in this research, the writer uses qualitative methods such as interviews (semi-structured interviews) and obtain data from primary and secondary sources (e.g., KLHS, RPJMD, Geopark...
The purpose of data analysis is to simplify the data interpretation by using descriptive qualitative methods. Commonly, for data validation, the analysis uses triangulation to guarantee credibility. Some variables operationalization based on the LGA concept was obtained from this research, shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing</td>
<td>1. Explaining laws and decree</td>
<td>The improvement of knowledge exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Offering a platform for exchange, learning, and networking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Delivery</td>
<td>1. Capacity building</td>
<td>The qualities of services to citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Access to funds through donor-funded projects</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Providing qualified personnel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Providing manuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobby and Advocacy</td>
<td>1. Mediating conflict</td>
<td>The strength of municipalities’ position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Lobbying for decentralization reality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Representing local government at the central government and international level</td>
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The author uses method triangulation through a quadruple relationship model and narrative analysis for this research. The importance of NGOs was then manifested into a new model called “Quadruple-Helix,” representing the civil society or civil sector as one participatory domain in SDGs (Maldonado, 2010). This model can help understand the role of each stakeholder engaged in the technical assistance tourism recovery of Sawahlunto Geopark Website Development. Stakeholders are UCLG ASPAC (community/society), Sawahlunto City (Government), SDGs Center (university/academic), and the web developer (business).

In between data source triangulation measures based on a literature study and interviewing with selected parties from the Local Government Association (UCLG ASPAC, particularly the person in charge of the project, Head and personnel of Sawahlunto Tourism, Youth & Sports Department), UNESCO representative, and web developer. The interviewee and the list of questions can be seen in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCLG ASPAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sawahlunto Tourism, Youth &amp; Sports Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO representative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Web developer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Officer of LOCALISE SDGs project, LG</td>
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</table>

![Quadruple Helix](image)

Figure 2. Quadruple Helix shows the linkage of stakeholders in the Sawahlunto Geopark Source: Author’s Research (2023)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>List of questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Head of Sawahlunto City Tourism, Youth & Sports Department (Mr. Nova Erizon, ST, MT)** | What do you know about UCLG ASPAC?  
Is Sawahlunto a member of UCLG ASPAC?  
What do you know about the LOCALISE SDGs project?  
What has made Sawahlunto interested in project activities: technical assistance on tourism recovery? Please elaborate.  
Are the project activities aligned with the vision, mission, and priorities (RPJMD/RKA) of Sawahlunto? Please explain further.  
What policies have been made to support Sawahlunto’s role as a geopark? Is there any budget allocated?  
Is tourism one of the SDG’s priority targets for the Sawahlunto municipal government? Where is it written, or can it be found? In RAD or RPJMD?  
How do you see the role of UCLG ASPAC so far toward the City Government of Sawahlunto? Both in general and in particular?  
Related to Sawahlunto’s desire to become UNESCO Global Geopark, is there any budget allocated? Does UCLG ASPAC’s role have any influence? If yes, please explain further.  
In your opinion, what are the challenges in the project implementation? What are your future expectations of this technical assistance? Do any further actions need to be taken? e.g., related to sustainability. |
| **Field Officer of UCLG ASPAC, PIC of the Project (Ms. Vidya)** | How long have you worked at UCLG ASPAC? In which section or project?  
How familiar are you with the LOCALISE SDGs project? Is there a particular project that you handle?  
Regarding technical assistance in the field of tourism recovery carried out under the LOCALISE SDGs project, what is your role?  
What do you think about the project activities? Does it have any impact on the beneficiaries?  
Do you think the project activities align with the policy priorities of the city of Sawahlunto?  
In your opinion, how significant is the role of UCLG ASPAC for the cities that receive technical assistance? And in what way?  
Related to Sawahlunto’s desire to become UNESCO Global Geopark, does UCLG ASPAC’s role have any influence? If yes, please explain further.  
To your knowledge, will there be a future monitoring and evaluation program for this project? |
| **BP GN Sawahlunto (Mr. Rachmad Zoraldi)** | Please introduce yourself and your National Management Agency Geopark (BP GN) Sawahlunto role!  
Where did the initiative to have Geopark come from?  
How is the involvement of the local community?  
Does the BP GN have a work plan?  
How is the local government involved in managing this geopark? Are they supportive?  
What is Pokdarwis?  
How far has Sawahlunto progressed toward UGG?  
How is the current financing of geopark management in Sawahlunto?  
It needs to be elaborated more. Who has the link to KNGI?  
If the two National Geoparks are merged, is there one management body to manage them or what? |
| **UNESCO Representative (Ms. Ozlem Adiyaman Lopes - the UNESCO Earth Science** | What is your position in UNESCO?  
Are you involved in the UNESCO Global Geopark?  
Can you tell us more about UGG? What are the benefits for cities that get the UGG predicate? |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>and Geo-Hazards Risk Reduction Section</th>
<th>What are the criteria for assessing the feasibility of a geopark attraction to become a UGG?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Is there a registration or other fee for selecting tourist objects to become UGG?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Based on your experience or observations, what challenges are faced regarding the nomination process of tourist objects to become UGG?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In your opinion, do you think there is a link between UGG and SDGs? Do you see any connection with SDG 11.4?</td>
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<td>Do you think there is a role for non-state actors or local government associations in encouraging or assisting local governments in realizing their desire to become UGG? Are there any examples you know?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do you know about the tourism recovery technical assistance project undertaken by UCLG ASPAC?</td>
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<td>What are your roles or responsibilities in these activities?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What do you think about coordinating with the City Government of Sawahlunto so far? With what department? Do you usually coordinate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>PT. ATN (Reza Permadi)</td>
<td>Can it be known on average one day, one week, and one month the number of visitors who access the Sawahlunto Geopark website?</td>
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<td>Are there any significant challenges so far? If so, can you please explain?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do you have any input for future improvements? Both in technical and non-technical terms.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have you ever received requests for similar services from other places? How did it go?</td>
</tr>
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| Source: Author Analysis (2023) |

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Result of Interview

From five interviewees, the author catches some information about the role of each interviewee and the role of other stakeholders, especially the role and position of UCLG ASPAC as LGA in the Sawahlunto project. The table summary of the information is below. The interviewee mentioned some actors who also had an essential role, like APEKSI as the community/society sector, similar to UCLG ASPAC but with local coverage (across Indonesia only) and co-organized activity in the Sawahlunto project. Some statements mention promising future actors such as local academies for making master plans, CSR for funding outside APBN, local society for maintaining and sustaining the project, and local region networks for knowledge exchange and advocacies.

Here is a summary of the interviewee's information:

1. Information from UNESCO’s Representative as the Academic/Scientist/Education informs that UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic protection, education, and sustainable development concept. Cities that wish to be recognized as UGG must fulfill several points determined by the UGG committee. Cities must be prepared administratively and financially. UGG should respond to SDGs – and support all of them. Any projects and cooperation related to SDGs should have objectives that benefit the communities to support such activities. The communities must understand why such activity has been implemented, how it benefits them, and how they can contribute. In addition, cooperation between regions should be promoted and implemented by suitable partners and institutions to achieve the targets and objectives. The role of this project is to deliver capacity-building and communication activities about UNESCO's International Geoscience and Geoparks (IGGP) program. The role of Local Government Associations like UCLG ASPAC is encouraging or assisting local government for geopark as a people organization with a bottom-up approach.

2. PT. ATN as Business/Industry/Entrepreneur informs that PT. UCLG ASPAC appointed ATN as a training provider for project matchmaking under LOCALISE SDGs. The government of Sawahlunto is still not
serious in efforts for the Sawahlunto Geopark to get UGG recognition. Sawahlunto received recognition as a National Geopark site in 2018 and OCMHS in 2019, but until now, it has not received recognition from UNESCO as UGG. There are still several UGG requirements that Sawahlunto has been unable to fulfill. The BP GN Sawahlunto was formed in 2018 almost three years vacuum. In 2021 it was reformed. Apart from that, the main obstacle was that the commitment from the regional head was not strong. This affects the unavailability of the regional budget to finance the operations of the managing agency and supporting activities for the development of the Sawahlunto Geopark area. The role of UCLG ASPAC is limited to matching/match-making cities with training providers through this LOCALISE SDGs project and organizing webinars to share with other cities in terms of geotourism.

3. The head of Sawahlunto City Tourism, Youth & Sports Department Government informs that as a Tourism City recognized as a World Cultural Heritage and National Geopark, Sawahlunto requires a lot of input and brainstorming from various parties. Tourism is a top priority for Sawahlunto. As stated in the Regional Regulation on the Vision and Mission of the City, and has also become the Vision of the Government for the current period (2018-2023). The Sawahlunto City, Tourism, Youth & Sports Department, generally understands UCLG ASPAC and the LOCALISE SDGs project but may not fully comprehend their potential benefits for the city. The obstacle is the lack of human resources to manage the website to sustain the project’s benefits. Regarding Sawahlunto’s desire to become UGG, it is not enough to create a Geopark website. The existence of limited human and financial resources is an obstacle that needs to be found a way out. Sawahlunto’s journey is still quite long. UCLG ASPAC can help Sawahlunto by facilitating Sawahlunto City with other cities that have previously developed geoparks. By networking and collaborating with other cities with experience in developing geoparks, Sawahlunto may be able to access resources, knowledge, and best practices to support their geopark development efforts. Additionally, UCLG ASPAC may also be able to provide technical assistance and support in the development and management of Sawahlunto’s geopark.

4. BP GN Sawahlunto, as Government, informed that the management body, which was just legalized through a mayoral decision letter on 1st of April 2022, has not yet received full support from the main leader appointed, namely the Regional Secretary. In 2018, it received the title of Sawahlunto National Geopark (GNS); in 2019, it was recognized as the Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage (OMCH) by UNESCO. This is a golden opportunity for Sawahlunto to continue their desire to go to UGG, but due to the lack of support from the leadership and unclear funding, this process is still running in place. BP GN Sawahlunto began to intensify collaboration with universities and started thinking about seeking CSR funds. The master plan is being developed as a primary document for applying CSR funds, so there is no need to depend entirely on the APBD. Initially, not many cared about and worked hard to develop the Geopark in Sawahlunto. This was an individual like Reza, an expert and practitioner in the field of Geopark. He advocated for leaders in Sawahlunto so that in 2018, Sawahlunto received recognition as a National Geopark. Reza also introduced Sawahlunto to UCLG ASPAC and saw an opportunity to get assistance in making a Geopark heritage document website, which is one of the conditions for becoming a UGG. Bangda and BP GN Sawahlunto must proactively involve UCLG ASPAC in developing the Sawahlunto Geopark, using the worldwide UCLG ASPAC network to achieve their desire to become UGG. Sawahlunto has joined as a member of UCLG ASPAC and pays an annual fee, so it is only natural that Sawahlunto will benefit from his membership in UCLG ASPAC.

5. UCLG ASPAC (Local Government Association) as Community/Society informs that UCLG ASPAC is a local government association that has a reasonably comprehensive coverage in Asia Pacific and has a role in this project as program initiator and technical assistance through LOCALISE SDGs. There are benefits from virtual tour training for the tour guide, who, before losing their job due to the pandemic, now have a new job-creating virtual tour facilitated by selected vendors such as PT. ATN, and for virtual expo training, they get facilitation from KA Wisata in marketing the promotion of their tourism area so that there
is already sufficient information regarding tourism in the region after the pandemic. Especially for the promotion of Sawahlunto Geopark, the benefit is that the tourism website can be used to make promotion one of the stipulations to improve the Geopark to become UGG. The program implementation was in cooperation between UCLG ASPAC and APEKSI, funded by a grant from the EU. For technical assistance purposes, Sawahlunto is supported by PT. ATN, which previously had a close relationship with Sawahlunto, understands the needs better. UCLG ASPAC supports Sawahlunto’s efforts to get the UGG status/acknowledgment through involvement in international conferences and networks, submitting endorsement letters, and linking local websites to their network website so that it could disseminate the news to Asia Pacific (not only in Indonesia).

Discussion

The relationship of all stakeholders in the Sawahlunto project is a dynamic relationship with direct and indirect coordination. The business party indirectly coordinates with academics and the government through their role as funding channel/broker and technical assistance. They directly coordinate with the community or society and have an important role in technical issues. The government has a role not only as a policy maker but also as a facilitator, promotion, and advocacy with direct coordination with community/society and academics. This model will make people’s organizations grow and sustain with a bottom-up approach, like some interviewees mentioned above. This dynamic relationship can be seen in the quadruple helix below.

It is evident that through the technical assistance provided to Sawahlunto Geopark through the LOCALISE SDGs project, UCLG ASPAC requires another party to perform the technical role, namely PT. ATN. This aligns with the relationship between stakeholders in the Sawahlunto project, where business parties indirectly coordinate with academics and government through their role as funding channel/broker and technical assistance. They directly coordinate with the community or society and have an important role in technical issues. Other actors who can also play a role are APEKSI as a community/society sector similar to UCLG ASPAC but with local coverage (across Indonesia only) and co-organized activity in the Sawahlunto project.

Regarding funding, there are other solutions to get funding outside the APBN, which seeks CSR funds from companies. However, a comprehensive master plan required for each existing site must be attached to the proposal submitted. Making a master plan has become another challenge, so the BP GN needs to collaborate with academics (universities and experts). This master plan should outline strategies for conservation, sustainable tourism, community engagement, infrastructure development, and other relevant aspects. It should also include financial projections and a clear roadmap for implementation. Collaborating with reputable universities and experts can enhance the credibility and reputation of the geopark management agency. This can strengthen relationships with potential funding partners, including companies for CSR funds. Also, universities and experts may have existing networks and connections that can be leveraged to establish partnerships and attract funding.

CONCLUSION

Local governments that have geopark potential should be able to develop their regional potential. LGA, like UCLG ASPAC, was a strong collaborator for local government to support and develop their planning. The ten recommendations for local governments to collaborate with LGA from this study are as follow: 1) foster strong partnerships between LG and LGAs, 2) the LG and LGA should work together to develop a joint action plan, 3) LGs and LGAs must actively engage local communities, indigenous groups, and cultural heritage experts in planning, implementing and evaluating heritage protection initiatives, 4) LGs and LGAs must actively engage local communities, indigenous groups, and cultural heritage experts in planning, implementing and evaluating heritage protection initiatives, 5)
LGs and LGAs should establish strong monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track progress towards SDG target 11.4; 6) LGs and LGAs should advocate for policy support at higher levels of government and support the implementation of SDG 11.4 at the local level; 7) LGs and LGAs should actively share best practices, lessons learned, and success stories with each other and the wider international community; 8) LGs and LGAs should mobilize resources for heritage protection initiatives; 9) LGs and LGAs should jointly engage in public awareness campaigns to promote the value of cultural and natural heritage and the importance of its protection; 10) LGs must boost international cooperation through international networks, partnerships and platforms that promote cooperation in heritage protection and sustainable development where LGAs can fully support.

The researcher realizes that there are still many things that can be studied further from this case study which may later be carried out by other researchers. Some of the things that can be studied or further analyzed include:

1. The evaluation of the effectiveness of policy frameworks in promoting sustainable development within the geopark context.

2. The stakeholder analysis to identify and understand the perspectives, roles, and interests of various stakeholders involved in SDG implementation within the geopark. This analysis should include local government officials, LGAs (e.g. UCLG Asia Pacific, APEKSI representatives), community members, civil society organizations, and other relevant actors. Assess their collaboration, communication, and coordination mechanisms.

REFERENCES


Local Governments Medium-term Development Plans (RPJMD) 2018-2023 of Sawahlunto City.


Maldonado. (2010). Book or article title. The importance of NGOs was then manifested into a new model called “Quadruple-Helix” representing the civil society or civil sector as one participatory domain in SDGs.


