Branding Wasuemba Village Tourism Potential through a Website-Based BUMDes Information System

Mahyudin[1*], Muhammad Rizal Ardiansah Putra[1], Wa Nur Fida[1]

[1]Universitas Muhammadiyah Buton, Baubau, Indonesia

*Correspondence: mahyuddinfaith2018@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to enhance the competitiveness of tourism potential and local products in Wasuemba Village through an integrated digital branding strategy supported by a website-based Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) information system. The partner, BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru, faced limitations in product branding and the effective use of information technology for promotion. The program employed a participatory approach consisting of socialization, mentoring and digital marketing training, development and implementation of an official BUMDes website, and the installation of Starlink-based internet connectivity to support digital access. The results show improved capacity of BUMDes administrators in managing digital platforms and content, as well as increased readiness to utilize the website as a central information and promotion hub. The website strengthens the village's digital identity, supports sustainable tourism promotion, improves transparency, and expands market reach. Overall, this program demonstrates that the integration of digital infrastructure and capacity building can accelerate digital transformation and support local economic development in rural and coastal communities.

Keywords: BUMDes; Digital Branding; Digital Transformation; Starlink; Tourism Promotion.

1. Introduction

Tourism is widely acknowledged as a strategic sector that contributes significantly to regional economic growth and community welfare. In recent years, tourism development in Indonesia has increasingly emphasized competitiveness among regions, encouraging local governments to innovate in promoting their unique destinations through more systematic and technology-driven approaches (Fathinnah et al., 2022; Nabilah et al., 2024; Priambodo, 2022; Siregar et al., 2024). Consequently, destination branding has become a crucial strategy for enhancing visibility, strengthening competitiveness, and ensuring sustainability in the tourism sector, particularly at the local and village levels (Prastiani & Pratiwi, 2020; Prasetyo & Nararais, 2023; Syaripuddin, 2024).

At the village level, tourism is not only positioned as a source of local revenue but also as a driver of inclusive economic development. Villages that are able to manage and promote their tourism assets effectively tend to experience increased community participation, improved income distribution, and strengthened local economic resilience (Rahmandari et al., 2024; Wan, 2022). Tourism destinations generally encompass natural, cultural, and culinary attractions, all of which require well-planned promotion and professional management to attract visitors and sustain long-term growth (Hakim, 2020).

Wasuemba Village is located in Wabula District, Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, and possesses diverse tourism assets that reflect both natural and cultural richness. The village covers an area of approximately 4,500 hectares and consists of four hamlets: Wasuemba, Ngapa, Bantea, and Piropa. Its tourism potential includes historical heritage from the era of the Buton Kingdom, coastal attractions that serve as natural tourism icons, and community-based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) such as traditional weaving and shell handicrafts. These assets provide promising opportunities for developing village-based tourism that can contribute to increasing village original income and improving community welfare (Mahyudin et al., 2020; Fadilla, 2024).

Figure 1. Wasuemba Fortress

In addition to its cultural heritage, Wasuemba Village also possesses significant natural tourism potential, particularly coastal attractions that support village-based tourism development. Lahonduru Beach is recognized as the main natural tourism icon of the village and functions as a flagship destination with strong potential to enhance tourism branding and visitor attraction at the local level.

Figure 2. Lahonduru Beach, Wasuemba Village

Despite its considerable tourism potential, tourism development in Wasuemba Village has not yet been optimized. One of the main challenges lies in the limited capacity for branding and promotion of village tourism assets. Promotional activities are still largely conventional and have not fully utilized digital platforms, resulting in low visibility of tourism destinations among broader audiences. This condition is further compounded by limited understanding of sustainable tourism practices and inadequate utilization of information technology as a strategic marketing medium.

Village-Owned Enterprises (Badan Usaha Milik Desa/BUMDes) play a strategic role in managing and optimizing local potential to strengthen village-based economic institutions and improve community welfare (Hakim et al., 2025). In Wasuemba Village, BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru has been actively managing various village economic activities, including tourism. However, in terms of marketing and promotion, the BUMDes still encounters significant obstacles, particularly in adopting digital-based strategies that could expand market reach and enhance destination branding.

The utilization of website-based platforms offers a practical and strategic solution to address these challenges. Website-based digital platforms have been shown to be effective tools for strengthening branding capacity, expanding market access, and increasing the visibility of local products and tourism potential through integrated digital promotion strategies (Wicaksana et al., 2025). Moreover, websites function as information systems that support transparency, facilitate communication with potential visitors, and enable more efficient management of village business processes in a digital environment (Robby Aditya & Rusdianto, 2023; Amelia & Iswadi, 2023).

Currently, BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru does not yet have an official website to support tourism promotion and business management. This absence represents a missed opportunity to strengthen the digital presence of Wasuemba Village and to leverage information technology for sustainable tourism development. Therefore, a structured intervention is needed to support the branding of Wasuemba Village's tourism potential through the development of a website-based BUMDes information system.

Based on these considerations, this community service activity focuses on strengthening the capacity of BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru in branding and promoting village tourism potential through digital transformation. The program is designed to enhance digital literacy, improve promotional strategies, and support sustainable village economic development by integrating tourism management with a website-based information system.

2. Method

This Community Service (PkM) activity was conducted in Wasuemba Village, Wabula District, Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, in partnership with the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru. The activity was implemented from July to September 2024.

2.1 Approach and Design

The PkM program employed a participatory community empowerment approach, in which BUMDes administrators, village officials, and local stakeholders were actively involved in identifying problems, implementing solutions, and evaluating outcomes. This approach was chosen to ensure that the intervention was aligned with the real needs of the partner and to support sustainability after the program ended.

2.2 Participants

The participants consisted of 10 BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru administrators, who were directly involved in managing village tourism potential and business operations. These participants became the main target group for capacity-building activities related to digital branding and website management.

2.3 Stages of Implementation

The implementation of the PkM activity was carried out through four main stages, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Stages of Community Service Activities

No	Activity Stage	Description
1	Socialization of Activities	Introduction of program objectives, scope, and expected outcomes to village government and BUMDes administrators
2	Technology Application	Installation of Starlink-based internet services and development of a website-based BUMDes information system
3	Pre-test Evaluation	Assessment of participants' initial knowledge and experience related to website use and digital promotion
4	Mentoring to Promote Local Potential	Assistance and training on website management, digital content creation, and online promotion of village tourism potential

2.4 Data Collection and Evaluation

Data were collected through observation, documentation, and a pre-test questionnaire administered to all participants prior to the training and mentoring sessions. The pre-test was used to measure participants' baseline knowledge, experience, and perceptions regarding website utilization and digital promotion for BUMDes.

2.5 Indicators of Success

The success of the PkM program was evaluated using the following indicators:

a.   Increased understanding of BUMDes administrators regarding the role of websites in tourism promotion and business management.

b.   Availability and functionality of the official BUMDes website as a digital information and promotion platform.

c.   Improved capacity of participants to manage website content and promote local tourism potential digitally.

d.   Improved internet connectivity supporting real-time access and online promotion activities.

This methodological framework ensured that the community service program was implemented systematically, measurable in its outcomes, and responsive to the actual needs of BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru and the Wasuemba Village community.

3. Results

3.1 Initial Conditions and Needs Identification

Prior to the implementation of the community service program, an initial assessment was conducted to identify the baseline conditions of BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru and its administrators. This assessment aimed to map participants' initial digital literacy, their perceptions of website utilization, and their readiness to manage digital promotion tools independently.

The pre-test results indicate that all participants (100%) had previously accessed websites, suggesting a basic level of digital exposure. However, none of the participants had experience in managing a website. In terms of perception, only half of the participants considered websites beneficial for BUMDes promotion, while the remaining participants had no clear understanding of their strategic role. These findings highlight a gap between general digital familiarity and the capacity to utilize digital platforms strategically for institutional branding and tourism promotion.

Furthermore, although most participants correctly identified the BUMDes administration and digital team as the parties responsible for managing the website, they lacked practical knowledge regarding content development, website governance, and digital promotion strategies. Participants also emphasized the importance of website transparency in increasing public trust and expressed expectations that the website should prominently display organizational profiles and flagship village products.

Table 2. Pre-test Evaluation Results of BUMDes Administrators

No	Aspect Assessed	Key Findings
1	Website exposure	All participants (100%) had accessed websites previously
2	Website management experience	None of the participants had experience managing a website
3	Perceived benefit of a website	50% considered websites beneficial; 50% had no clear understanding
4	Awareness of BUMDes website	Majority had limited or partial awareness of BUMDes websites
5	Responsible party for website management	Most participants identified BUMDes admin/digital team as responsible
6	Main perceived function of website	Promotion and increasing public trust
7	Expected website content	Organizational profile, flagship products, and institutional information

Overall, the pre-test findings confirm that while basic digital literacy already exists among BUMDes administrators, there is a clear need for structured capacity-building interventions. These results justify the subsequent stages of the community service program, which focused on website development, digital infrastructure support, and mentoring activities aimed at strengthening BUMDes branding and village tourism promotion.

3.2 Implementation of the Community Service Program

a.   Socialization and Capacity Building

The community service activity began with a socialization session involving village officials, BUMDes administrators, Pokdarwis members, and community representatives.

This stage aimed to introduce the objectives, scope, and expected outcomes of the program, as well as to build shared understanding regarding the importance of digital transformation in tourism promotion.

Participants showed strong engagement during discussions and practical sessions, particularly in exploring website features and content management mechanisms. The socialization process contributed to increasing participants' awareness of the strategic value of digital platforms in strengthening BUMDes branding and establishing an official digital identity for Wasuemba Village.

**Figure 3.** Socialization of Partnership Empowerment Program Grants

b. Technology Application: Website Development and Internet Connectivity

One of the main outputs of this community service program is the development of an official website for BUMDes Bantea Mainawa Lahonduru, accessible at **https://wasuemba-desa.id/**. The website was designed as an integrated information and promotion platform to support tourism branding and BUMDes business management.

The website includes several key features, such as:

- Village and BUMDes profiles,
- Tourism destination information and photo galleries,
- Booking and contact services,
- Village news and activity updates,
- Infographic-based reporting to support transparency.

The presence of this website enables BUMDes to disseminate information systematically, promote village tourism potential, and enhance institutional transparency. This digital platform also functions as a bridge between BUMDes, the local community, and external stakeholders, including tourists and potential partners.
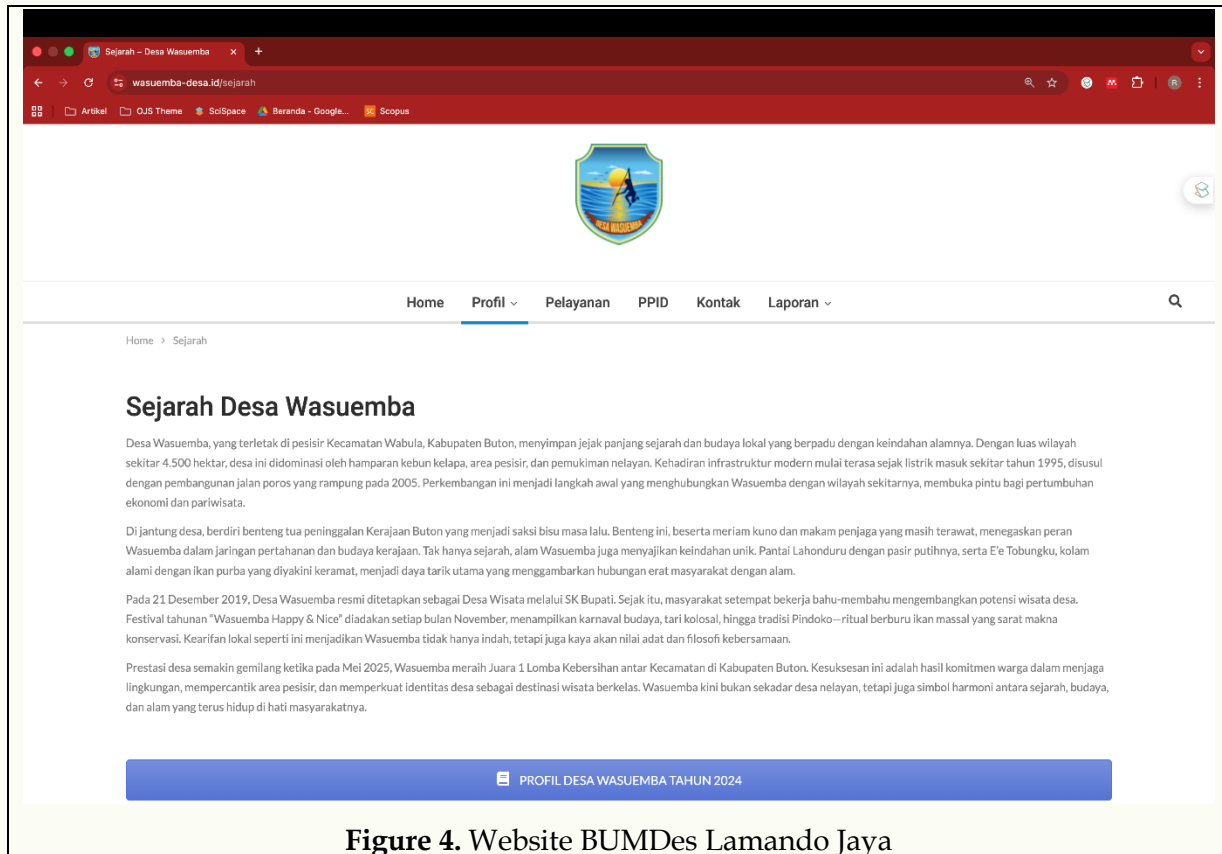
Figure 4. Website BUMDes Lamando Jaya

To support the optimal functioning of the website, the program also facilitated the installation of Starlink satellite-based internet services in Wasuemba Village. This intervention addressed connectivity limitations that had previously hindered digital activities. The availability of stable and high-speed internet significantly improved the effectiveness of website management, real-time content updates, and online communication.

The integration of internet infrastructure and digital platforms demonstrates that technology access is a critical enabler of digital transformation in rural and coastal areas with limited conventional network coverage.

Figure 5. Starlink Internet Installation

3.3 Outcomes of the Program: Strengthening Local Potential Promotion

Following the development of digital infrastructure and platforms, mentoring activities were conducted to strengthen participants' capacity in promoting local tourism potential. BUMDes administrators and Pokdarwis members received guidance on identifying village assets, developing promotional narratives, and producing visual content such as photographs and short videos.

The mentoring sessions focused on practical skills, including digital content creation, social media integration, and the utilization of the BUMDes website as a central promotion hub. Through this process, participants gained the ability to package local tourism attractions, cultural heritage, and village products into marketable digital content.

Figure 6. Appearance Promotes Local Potential

4. Discussion

The findings of this community service program indicate that the success of digital-based tourism branding initiatives in rural areas is closely related to institutional readiness, digital infrastructure availability, and human resource capacity. Although BUMDes administrators in Wasuemba Village had basic exposure to digital platforms, the pre-test results revealed limited understanding of the strategic role of websites in tourism branding and village economic development. This condition reflects a broader challenge faced by many village enterprises in Indonesia, where digital tools are available but not yet optimally utilized for institutional strengthening and market expansion.

The implementation of a website-based BUMDes information system played a strategic role in enhancing tourism branding, information transparency, and stakeholder communication. As a centralized digital platform, the website enabled the systematic presentation of tourism destinations, village profiles, and BUMDes business activities, thereby strengthening the village's digital identity. This finding aligns with previous studies on village and BUMDes website development in Indonesia, which emphasize the role of websites as effective media for disseminating village potential and supporting local economic activities (Sulistia & Geges, 2022; Trisnawarman, 2023). From a broader perspective, such digital initiatives reflect organizational digital transformation readiness, where technology adoption must be aligned with institutional goals and operational capacities (Michelotto & Jóia, 2024).

Beyond the availability of digital platforms, infrastructure readiness emerged as a critical enabling factor. The installation of satellite-based internet connectivity through Starlink significantly improved access to stable and high-speed internet, allowing the

BUMDes website to function optimally in real time. This finding supports previous research highlighting the strategic role of LEO satellite technology in bridging the digital divide in rural and remote areas (Lopez et al., 2023; IEEE Communications Magazine, 2022). In the Indonesian context, improved connectivity has been recognized as a key driver for accelerating digital transformation in rural communities and village-based enterprises (Kosasih & Sulaiman, 2024).

Human capacity development through mentoring and training was equally crucial in translating digital access into practical competencies. Assistance activities enabled BUMDes administrators and Pokdarwis members to better identify, package, and promote local tourism assets using digital media. This process strengthened digital literacy and organizational confidence in managing online platforms, which is consistent with studies emphasizing that digital transformation is not solely determined by technology adoption but also by digital skills and organizational learning processes (Zhao et al., 2023; Koch & Fehlmann, 2024). Similar community-based digital marketing initiatives in Indonesia have shown that targeted mentoring significantly improves the effectiveness of BUMDes promotion and local product branding (Lesmana, 2024).

Furthermore, the integration of digital promotion strategies contributes to broader tourism development objectives. Digital platforms allow village tourism destinations to reach wider audiences, improve visitor engagement, and support sustainable tourism management. Previous national and international studies have demonstrated that digital marketing and e-tourism platforms can enhance destination competitiveness while supporting community-based tourism development (Wa Nur Fida et al., 2024; Bahou et al., 2024). In this regard, the experience of Wasuemba Village confirms that digital transformation initiatives are most effective when technology provision, infrastructure support, and institutional capacity-building are implemented in an integrated and participatory manner.

Overall, this discussion highlights that digital transformation in village tourism development should be understood as an institutional process rather than a purely technological intervention. The combination of website development, improved connectivity, and sustained mentoring strengthens the role of BUMDes as a key actor in managing village tourism potential and promoting inclusive local economic growth. These findings provide practical insights for policymakers, practitioners, and academics involved in rural development and community-based tourism initiatives.

5. Conclusion

This community service program demonstrates that digital transformation initiatives can effectively strengthen the capacity of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in branding and promoting village tourism potential when supported by adequate infrastructure and structured capacity-building efforts. The findings confirm that although BUMDes administrators in Wasuemba Village had basic exposure to digital platforms, institutional readiness for digital transformation required targeted interventions that combined technology provision, skills development, and participatory engagement.

The development of a website-based BUMDes information system served as a strategic instrument for enhancing tourism branding, improving information transparency, and facilitating communication between BUMDes, the community, and external stakeholders. The availability of stable internet connectivity through satellite-based services further enabled the optimal utilization of digital platforms, highlighting the importance of infrastructure as a critical enabler of rural digital transformation.

Moreover, mentoring and capacity-building activities played a key role in translating digital access into practical competencies. Through guided assistance, BUMDes administrators and Pokdarwis members were able to strengthen their ability to identify, package, and promote local tourism assets using digital media. This process reinforced the role of BUMDes as a central institutional actor in managing village potential and supporting inclusive local economic development.

Overall, this program underscores that successful digital transformation in village tourism development is not solely driven by technological tools, but by the alignment of infrastructure readiness, human capacity, and institutional strengthening. The experience from Wasuemba Village provides practical insights for similar rural and coastal communities seeking to leverage digital platforms for sustainable tourism development and community empowerment.

6. Acknowledgement

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