

# The awakening of tourism sector in Kepulauan Riau province road to recovery from Covid 19 (Kepri bangkit movement strategy)

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## Abstract

Since the covid-19 outbreak that has had a huge impact in Indonesia whereas its inevitable affected any industries and sectors worldwide. The very affected industry is the tourism and hospitality industries. This descriptive qualitative research aims to elaborate a movement program called Kepri Bangkit (Riau Island Awakening) and its strategy initiated by the government of Riau Island province. Kepri Bangkit executed by the government authorities and other stakeholders to embark the journey with a long path to resume usual tourism activities. The results of the study show that the role of stakeholder is tremendously positive in efforts to support the awakening of the tourism sector in Kepulauan Riau.

## Keywords:

*"Kepri Bangkit", awakening, movement, strategy, tourism sector*

## 1 Introduction

Riau Island Province or well known as Kepulauan Riau (Kepri) was established as a new province in 2012. Directly bordering several neighboring countries like Malaysia, Cambodia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Vietnam, this province is a popular entry and exit point of Indonesia, especially with Singapore. The two main islands in this province are Batam and Bintan, both with their own unique charm. Batam

is more popular for its man-made attractions while Bintan counts on its beautiful natural settings with its 23,000 hectares resorts concept, a multi-award winning, integrated beach resort destination that is host to 19 independent beach resorts, four designer golf courses, as well as an ever-expanding range of recreational facilities and attractions. Both locations are located just 60 minutes away via a catamaran ferry ride from Singapore. As one of the outermost provinces in Indonesia, Kepri is a great gateway for tourists to enter Indonesia. In term of tourism, Kepri is running fast with accelerated development compared to many places in Indonesia.



Figure 1: Tourism Map of Kepulauan Riau Province

Source *Indonesia-tourism.com*

Covid-19 has changed a lot of sectors, including tourism and made an uncertain situation. This situation has struck from March – December 2020, the number of visitors to Kepulauan Riau in early 2020 was far below the target. Local authorities mentioned many companies involved in tourism and hospitality industries had stopped operations due to outbreak.

Table 1: Tourist Arrival in Kepulauan Riau Year 2019-2020

Month	2019	2020
January	192.856	220.696
Febuary	233.194	124.465
March	260.289	54.102
April	229.250	1.139
May	225.171	1.798
June	265.904	1.787

July	217.313	1.765
August	264.933	1.654
September	230.576	1.999
October	227,146	740
November	241,249	561
December	276.914	542
Total	2.864.795	411.284

*Source: Biro Pusat Statistic Kepulauan Riau*

This research aims to elaborate how the fighting strategy was planned and its executing steps being taken. The multi stakeholder participation both in Kepulauan Riau's province and Central Government which actively and meaningfully involved in a deliberation; their inputs, feedback to assist in designing and guiding the strategy from the start to decision-making process and its implementation to fight covid 19 for the initiatives of tourism awakening in Kepulauan Riau Province. The concept of positive thinking can generate Indonesia's tourism industry. The tourism industry must continue and enter a new normal era. Tourism businesses must adapt to new conditions and have a business strategy to stay. Kepri Bangkit strategy which was launched officially on 7 February 2021 has been initiated to embark the journey and work closely with a long path way to resume usual tourism activities.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptualizing Strategy

To observe the philosophy of Kepri Bangkit strategy, a literature review is elaborate for better understanding of the strategy concept. Strategy is the "overall plan for action, the blueprint of activities with regard to the mobilization of resources and the series of collective actions that movements designate as necessary for bringing about desired social changes" (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996) Although strategy is a buzzword it lacks a universally accepted definition. Therefore, in different contexts and to different people, strategy means different things. In the most broad and general context strategy would be defined as a —plan of action|. The Oxford Dictionary (<http://oxforddictionaries.com>) defines strategy as a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose: to develop a strategy for dealing with unemployment. It's all part of an overall strategy to gain promotion.

Strategic actors survey their resources, goals, and available opportunities, and try to make matches that maximize their influence. Importantly, however, influence is multidimensional, and plays out over both long and short time frames. A decision may affect not only the response of policymakers, but also the potential to mobilize resources in the future. The strategic decision maker has to balance sometimes conflicting interests and pressures (Meyer, 2007). This is an iterative process, dependent upon the reactions of others engaging the same sets of issues and

constituencies, which can alter the next round of opportunities and constraints. Collective action demands, arenas, and tactics are three key elements of strategy, which each involve the selection of targets, decisions about timing, and various types of relationships and strategic dilemmas.<sup>1</sup> These choices are naturally related, and each decision opens up some strategic possibilities, while foreclosing others

## **2.2 Strategy Choice and Outcomes Theory**

Strategy as the product of interactions with authorities, bystanders, supporters and opponents in multi-organizational fields, could be examine influences on strategic choices and their impacts at different levels of interaction:

- a) The political and cultural environment, where movement actors encounter political and cultural opportunities and interact with their targets, opponents, bystanders, mass media and potential allies.
- b) The movement community, where various organizations and individuals within the movement interact; and
- c) The movement organization, where leaders and members of the organization interact.

These different levels of interaction are connected--influences at one level affect interactions at another--and strategic choices are influenced by multiple interactions at each level. Histories of interactions and strategic choices and their outcomes influence subsequent strategies by actors in the multi-organizational field. Although it is tempting analytically to view each decision as distinct and discrete, the legacies of the past, including the development of specialized expertise, distinct resources, and a web of relationships with supporters and authorities, constrain subsequent decisions. A strategic plan is the documentation of the strategy in terms of performance goals, approaches to achieve the goals, and a planned commitment of resources over a specific period (usually three to five years ahead. In most cases however this will formulate and communicate strategies as support to decision-making, coordination device, or as target as a support to decision-making. Finally, as a target, strategies help to define how the target will compete today, and how it will do it in the future. Hence, strategies are forward-looking, and they not only set directions for the future, but also the perspectives and visions that can drive and motivate people today.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Qualitative Research**

This research is using a descriptive qualitative approach with library research and using secondary data from sources that are used as the object of research, such as books or literature including newspaper, magazines, manuscript and electronic media (internet site), online media, which deals and is relevant with this research problem. Data collection is done by studying and recording reading materials during the period

of research. According to Sugiyono (2012), literature study is related to theoretical studies and other references related to values, culture and norms that develop in the social situation under study, besides that library research is very important in conducting research, this is because research will not be separated from scientific literature. (Sugiyono, 2012). The output of the interviews with various parties namely government authorities, tourism associations and organization representatives and other stakeholder has been identified and compiled for the purpose of elaborating the research.

The focus of this study is not only identifying the movement strategy plan but also analyzing the background of the collective spirit for the awakening of the tourism sector in Kepulauan Riau Province. A tagline of “Kepri Bangkit “ has enlightened the movement into details of an action plan. By conducting research through a descriptive approach, the researcher must describe, explain, describe the data that the researcher has obtained through in-depth literature review conducted with informants. Key informants such as Head of Tourism Department of Kepulauan Riau Province, Head of Tourism of Bintan Regency, General Manager of Bintan Resort Corporation, the master developer of international resorts in Bintan which were chosen as an entry port of foreign tourist arrival as part of the travel corridor arrangement (TCA) scheme with neighboring countries; Singapore and Malaysia. The data obtained includes the development of the tourism effort made during the pandemic in Kepri,

The combination of literature studies and in-depth interviews is used to increase the completeness of information and correct any discrepancies between the results in the field and the available literature. There are at least three stages in the research, which are consist of preliminary process (literature) by studying relevant sources related to pandemic covid 19 hits to the worldwide economic sectors and its impact towards the Kepulauan Riau’s tourism sector; survey to various region namely Bintan and Batam which known for their aggressively and continuous effort in covid 19 fighting and in-depth interview conducted with various key informants and analyzing the results.

## **4 Findings**

### **4.1 Recovery Initiatives**

Kepri Bangki ‘s initiatives taken as earlier as September 2020 when Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was carried out at Bintan and attended by KEPRI Tourism Board, Perhimpunan Hotel dan Restoran Indonesia (PHRI), Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) and Government as well the private sectors from tourism industries. The discussion centered on the New Normal socialization followed by a Leadership Coordination Meeting (Rapat Koordinasi Pimpinan) of the Covid-19 and National Economic Recovery Committee (PC-PEN) with the Ministries / Institutions (K / L) chair by Minister Airlangga Hartanto, Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs. Milestones on the giving of the ‘I Do Care Indonesia Care’ certificate handed the first certificate of Indonesia Care (IDoCare) in Lagoi Bay Bintan as a form of readiness for

Bintan Regency known as Bintan Resort at the Kepulauan Riau Province , Riau Islands. The certificate indicates that the CHSE health protocol (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) is implemented well. A month after being inaugurated as Minister of Tourism & Creative Economy Sandiaga Uno has flown to Batam and Bintan for a quick survey and finest observation on the current condition. Implementation of CHSE standard being a major priority while travel bubble arrangement which later called Travel corridor arrangement is communicated amongst the stakeholders.

On 20 March 2021 the new Elected Governor of Kepulauan Riau Ansar Ahmad highlighted his concern over the situation which gave an optimistic spirit to the tourism industries not only in Batam and Bintan but to the whole regions. Both joint press conference stated that the government would prioritize to open doors for international tourists in Batam and Bintan, Riau Islands, before Bali, as the two regions are considered to be more ready. The tourist destinations that will be opened in Batam are Nongsa, and Lagoi in Bintan. These two destinations are scheduled to open on April 21, while Bali in June and July 2021 which based on President Jokowi's order that the reopening of destinations for foreign tourists can be done gradually, with the requirement that the number of Covid-19 infection is under control. The number of coronavirus infection on Riau Islands has been reportedly low and stable; even the number of the virus transmission in Nongsa and Lagoi is reported to be zero.

#### 4.2 Tourism Recovery Program and Kepri Bangkit Strategy

To understand how strategic choices are made, following is a series of actions within the movement and between movement actors and targets. Activists become familiar with strategies, assess their opportunities, and position themselves for new rounds of collective action in particular contexts and as a consequence of their relationships with actors inside and outside the tourism recovery program.

Table 2: Tourism Recovery Program – Kepri Bangkit Strategy

<b>Tourism Recovery Program</b>	<b>Kepri Bangkit Strategy</b>
Quality improvement towards the Human Resource and Manpower which impacted	Online Training, Entrepreneurship Program and Funding Assistance on Tourism & Hospitality sectors
Domestic Tourist Promotion and Campaign	Domestic Tourism Branding, Ecotourism Packaging,
Tourism Bundling Packages	2021 Calendar of Event Launching – Staycation Promotion, City Activation, Great Sale Promotion
Implementation of Health Passport (Health Checking and Screening prior and after Departure)	PCR & Swab Test equipment placement allocation – Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Health Protocol Implementation

Implementation of Health Protocol	Compulsory implementation at determining Airport and Seaport (Batam & Bintan )
Cleanliness and Safety requirement (CHSE Certification) fulfilment for tourist confidence	CHSE compulsory certification – Video Promotion CHSE Destination Journey and Massive Movement of Health Protocol Implementation
Fiscal Incentive to support the cash flow for tourism sectors	Coordination with UMKM Department

Source Research Data Compilation



Figure 2: Tourism Recovery Program – Kepri Bangkit Strategy  
Source Tourism Department of Kepulauan Riau

As elaborated on the based analytical thinking of strategy. Kepri Bangkit strategy has formulated and communicated strategies as support to decision-making by consistently pulling out most effort from various stakeholders to collaborate the coordination device, or as a target to open the border entrance of tourists as a support to decision-making. Strategies are forward-looking and they not only set directions today. Following are the strategies set by Kepri’s Government.

- a) The opening plan of the safety travel corridor in Nongsa and Lagoi to be set is the knowledge of conducting strict and discipline health measures by wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands, as well as testing, tracing, and treatment; and finally, vaccination in a more discipline manner which lead to the lower cases of the Covid-19 infection and can be suppressed to be zero.
- b) The Riau Islands government hoped that the travel bubble policy with Singapore could be implemented in its region to boost tourist arrival. Several exclusive tourist sites were considered suitable to implement the policy. Through the travel balloon policy, citizens from the two countries would be allowed to have free visits and exempted from quarantine mandatory

- c) Planning to obtain hygiene certification from Singaporean authorities. (SG Clean). The certification was necessary to convince prospective tourists to visit the islands once the travel bubble policy was applied
- d) The Riau Island government was also determined to suppress the Covid-19 transmission through vaccination which shown a declining virus transmission rate
- e) The Indonesian government has prepared an important step to revive the tourism industry, namely social protection programs for workers in the tourism sector and the creative economy that is right on target.
- f) Budget reallocation of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy directed at labor-intensive programs for workers in the tourism sector and the creative economy and prepare an economic stimulus for businesses in the tourism sector and creative economy

Based on the several statements conveyed by the Governor that preparations for the reopening of these tourist areas namely Bintan and Batam were carried out with full calculation. Including vaccinating tourism workers. These two locations were chosen because this tourism area is well on separation blocked areas. This means that usually the tourists / tourists are not affiliated with the community because this area is far from community residential areas. In addition, Governor Ansar expects the Central Government to hold talks with the Singaporean Government. Because so far tourists from Riau Islands are mostly from Singapore. The Central Government was urged to hold talks with Singapore. It's just a matter of how the Central Government can help convince Singapore if the Riau Islands are ready to welcome back tourists

Previously, both Governor Ansar and the Singapore Government, represented by Singapore's Second Minister of Foreign Affairs, held a virtual meeting to discuss the travel bubble. It shows that Singaporeans have actually been waiting for another vacation to the Riau Islands. Governor Ansar acknowledged that currently the drastically fallen on tourist arrival d is affecting economic growth in Riau Islands. Governor Ansar also added that the Riau Islands Province is currently relatively declining in the number of Covid-19 spreads. Of the 7 regencies/cities in the Riau Islands, 4 regencies have the status of a green zone, while only 3 regencies/cities have the status of a yellow zone.



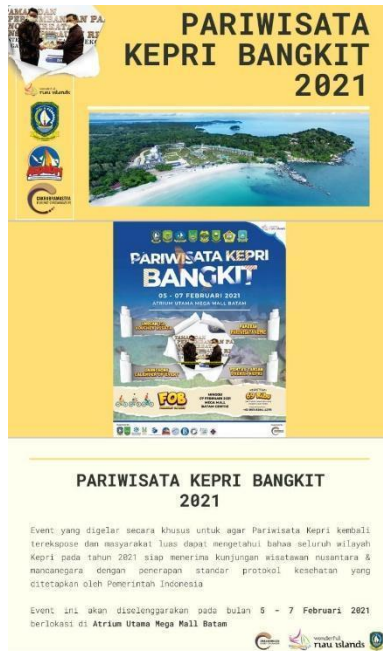


Figure 3: Launch of Kepri Bangkit Tourism Strategy



Figure 4: Kepulauan Riau Calendar of Event 2021

Source: Tourism Department of Kepulauan Riau

## 5 Discussion

Series of interviews conducted with The Head of Tourism Department of Kepulauan Riau; Buralimar and also The Head of Tourism Department of Bintan ; Wan Rudi Iskanda who has enlighten on how they implement strategies and measures across Kepulauan Riau Province for the tourism awakening. The confidence towards the successful transformation of the Kepri Bangkit movement is below the top-down perspective of change considering several prioritized strategies.

Table 3: Perspective of Kepri Bangkit Strategy

Perspective Strategy of Kepri Bangkit Movement	
i.	Establishing a sense of urgency (identifying crisis and opportunities)
ii.	Forming a powerful coalition (forming a group with power enough to drive the change)
iii.	Creating a vision (establish a vision to be follow and the strategies to do it)
iv.	Communicating the vision
v.	Empowering others to act on the vision (getting rid of any obstacles to change)

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vi.	Planning and creating short-term wins (plan, execution and reward of achievable performance and practice)
vii.	Consolidating improvements and producing more changes (using achieved credibility to materialize the vision, and finding new ways to bring it further)
viii.	Institutionalizing new approaches (making evident the links between success and the new vision and behaviour, making them a tool of leadership and management)

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*Source: Research Data Compilation*

Above bolster will also include other tourist destinations covering other places in Kepulauan Riau namely Anambas, Natuna, Lingga, Karimun and Tanjungpinang as the capital city of Kepulauan Riau Province. The emphasis on the 3 A's of Attraction, Amenity and Accessibility comply with CHSE certification is a must. Most significant step to be taken is the industry will apply health protocols based on CHSE or cleanliness, health, safety and environment in tourist destinations and creative economy. They will be key in regaining tourists' trust in the tourism industry during the pandemic and onward. Other than that, several strategies also considered as priority to be implemented, namely:

- i. Push for digital technology, investment and promotion of the tourism sector.
- ii. The hotel and hospitality industry will diversify to the outdoors, sports, health, wellness, ecotourism as well as medical tourism
- iii. CHSE promotion will be further encouraged by holding mega events, mega family trips, MICE [Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition] roadshows overseas.
- iv. An endorsement of the use of E-HAC or Health Alert Cards to the wider public and other institutions." Continuous coordination with the Ministry of Health and telecommunications providers to monitor the coming and going of visitors with potential health issues.
- v. To work closely with universities, provincial administrations as well as the public and business sectors to bolster tourism and creative economy in Indonesia. The strategy is based on innovation, adaptation and collaboration.
- vi. A big data will be used to design a more personalized means of promotion, and ensure that movers in the tourist industry and creative economy can survive,
- vii. iA continuous and integrative coordination with the national task force of Covid-19 to evaluate on a daily basis the management of covid19, and as far as the tourism concern, the industry in the Riau Islands are ready to welcome and adapt to new normal.in terms of covid19 management and readiness of the industry In general".

- viii. To ensure everyone's safety, foreign tourists are expected to do a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test in their own country. They will then have to take a GeNose test, a Covid-19 breath test detector developed in Indonesia, upon entering and leaving the two tourist zones.
- ix. Last but not least, vaccinating tourism workers in both Batam and Bintan will take place in batches. Around 1,500 tourism workers in Batam while more than 2,000 in Bintan have also been vaccinated. They are targeting to vaccinate 30,000 residents before April before implementing the "safe travel corridor"

## 6 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 6.1 Conclusion

- a. The industry in the Riau Islands is ready to welcome and adapt to new normal in terms of covid19 management and readiness of the industry. In general this pandemic underlines that tourism has to be understood in the greater global economic and political context that will define the future world that tourism will operate in. A 'new-normal' tourism world – is what exists. In particular, if our underlying theories and understandings have changed due to the coronavirus pandemic. This means there is a lot to research yet to be conducted. Let us start, but *do not go for the obvious and purely descriptive*.
- b. There were 6 (six) illustrative coronavirus research parts (i.e., complexity of the situation; changes in destination image; change in tourism behaviour; change in resident behaviour; change in the tourism industry; long-term and indirect effects). In doing so, this research shows paths where existing lessons learnt could intensify, or where we even expect a paradigm-shift in tourism due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### 6.2 Recommendation

- a. The concept of positive thinking can generate Indonesia's tourism industry. The strategy that can be applied in the tourism industry is to optimize the digital platform as a marketing media and the application of protocols (health, safety, and awareness). This is very important to restore the tourism industry and awaken tourist confidence.
- b. Reviving the tourism industry requires cooperation between the government and tourism industry players. In my opinion, the concept of positive thinking is very important for both parties in reviving the tourism industry. With the rise of the tourism industry, the economy in a country will turn back because this industry is very directly related to other industries.

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