

The Role of Stakeholders in the Development of Sustainable Indigenous Ecotourism in Kasepuhan Citorek, Banten

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Abstract

Indigenous ecotourism is a nature tourism concept offering a distinctive cultural experience. Ecotourism, in its concept, seeks to ensure tourism development that is environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socio-culturally responsible. However, achieving such instrumental goals requires collaboration among the various parties involved. This research aims to identify stakeholder working mechanisms and the dimensions of sustainability in developing indigenous ecotourism on Mount Kendeng Ecotourism in Kasepuhan Citorek, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The approach used is qualitative, which was obtained through in-depth interviews. The results showed that stakeholders involved in managing indigenous ecotourism have varying degrees of influence and interests. The various influences and interests of stakeholders further influence the dimensions of sustainability, ecological, socio-cultural, economic, and institutional in developing indigenous ecotourism.

Keywords: Indigenous ecotourism, stakeholder, sustainability, sustainable tourism, Kasepuhan Citorek,

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a strategic geographical position, which is one of the factors causing this country's high biodiversity level. The potential natural wealth and abundant biodiversity give some parts of Indonesia the potential to be tourist destinations. One type of tourism that is quite popular today is indigenous ecotourism. Not only offering beautiful and sustainable natural scenery, indigenous ecotourism also offers a distinctive cultural experience. The development of Indigenous ecotourism needs to be carried out sustainably because there are risks such as environmental damage, the entry of new cultures that are not suitable, the loss of livelihoods, and the fading of culture due to poor management (Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014) Effective governance and collaboration from all stakeholders are needed to support inclusive development in the development of indigenous ecotourism potential, as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2016 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations.

Ecotourism, in its concept, seeks to ensure tourism development that is environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socio-culturally responsible (Melubo & Carr, 2019). However, achieving such instrumental goals requires unwavering collaboration and partnership among the various parties involved in ecotourism. The role of various stakeholders is important in ensuring the sustainability of ecotourism management and ensuring that in its development, ecotourism causes minimal negative impacts on the environment, socio-culture, and economy of the local community. However, collaboration often leads to ineffectiveness due to the complexity of the existing system and unequal power relations between stakeholders (Mulyani et al., 2021). Adom (2019), in his research, asserts that the success of ecotourism programs depends on providing a forum for all stakeholders to voice their opinions in management decisions.

Wewengkon Adat Kasepuhan Citorek has many tourism potentials, one of which is Kendeng Mountain Ecotourism in East Citorek Village, which is a new ecotourism. Although relatively new in its development, this ecotourism has involved various stakeholders. Thus, it is vital to analyze the role of stakeholders in developing sustainable indigenous ecotourism in East Citorek Village, Kasepuhan Citorek. This research aims to identify stakeholder working mechanisms in developing indigenous ecotourism and identify the dimensions of sustainability in developing indigenous ecotourism on Mount Kendeng Ecotourism in East Citorek Village, Kasepuhan Citorek.

2. METHODS

Research Methods

Research activities started in October 2023 and were completed in February 2024. The approach used in this research is qualitative, with in-depth interviews conducted with key informants to explore answers. Informants in this study were selected purposively based on criteria, namely parties or individuals who know and understand ecotourism management in East Citorek Village. Qualitative data obtained from researcher observations and in-depth interviews with informants were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis techniques. Qualitative stakeholder mapping analysis was processed through Microsoft Excel 2013 to produce an identification matrix.

Research Location

The research was conducted in the *Wewengkon Adat Kasepuhan Citorek*, a customary area, precisely in East Citorek Village, Cibeber District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The

location was selected purposively because it has an ecotourism destination area currently being developed, Mount Kendeng Ecotourism. In the development of East Citorek Village, the role and participation of stakeholders at multi-level and multi-sector has been established. Administratively, East Citorek Village is included in the administrative area of Cibeber Subdistrict, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. East Citorek Village is one of five villages included in the customary area of Wewengkon Kasepuhan Adat Citorek, and other villages are Central Citorek Village, Citorek Sabrang Village, West Citorek Village, and Citorek Kidul Village, which are included in Wewengkon Kasepuhan Adat Citorek still uphold the rules and cultural values passed down from generation to generation from the ancestors. East Citorek Village has a topography of hilly areas, highlands, mountain slopes, and lowlands with an area of 1736.44 Ha. In particular, East Citorek Village is the center of Kasepuhan Citorek because of the *Imah Gede*, or the center of Kasepuhan. Kasepuhan Citorek has a structure of customary institutions that distinguishes it from other indigenous groups. The existing customary institution structure remains the foundation of the community, including in village administration. This structure divides the two governments: the customary government led by the *jaro adat* (indigenous community leader) and the village government led by the *jaro pamarentahan* or village head in coordination with the *jaro adat*.

3. RESULTS

Indigenous Ecotourism Development Background

The customary forest in Kasepuhan Citorek was previously part of the Gunung Halimun Salak National Park (TNGHS) since 1992. During the period when the state forest and national park regulations were in effect, the customary forest area could not be utilized by the community, even though it was customarily included in *leweung sampalan*. This area, under customary law, can be used for the most excellent welfare of the indigenous community. To achieve customary forest status, the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) facilitated the Kasepuhan Citorek community. In 2019, through SK.6164/MENLHK-PSKL/PKTHA/KUM.1/2/2019, Kasepuhan Citorek obtained customary forest recognition with an area of 1,647 hectares for a total submission of 4,439 hectares. This recognition was handed over directly on January 7, 2021 in Jakarta. After determining customary forest status, the community felt significant changes in their daily lives. They are no longer afraid or limited in accessing fields or gardens in customary forest areas and feel greater freedom and confidence in cultivating land in these areas.

Determining customary forest status also opens up great potential for village economic development, especially in East Citorek Village. Many development options are considered in the context of utilizing customary forests and improving community welfare. However, ecotourism became the option stakeholders chose through the discussions held. The choice of ecotourism development was based on the consideration that East Citorek Village has great potential with abundant natural resources, such as mountains, rivers, and forests, which are also the community's livelihood. In addition, the culture of the Kasepuhan Citorek community that is still maintained in this village is typically reflected in traditions, customs and arts, providing additional attraction. The urgency of tourism development in this village is then an effort to stimulate economic growth and diversify the income of local communities. The development of community-based ecotourism is expected to open up new employment opportunities, support the trade and services sector, and have a positive impact on the development of local infrastructure.

Ecotourism-based tourism development includes efforts to preserve the environment and sustain existing culture. Thus, with the initiation of the community and permission from the Kasepuhan or customary institution as the owner of the customary area representing the Citorek indigenous community, a tourism plan was developed in East Citorek Village located on Mount Kendeng. In line with the plan to develop Mount Kendeng tourism in East Citorek Village, the Lebak Regency Government for the 2019-2024 period also designed a local tourism-based regional economic development plan through its vision, namely "Lebak as a National Leading Tourism Destination Based on Local Potential" in the development program of six leading tourism priorities in Lebak Regency. In detail, the six tourism development priorities of Lebak Regency are known as "Six Fantastic" consisting of Baduy Tourism Village, Multatuli Museum, Citorek Tourism Area, Sawarna Beach, Badegur, and Cikuya Tea House (Prabowo et al. 2023).

Stakeholder Working Mechanism

In a management system, stakeholders play a crucial role (Samal & Dash, 2023). The stakeholders involved in development are classified into six categories, namely customary institutions, regional governments, village governments, communities/community organizations, academics, and the public and each category consists of several stakeholders. The results of stakeholder identification show that there are 10 stakeholders involved in ecotourism development in East Citorek Village who come from various groups. The results of this identification were obtained by direct identification through observation and

interviews with key informants in East Citorek Village, Cibeber District. The identification results are presented in Table 1 below

Table 1. Identification of stakeholders by group in the development of ecotourism in East Citorek Village

Stakeholder Category	Institution/Group
Customary Institutions	Kasepuhan Adat Citorek
Regional Government	Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata (Regional Government in Culture and Tourism Sector)
	Dinas Pertanian (Regional Government in Agricultural Sector)
Village Government	Village Government of East Citorek
Academics	KUMACITOR (Family of Citorek College Students)
	Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB)
Community Group	Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) Citorek Timur
	Poktan (Farmers Group)
	KWT (Women Farmers Group)
	CMF (Citorek Millennial Farm)
Community	General Public of East Citorek Village

Based on the results of the study, it is known that Kasepuhan Citorek as a customary institution has a supervisory function so that all developments in ecotourism development must be authorized by customary institutions. Kasepuhan Citorek directly coordinates with Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) as the ecotourism managing group and Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata, Regional Government in Culture and Tourism Sector, as the executor of ecotourism development related to development licensing. Pokdarwis then communicates with the East Citorek Village Government regarding administration and communicates with Dinas Pertanian, Regional Government in Agricultural Sector, regarding agricultural programs that are being developed and can assist in the development of ecotourism. External parties such as IPB as academics although not directly to the field, but their role and influence is greater when interacting with the Regional Government in supporting and evaluating the running of ecotourism. In its implementation, currently ecotourism in its development is still targeting community group such as Pokdarwis, Poktan, KWT, CMF, and KUMACITOR. Some community group such as Pokdarwis, Poktan, and KWT are involved up to the stage of capacity building and comparative studies carried out in supporting ecotourism. In its development, the general public of Citorek has not been involved in overall management. After identifying all stakeholders in the program, a mapping analysis was conducted based on the influence and importance of stakeholders. Stakeholders identified as being involved in ecotourism development certainly have interests and influences that determine their role in running the program (Reed et al., 2009). The interests of each stakeholder are based on five

aspects, namely being directly involved (K1), receiving benefits (K2), having authority (K3), having a work program (K4), and having dependence on resources (K5). The influence of each stakeholder is also based on five aspects, namely having normative power (P1), being able to provide compensation (P2), having supporting resources (P3), having the ability to influence (external) (P4), and having the ability to interact (P5). The matrix consists of four quadrants representing four stakeholder categories that show each stakeholder's degree of importance and influence (Reed et al., 2009). These categories are subjects, key players, crowds, and context setters. The complete stakeholder mapping in the development of ecotourism in East Citorek Village is presented in Figure 3 below.

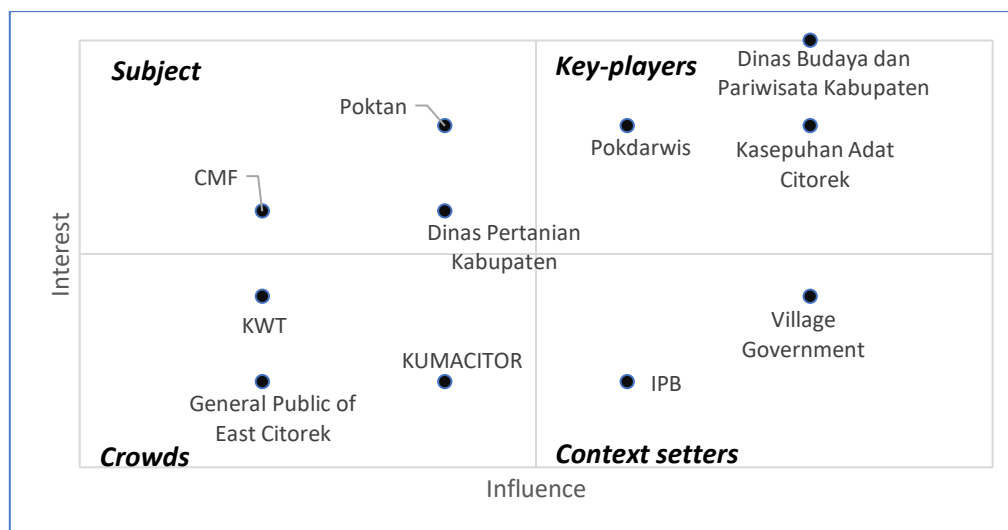


Figure 1. Stakeholder interest and influence mapping

Overall, the results of stakeholder mapping based on the degree of influence and importance will be explained in more detail based on quadrants.

1. Subjects

Stakeholder 'subjects' show their position with a fairly low level of influence but have a high importance. In this category, the majority of stakeholders come from the community category, the Farmer Group (Poktan), Citorek Millennial Farm (CMF), and the Dinas Pertanian. The community, especially those engaged in agriculture, has a high level of importance because of the location of ecotourism close to the community's agricultural land. Therefore, the development carried out in the development of ecotourism in East Citorek Village is enough to affect the agricultural activities of people who have cultivation rights close to the development site. In addition to the community, there is also the regional government from agriculture sector, Dinas Pertanian of Lebak Regency, which although it does not have much influence on the development of ecotourism, but the interest in agricultural work programs

carried out in East Citorek Village is quite high. In this category, stakeholders should always be involved in development activities and should be kept satisfied with ongoing management (keep satisfied) by always providing information related to ecotourism development activities carried out.

2. *Key Players*

Stakeholders in the key players category show stakeholders with a high level of importance and influence in ecotourism development. In this category, stakeholders are dominated by the government and groups directly involved, Pokdarwis. Stakeholders consist of Kasepuhan Adat Citorek as the customary government, Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata as the regional level government, and tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis). Government group stakeholders are heavily involved in ecotourism development, especially in activities that require important decisions and are directly affected by ecotourism development. With the full support of Kasepuhan and the network owned by this group, ecotourism development can be implemented. All stakeholders in this category should always be maintained and actively nurtured so that they can be managed closely and play a role in ecotourism development.

3. *Context Setters*

Stakeholders in the context setter category are stakeholders with low importance but high influence. Stakeholders in this quadrant include the East Citorek Village Government and Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) as an academic group involved in ecotourism management. Unlike the local government, the village government, in this case the East Citorek Village Government, plays a role in the administrative interests of ecotourism development. The low interest of the village government is partly because the coordination that occurs between the Regional Government and Kasepuhan and Pokdarwis is carried out directly, so that the village government in the current period is not much involved in ecotourism development. Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) in the management of ecotourism in East Citorek Village is indirectly involved in the agricultural sector, the UPLAND Project, and the evaluation of Kasepuhan Citorek ecotourism management. The East Citorek Village Government and Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) because they have low importance and high influence as context setters should always be kept informed.

4. *Crowds*

Crowds are stakeholders with a low level of importance and influence in the development of ecotourism in East Citorek Village. This category is occupied by KUMACITOR, KWT (Women Farmers Group), and the wider community of East Citorek

Village. The community is the main actor in the goal of developing ecotourism for the welfare of the community, even so in its development the community has not been specifically involved. The location of ecotourism, which is not too close to residential areas, makes the place only a local tourist spot for the community. The community has also not been much affected by the development of ecotourism because the tourist area has not been opened, and visitors are currently limited. Not much different from the general Village Community, community groups such as KUMACITOR and KWT have not been much involved and involved themselves in ecotourism management. Stakeholders in this category can increase their influence by forming alliances with other stakeholders.

4. DISCUSSION

Stakeholders in Sustainability Dimensions

Sustainability is a process, a way, a multidimensional approach that considers various aspects on an equal level in the long term (Von Wirén-Lehr, 2001). In a broad sense, sustainability is associated with equitable distribution, i.e. equitable development opportunities between present and future generations (Ciegis et al., 2009) Within the framework of sustainability, there is the concept of sustainable development, which serves as a means to pursue social justice and achieve a balance between resource conservation and the development process. In general, the goal of sustainable development is to achieve a balance of development without compromising the welfare of future generations, and this goal is reflected in several dimensions.

a. Ecological Sustainability

This principle aims to maintain environmental sustainability because it emphasizes that tourism development in one area is guaranteed not to pose a risk to the environment, natural resources, or surrounding ecosystems. (Gebreegziabher & Kumar, 2019) In their research, they identified ecological sustainability as the extent to which biological diversity is maintained, resources are used efficiently, and the environment is preserved.

The customary law of forest allocation Kasepuhan Citorek Indigenous Community shows the full awareness in customary wisdom of the forest's conservation function. In the customary perspective, the forest is considered as *hulu cai'*, which means head of water, functioning as a protector of springs. The Kasepuhan Citorek Indigenous Community has traditionally recognized the important role of forests in maintaining the sustainability of springs and water availability. This concept is in line with the principles of modern science.

Based on the results of field observations during the research, it appears that the indigenous people of East Citorek Village still have a high dependence on Mount Kendeng, which is a tourist attraction location. Therefore, ecological sustainability is important for the environment and indigenous people. Furthermore, the form of stakeholder involvement in maintaining ecological sustainability can be seen at the beginning of regional development planning; ecotourism was chosen by stakeholders, namely customary institutions and village governments, at the suggestion of the Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata with the consideration that ecotourism has the potential to increase regional income as well as its nature that maintains and preserves the region, especially in customary forest areas.

Development is carried out to ensure that it does not interfere with stands that prevent landslides, protect springs that are used by the local community for daily needs, and irrigate rice fields and rivers. In addition, development follows the natural topography of the area and does not damage community plantations, including plantations managed by the Farmers Group (Poktan) together with the Dinas Pertanian. One of the results of this agreement is the division of areas or zoning in development, which is designed in a participatory manner with several considerations consisting of the shape of tourist design towards the main road, the level of vulnerability, and topographic conditions of the area, identification of soil conditions, important tourist points or points of interest, and accessibility between zones. Of all the zones, there is a buffer zone that will become a preservation and conservation area.

Reporting on development progress is also always carried out by development vendors from Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata, especially to the Kasepuhan Citorek customary institution and the Village Government, so that there is a division of responsibilities between the local government, customary institutions, and village government for monitoring and enforcing environmental regulations. Local governments usually understand local conditions better and can act more responsively. Continuous monitoring and evaluation helps to identify problems early and adjust strategies to ensure ecological sustainability.

b. Socio-cultural Sustainability

Socio-cultural sustainability aims to ensure that development does not lead to social impacts such as conflict or disharmony in local communities and to ensure that development is socially accepted by local communities. It can also prevent the loss of local

values and unwanted cultural shifts. Socio-cultural sustainability is measured through visitor satisfaction, control of values by local communities, cultural richness, and social justice to avoid conflict (Gebreegziabher & Kumar, 2019).

In collaborating with Kasepuhan Citorek, external stakeholders have understood the customary system that applies in Kasepuhan Citorek, including the values and culture implemented by the community. Therefore, every implementation or stipulation of policies regarding ecotourism development must be known by customary institutions even though the policy comes from the Regional Government. This then becomes the boundaries of development in Kasepuhan Citorek, including in East Citorek Village, so that development must continue to favor indigenous peoples and their culture and not threaten the preservation of customs and is even expected to be a means of promoting Citorek culture. Even so, the older community still dominates traditional events and other community activities in their implementation. The role of youth in traditional activities and other activities has not been very visible.

Stakeholders also tried to highlight Citorek culture as a potential tourist attraction as well as a means of cultural preservation by creating a museum in the form of an *Imah Gede*, the house of Indigenous community leader, that will showcase the farming culture of the Citorek Indigenous people including the tools used in farming. This shows that stakeholders not only see culture as a tourism potential, but also see tourism potential as a means of preserving Citorek's traditional culture so that it is better known to the outside community. Apart from physically through the construction of facilities, cultural preservation is directly carried out through the implementation of traditional activities. The village community is quite open to various programs such as from the government, training programs from universities, and research. The culture and traditional values that exist in the Citorek indigenous community can still be seen well in everyday life. Changes in socio-culture certainly exist, but with the existence of customary institutions and indigenous people who still preserve these values, they are still held, even with the opening of Kasepuhan Citorek culture to the outside world, Citorek culture and traditional values are promoted.

c. Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability is the economic principle in tourism development that provides fair benefits for every stakeholder and actor involved so as to improve the welfare of local communities as managers. Economic sustainability is measured through the quality of

work in tourism, the welfare of local communities, and the feasibility of making the tourism sector an economic source (Gebreegziabher & Kumar, 2019).

Agriculture has been a hereditary activity throughout Kasepuhan Citorek, so farming and farm labor are the majority of jobs in the Kasepuhan and East Citorek Village. Although most people in East Citorek Village are rice farmers, they do not sell their produce. Apart from the fact that access to markets is quite far away, the community is also bound by a customary system that only allows the community to harvest once a year with the rules of the agricultural calendar, namely six months of planting rice in the fields and six months after that the fields are put in fish to be maintained while fertilizing the land. Therefore, the community is accustomed to prioritizing farm produce for household rice needs for the next year before the next harvest.

In addition to rice farming, horticultural farming is also an economic sector widely cultivated by the people of East Citorek Village; especially after the recognition of customary forests, the community can more freely use land, especially on the slopes of Mount Kendeng. The Citorek indigenous community can use the customary land together because of the right to cultivate which is handed over by the Kasepuhan as a customary institution to the community. The variety of commodities grown include chili peppers, eggplants, water spinach, tomatoes and cucumbers. This horticultural farming business is also supported by assistance from Dinas Pertanian to farmer groups in East Citorek Village, such as seed and fertilizer assistance and capacity-building assistance for farmers. In addition, there is other assistance in the form of programs such as UPLAND project which is a program of Dinas Pertanian to develop mangosteen fruit as local commodities.

Based on the results of field observations and in-depth interviews, the people of Citorek Timur Village already have a high interest in doing business when ecotourism opens. However, there has been no socialization specifically in conditioning the community for tourism purposes. Several stakeholders have already conducted capacity building to support economic sustainability. Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata has conducted comparative studies for several ecotourism management communities who are members of the Pokdarwis and Farmer Groups (Poktan) of East Citorek Village, training in making typical village products to members of the Women Farmers Group (KWT). In addition, KUMACITOR as a community is also involved by conducting digitization training for micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) owners. With governance that involves community groups and is supervised by a traditional institution, Kasepuhan Citorek, the economic orientation of this ecotourism development is to ensure the empowerment of

local communities. In addition, with resource grants, namely funding grants provided by the Regional Government and land grants provided by Kasepuhan Citorek without any intervention from the private sector, this ecotourism can run independently by the community.

Even so, tourism in East Citorek Village with the concept of agro-ecotourism is directed at regenerating businesses in the agricultural sector including rice and horticultural agriculture, plantations, and fisheries so that in addition to supporting ecotourism the community can continue to preserve the farming culture that has existed for generations in Kasepuhan Citorek. In addition, preserving the farming culture in the community can prevent livelihood vulnerability when ecotourism stops or if there is a lack of visitors in the future.

d. Institutional Sustainability

Institutional sustainability is the principle of maintaining the capacity to deal with future changes or disruptions to the tourism management system without experiencing significant changes in the function, structural identity, or feedback of the system while maintaining the option to evolve (Gebreegziabher & Kumar, 2019). Institutional sustainability is measured through institutional integration, political participation, and institutional-based regulatory planning and control.

Based on field observations during the research show that existing institutions have been formed and agreed upon among stakeholders. However, the institutions have not been formally established, and the participation of all stakeholders is not the same at every stage of management. Stakeholders tend to participate according to their function in management, so when ecotourism is still in the development stage, the general public in East Citorek Village, who will later become direct managers, has not contributed much. This has also become an agreement of other stakeholders that, for now, the development focuses on the contribution of community groups such as Pokdarwis, Poktan, KWT, and CMF as community representatives.

Kasepuhan Citorek, as a stakeholder with the highest influence in Wewengkon Adat, has an important role in running the current customary ecotourism institution. Currently, there are no official institutional rules for the development of customary ecotourism, but this does not make current management irregular because temporary management is carried out based on customary rules.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, the following conclusions can be drawn from the research results:

1. The customary ecotourism of Mount Kendeng involves stakeholders from the Regional Government, Village Government, Customary Institutions, Academics, Community, and the village community in general. Mount Kendeng Ecotourism is built on customary forest areas and is a land grant from a customary institution, namely Kasepuhan Citorek, the construction of its facilities is a grant of funds from the Regional Government and Village Government, and its management is temporarily carried out by the surrounding community to benefit the village community at large further.
2. The development of custom-based ecotourism places the Customary Institution, namely Kasepuhan Citorek, with a supervisory function, the Regional Government with a development and funding function, the Village Government with an administrative function, academics with a development function, and the community and village community at large with a management and beneficiary function.
3. The stakeholder mapping resulted in four categories of stakeholders based on their level of importance and influence. Subjects and stakeholders with high importance and low influence consisted of Poktan, Dinas Pertanian, and CMF. Key players and stakeholders with high importance and high influence consisted of Kasepuhan Citorek, Dinas Budaya dan Pariwisata, and Pokdarwis. Context setters are stakeholders with low importance and high influence. Stakeholders in this category are the East Citorek Village Government and Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB). Crowds are stakeholders with low importance and low influence, namely the people of Citorek Timur Village, KWT, and KUMACITOR.
4. Stakeholders' diverse influences and interests further influence the sustainability dimensions of indigenous ecotourism development. In ecological sustainability, the variety of stakeholders accommodates environmental monitoring at various levels to ensure the preservation of the environment of indigenous peoples' territories. In socio-cultural sustainability, the cultural recognition carried out by stakeholders in the development of indigenous ecotourism allows ecotourism as a means of introducing Kasepuhan Citorek to the outside world so that it can simultaneously ensure the preservation of existing values and culture. In economic sustainability, the variety of stakeholders with multi-sectors allows for sectoral capacity development for the community. Regarding institutional sustainability, the role of Kasepuhan Citorek as a customary institution is important in regulating the established cooperation.

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