

Digitalization of Tourism Village Branding: Optimizing the Potential of Mangrove Forests

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Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Digital Branding, Digital Literacy, Mangrove Conservation.		Abstract. The community service program in the Sedari Village Mangrove Forest was implemented to address the limited utilization of digital technology in tourism promotion. Prior to the program, tourist visits averaged fewer than 60 per month, while the village’s promotional account received fewer than 10 interactions per post, indicating weak digital recognition and the need for stronger branding. This program aimed to strengthen community capacity through an integrated approach encompassing information technology, branding, and digital promotion. Information technology facilitated content management, branding established a distinctive identity for the mangrove tourism village, and digital promotion effectively disseminated this identity across online platforms. Key activities included developing an official tourism website, providing mentoring on branding that emphasized local characteristics, and collaborating with influencers to expand market reach. The results demonstrated that the website attracted 5,600 visits within two months of launch, while branding support enhanced partners’ ability to design logos, brochures, and social media content. Furthermore, influencer collaboration significantly increased engagement and improved the village’s public image. Overall, the program contributed to community-based sustainable tourism by improving digital literacy, fostering active community participation, creating additional income opportunities, and enhancing awareness of mangrove conservation.			
Katakunci: Pariwisata Berkelanjutan, Branding Digital, Literasi Digital, Konservasi Mangrove.		Abstrak. Program pengabdian masyarakat di Hutan Mangrove Desa Sedari dilaksanakan untuk mengatasi keterbatasan pemanfaatan teknologi digital dalam promosi pariwisata. Sebelum program berjalan, jumlah kunjungan wisatawan rata-rata kurang dari 60 orang per bulan, sementara akun promosi desa memperoleh kurang dari 10 interaksi per unggahan. Kondisi tersebut menunjukkan lemahnya pengenalan digital dan kebutuhan akan penguatan branding. Program ini bertujuan memperkuat kapasitas mitra melalui pendekatan terpadu yang mencakup teknologi informasi, branding, dan promosi digital. Teknologi informasi dimanfaatkan untuk pengelolaan konten, branding membangun identitas khas desa wisata mangrove, sedangkan promosi digital mendistribusikan identitas tersebut secara efektif melalui berbagai			

platform daring. Kegiatan utama meliputi pengembangan situs web resmi pariwisata, pendampingan branding yang menonjolkan karakteristik lokal, serta kolaborasi dengan influencer untuk memperluas jangkauan promosi. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa situs web mampu menarik 5.600 kunjungan dalam dua bulan setelah diluncurkan, sementara pendampingan branding meningkatkan kemampuan mitra dalam merancang logo, brosur, dan konten media sosial. Kolaborasi dengan influencer juga terbukti meningkatkan interaksi serta memperkuat citra desa. Secara keseluruhan, program ini berkontribusi pada pariwisata berkelanjutan berbasis masyarakat melalui peningkatan literasi digital, mendorong partisipasi aktif warga, menciptakan peluang pendapatan tambahan, serta meningkatkan kesadaran akan konservasi mangrove.

1 Introduction

Sedari Village, located on the coast of Karawang Regency, West Java, boasts a mangrove ecosystem that acts as a natural barrier against abrasion and offers significant potential for development as a tourist attraction. Currently, the mangrove ecosystem in coastal areas must be properly maintained, supported by a shared understanding and awareness of the importance of this ecosystem from various stakeholders. Mangroves play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of the coastal environment (Fikri & Sam'un, 2022). Mangrove forest management is regulated by Law Number 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry. Mangroves are a forest ecosystem that falls under the category of protected forests. The primary function of protected forests is to protect life support systems, regulate water management, prevent flooding, control erosion, prevent seawater intrusion, and maintain soil fertility. Therefore, mangrove forests must be protected and preserved (Redi et al., 2019). With the existence of attractive, educational, and sustainable mangrove tourism, not only will the sustainability of the mangrove ecosystem be maintained, but it can also improve the community's economy and make Sedari village a leading tourist destination (Bunga, 2024).

Sedari Village aspires to become a tourist village, but currently lacks an official decree as a tourist village and has not utilized digital media for promotion, making it less well-known among the wider

community. The Cikiong Mangrove Forest is currently managed by the Forest Village Community Institution (LMDH), which consists of 22 members. Entry to the mangrove forest is charged Rp 10,000 per person to cover maintenance and cleanliness costs. With plans to transform the village into a tourist village, sustainable mangrove ecosystem development and increased promotional capacity through digital media are essential to attract more visitors and promote Sedari Village as a potential mangrove tourism destination. The following is the latest education data for LMDH members:

Table 1. Partner Members' Education Data

No	Education	Amount
1	SMA	6
2	SMP	10
3	SD	6

The table above shows that most members have relatively limited formal education, with nearly three-quarters having only elementary school (SD) or junior high school (SMP) degrees. This situation indicates a lack of limitations in mastering managerial skills or utilizing digital technology to support tourism promotion. Therefore, through this community service program, LMDH members need to be provided with insight and capacity building, particularly in the areas of digital literacy, tourism management, and effective promotional strategies to enable them to sustainably manage mangrove tourism potential. The following image shows the exiting condition of the partner:



Figure 1. Partner Existing Condition

The problems faced by Sedari Village are not only related to the absence of official recognition as a tourist village but also encompass more complex and multidimensional issues. The lack of formal

recognition indeed limits access to government assistance and guidance; however, the core challenges lie in the low number of tourist visits, promotional efforts that remain conventional, and the underexposure of the village's mangrove tourism potential. In addition, tourism administration is still managed manually, making it difficult to present financial records and activity data quickly and accurately. The limited skills of human resources in utilizing information technology further exacerbate the situation, coupled with inadequate technological facilities and supporting infrastructure. This condition is worsened by the lack of training and mentoring programs for the community in tourism management and digital promotion.

Therefore, community service is crucial not merely to advocate for formal recognition as a tourist village, but more importantly to address the real problems that hinder the development of community-based tourism. Interventions through training, mentoring, and the application of digital technology are expected to enhance community capacity, improve tourism management, and expand promotional reach, enabling Sedari Village to grow into a sustainable tourist destination.

Objectives of Implementing Activities

This Community Service Program aims to provide comprehensive support to partners in developing Sedari Village tourism. One of the main focuses is assisting partners in managing the legal administration of the tourism village so they can obtain a Tourism Village Decree (SK) from the local government. To ensure these objectives are achieved, the success of this program will be measured by the submission of a draft decree to the local government, the establishment of an official digital platform and a visual identity for mangrove tourism, as well as the implementation of training for approximately 20 community members on tourism management, budget preparation and financial reporting, and branding concepts. At least 80% of the participants are expected to actively complete the training and produce tangible outputs such as a draft financial report and an initial logo design. This legality is crucial as the basis for official recognition, which will later open access to assistance, programs, and support from the government. Furthermore, this activity is also aimed at strengthening the capacity of partners in managing

mangrove tourism so that tourism management is not only carried out traditionally, but also supported by concrete aspects of professionalization such as the use of a digital ticketing system, application-based financial recording, and a clear division of organizational roles, thereby ensuring a more professional and sustainable management approach. In addition, the program also provides support and training related to tourism promotion strategies through digital branding using information technology, such as websites and social media, so that mangrove tourism destinations become more widely known to the community and potential tourists.

This theme was chosen because Sedari Village has significant mangrove ecotourism potential, but it has not been maximized due to limitations in legality, management, and promotion. Currently, tourism promotion is still carried out conventionally using brochures and banners, thus limiting information reach. Management administration is also still manual, making it difficult to record tourism revenue and activities quickly and accurately. The novelty of this community service lies in its integrative approach that combines legal assistance, managerial strengthening, and digital promotion strategies into a single program, ensuring not only the development of digital promotional media but also the transfer of knowledge and skills to the local community so they can independently manage technology. The urgency of this service emerges from the multidimensional problems faced by Sedari Village, including the lack of official recognition as a tourist village, low visitor numbers, conventional promotion methods, manual administration, limited digital skills, and inadequate facilities, all of which hinder sustainable tourism development. This program is therefore essential to strengthen institutional capacity, accelerate digital transformation, and maximize the potential of mangrove tourism for community welfare.

2 Method

The stages in implementing this community service are carried out in several stages. The stages can be seen in the following image:

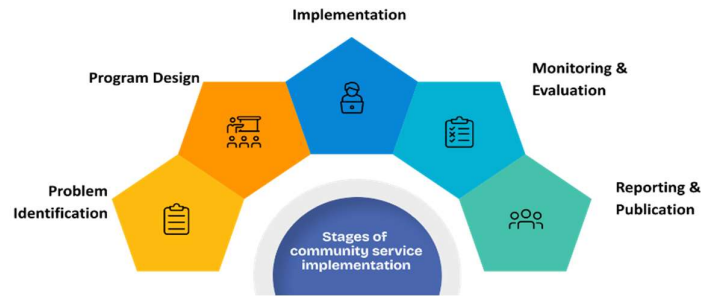


Figure 2. Stages of Community Service Implementation

The first stage is to identify partner problems by conducting surveys and field observations to see the actual conditions of tourism, infrastructure and management that occur, then formulate solutions that will be provided to partners. Then conduct interviews with partners to explore the challenges they face, as well as analyze data from available documentation related to the number of visits, promotional strategies used, and obstacles in management. The second stage is to prepare a service program such as complete documents that must be prepared for the submission of a tourist village decree to the Karawang district tourism office, with this submission Sedari Village can obtain official status as a Tourist Village so that it is easier to get assistance and support from the government and investors. The digital marketing strategy is designed to increase the promotion of Sedari Village tourism widely through social media and collaboration with influencers as well as the implementation of information technology to facilitate tourism management and increase the number of visits. The third stage of community service implementation is carried out with initial activities, namely conducting surveys, coordination, assistance to obtain a tourist village decree, holding training and assistance in order to increase the capacity of human resources in tourism management, training on digital-based tourism promotion strategies. As well as training and assistance with technology on how to use digital platforms for tourism promotion and the implementation of a digital-based tourism management system.

The next stage is evaluation and monitoring, where the team ensures that the program is running as intended and benefits the development of tourism and the creative economy in Sedari Village. The evaluation and monitoring stages include evaluating the system using

black box testing to ensure all features function according to specifications, and analyzing the UI/UX through usability testing. As emphasized by (Edwards & Hall, n.d.), systematic evaluation and monitoring are essential to measure program outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and ensure sustainability. This stage also involves conducting monitoring of system users and tourism managers, analyzing the increase in the number of visitors before and after the PKM program, and assessing the skills of partners by providing questionnaires. The final stage is reporting and publishing all PKM activities, producing community service journal articles to be submitted to OJS Sinta 3, as well as creating activity documentation and posters.

3 Results

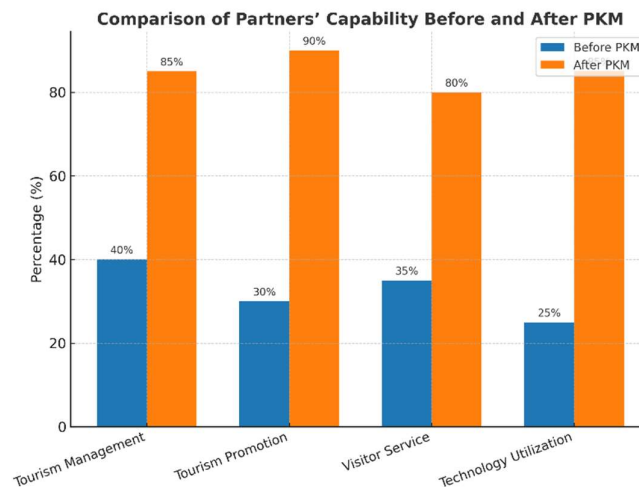
Community service activities in Sedari Village have yielded several important achievements in the development of mangrove ecotourism. First, Sedari Village successfully obtained official recognition as a tourist village through the Decree (SK) of the Regent of Karawang Number: 100.3.3.2 / Kep 160-Huk / 2025 issued on May 16, 2025. This legal recognition marks an important milestone in the history of Sedari Village's development, as it opens up opportunities for access to various forms of government assistance, programs, and support. Furthermore, the official status of a tourist village also strengthens Sedari Village's legitimacy as a nature-based tourism destination and sustainable mangrove conservation.

Second, in terms of promotion, the community service team took the initiative to collaborate with influencers and digital content creators to expand their reach. This strategy has proven effective in enhancing the branding of Sedari Village's mangrove forest as an attractive ecotourism destination that aligns with modern promotional trends. Through creative content published on various social media, the level of exposure of mangrove tourism is increasing and is able to reach the younger generation who are more familiar with digital media



Figure 3. Promotional Material Support

Third, the capacity building program (PKM) results showed a significant increase in partner capabilities. Prior to PKM, managerial skills (40%), promotion (30%), tourist service (35%), and technology utilization (25%) were low and conventional. After training and mentoring, these capabilities increased significantly: managerial skills (85%), promotion (90%), service (80%), and technology utilization (85%). This demonstrates that the PKM program has successfully strengthened the capacity of the Sedari Village community to manage mangrove tourism professionally and digitally.



.Figure 4. Partner Capability Graph

Fourth, the community service team also succeeded in developing the official website for the Sedari Village mangrove forest tourism.

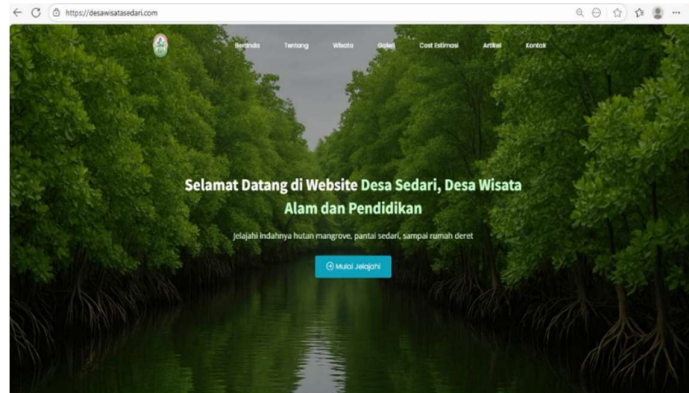


Figure 5. Website Display

This website was created using the waterfall method, which consists of five stages: needs analysis, system design, implementation, testing, and maintenance. The website serves as both an information medium and a digital promotional tool, featuring various content such as tourist village profiles, ticket and facility information, tourist activities, and engaging visual documentation. The presence of this official website is expected to make it easier for prospective tourists to obtain information and at the same time increase the attractiveness of mangrove tourism in Sedari Village.

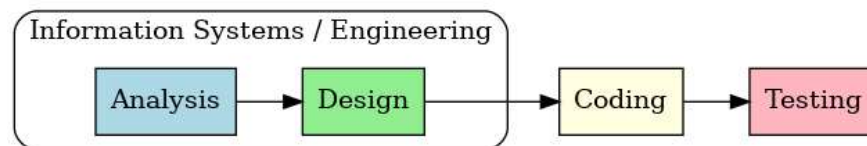


Figure 6. Waterfall Stages (Andriansyah, 2018)

A needs analysis was conducted by identifying the needs of both visitors and administrators. Visitors require access to information related to tourism types, tour packages, facilities, galleries, videos, articles, history, and additional features such as cost estimates and contact forms. Admins require a system that supports comprehensive tourism data management, from gallery management, packages, facilities, articles, to the creation of digital reports in PDF format. The analysis was conducted through interviews with tourism village managers and direct observation.

System design is carried out to describe the flow of user interaction with the application and the design of the database used. At this stage there are two main models:

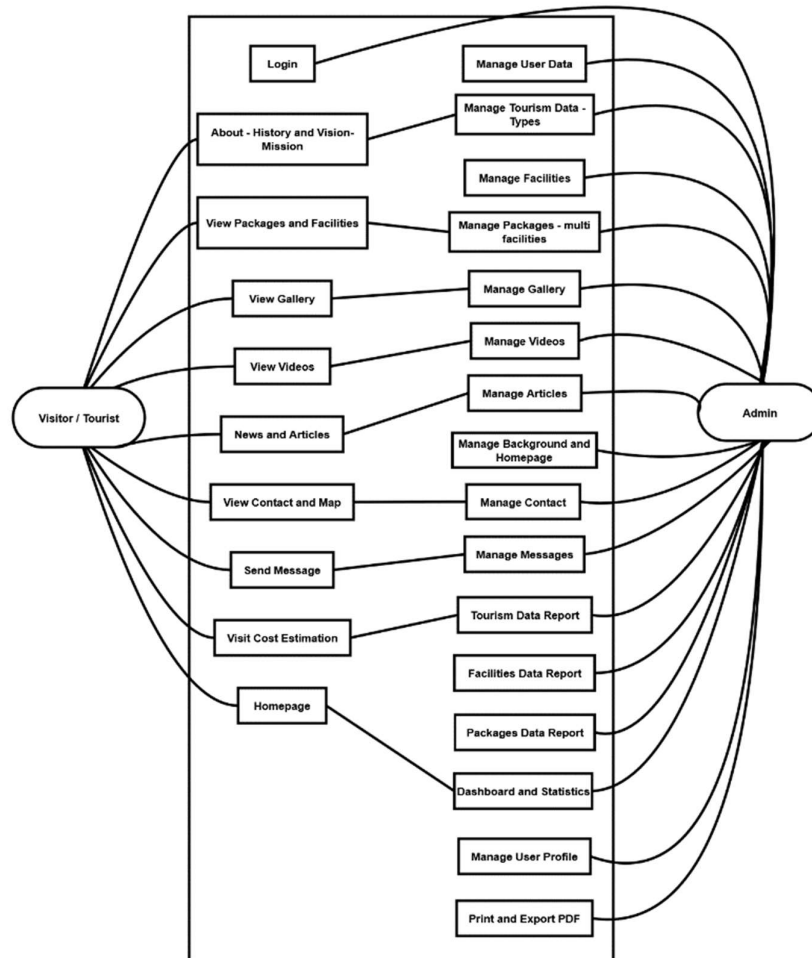


Figure 7. Usecase Diagram

This diagram illustrates the interaction between visitors and admins with the application. Visitors can view information, access galleries, articles, videos, and calculate cost estimates. Admins have the right to manage all data, including performing CRUD on tourist data, managing users, and generating reports.

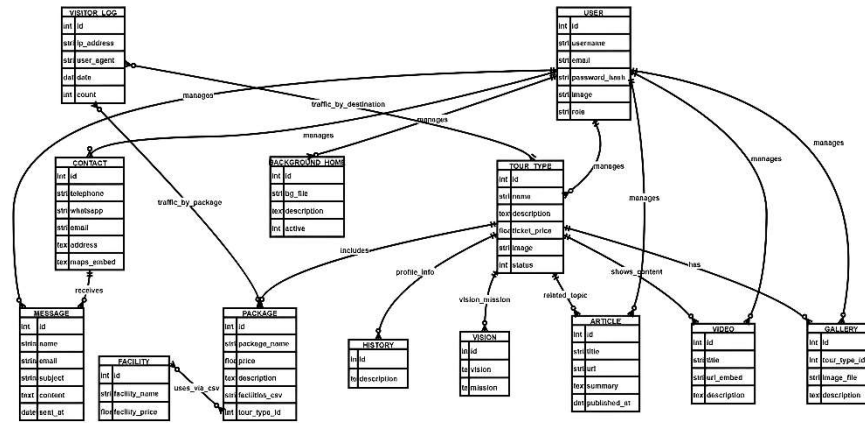


Figure 8. ERD

The application is expected to increase the visibility of Sedari Mangrove Tourism, empower LMDH members through digital literacy, boost tourist visits and local income, and support sustainable mangrove conservation, with success indicators including system functionality, active content, growing visitor numbers, community capacity building, and positive environmental impact.

The implementation was carried out using the CodeIgniter 3 framework, which implements a Model-View-Controller (MVC) architecture. The programming language used was PHP, with MySQL as the database, and HTML, CSS, and JavaScript for the user interface. The website is divided into two parts: the frontend for visitors (displaying tourist information, galleries, articles, videos, and cost estimates) and the backend for admins (managing data, dashboards, user profiles, and reports).

The system was tested using black box testing to ensure that every menu and feature worked properly. A user acceptance test (UAT) was conducted with the involvement of the Sedari Village mangrove forest management team. The results showed that all features functioned as expected and the user interface was user-friendly.

System maintenance ensures the system continues to operate effectively over the long term. Maintenance is carried out to fix bugs,

update content, and improve the interface to reflect technological developments and the promotional needs of Sedari Village. Through these five stages, the Sedari Tourism Village website has been successfully developed into an information system capable of supporting tourism promotion and simplifying data management by the village. With features such as tourism information, cost estimates, and digital reports, the website is expected to increase tourist appeal and make a significant contribution to village development.

4 Discussion

The results of the community service activities carried out by the Nusa Mandiri University team in Sedari Village can be further understood in the context of broader theoretical perspectives by analyzing five main themes.

a. Digitization as a Branding Tool.

The development of the official Sedari Village tourism website and the use of social media promotion reflect the role of digitalization as a branding tool. This effort goes beyond producing an information platform; it strengthens destination identity and visibility. (Rodrigues et al., 2023), note that digital marketing initiatives can enhance the image of rural destinations and influence tourists' intention to visit, while (Surya, 2024) emphasizes that smart ecotourism relies heavily on digital tools to increase competitiveness and promote sustainable economic development. (Ritonga et al., 2024) highlights that effective communication strategies and online promotion are key to attracting tourists to rural ecotourism sites. Additionally, (Purwitasari et al., 2024) discuss the role of social media influencers in increasing destination awareness, and (Mulyana, 2025) show that low-cost digital campaigns can strengthen local identity and community engagement. Finally, (Wulandari, 2025) argue that integrating website information and social media content enhances transparency and tourist satisfaction, while (Hoffmann et al., 2022) emphasize the importance of user-friendly digital platforms in supporting sustainable tourism practices. In this context, digital promotion positions Sedari Mangrove Tourism as an attractive

ecotourism destination at relatively low cost while reinforcing local identity.

b. Optimization of Mangrove Ecotourism.

The establishment of Sedari Village as an official tourism village through a decree represents the institutional basis for optimizing its ecotourism potential. Findings from (Nugroho et al., 2018) underline that such decrees are not only recognition but also frameworks that strengthen governance in tourism villages. At the same time, studies by (Manaf et al., 2018), (Ratna Susanti et al., 2023), and (Wibowo et al., 2023) indicate that institutional strengthening has multiple implications, including environmental conservation, cultural preservation, job creation, and reduced urbanization. Thus, ecotourism development in Sedari Mangrove is not merely a local initiative but part of a larger agenda of sustainable tourism governance.

c. Community Empowerment.

Community empowerment is a core aspect of community-based tourism (CBT). Training and mentoring have strengthened the digital and managerial capacities of local groups, enabling them to act as active stakeholders. Studies confirm that community-based approaches empower local participation in tourism development (Suarthana et al., 2015), social media literacy enhances tourism promotion (Siregar et al., 2025), ICT literacy supports community engagement (Yanti, 2020), and empowerment programs encourage sustainable management (Normelani et al., 2023). Similarly, participatory digital promotion strengthens branding and local involvement (Ihsan & Elyusra, 2025). In Sedari, this empowerment is evident in the growing digital literacy and the stronger role of local communities in tourism governance and promotion.

d. Socio-Economic-Environmental Impacts.

The service has created multidimensional impacts. Economically, tourism villages contribute to job creation and help reduce urbanization pressures, as seen in empowerment programs around mangrove ecotourism areas (Effendi et al., 2022). Socially, tourism

activities improve quality of life and raise public awareness in preserving culture and the environment (Rizky Augia & Fadhil Arief Dharmawan, 2025). Environmentally, the promotion of mangrove ecotourism implicitly supports conservation efforts, aligning with the view that institutional strengthening is key to sustainable destination management. Digital promotion also contributes indirectly by raising awareness of environmental values attached to mangrove ecosystems, as demonstrated in community assistance programs using social media and digital tools (Mastur et al., 2023)

e. Challenges and Recommendations for Sustainability.

Despite these achievements, challenges remain. The dependence on influencers and digital promotion strategies requires continuous innovation to avoid short-term visibility without long-term engagement. As (Purwandari et al., 2022) point out, the interaction between followers and influencers strongly influences trust and intention in following travel recommendations, which implies the need for consistent digital engagement. Furthermore, the digitalization of tourist destinations must be supported by consistent content and strong management to maintain tourist trust (Mutmainah et al., 2025). Sustainability also depends on balancing economic growth with environmental conservation, requiring stronger community institutions and governance. Recommendations include strengthening local human resources through ongoing digital training, building stronger institutional frameworks for governance, and integrating tourism development with long-term conservation plans.

Thus, it can be said that this community service not only produces concrete output but also encourages technology-based social transformation. The Sedari Village community has experienced a shift in mindset and skills, moving from minimal digital access to utilizing technology for tourism destination promotion and management. Capacity building for local communities is also a key pillar of CBT's success, as it ensures that communities become key actors, not merely tourism objects (Nabila et al., 2021)

5 Conclusion

The community service program in the Sedari Village Mangrove Forest has achieved significant results through the development of a tourism website, branding assistance, and digital promotion strategies. To measure its effectiveness, several indicators are established: the website is targeted to reach 50–100 visits per month within the first six months, while partners are expected to produce at least five promotional materials highlighting local uniqueness. Social media engagement is projected to increase by 20% within three months through influencer collaboration. Furthermore, at least three strategic partnerships with local government, tourism actors, and influencer networks will be established to strengthen promotional outreach. Capacity building is also emphasized, with 80% of partners trained to independently manage website content and digital promotions. These measurable outcomes not only reflect the tangible achievements of the program but also build a strong foundation for sustainable, community-based tourism development in Sedari Village.

6 Acknowledgment

The community service team from Nusa Mandiri University would like to express their sincere gratitude to all parties who have helped and contributed to the success of this activity. We also extend our gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology for providing funding so that this activity can run optimally. We also express our appreciation to the Karawang Regency Government through the Tourism and Culture Office for providing direction, guidance, and administrative support, allowing Sedari Village to obtain a Decree (SK) as a Tourism Village. We also express our appreciation to our media partners and Instagram celebrities/influencers who have supported the digital promotion of Sedari Village as a mangrove ecotourism destination. This support is a crucial factor in effectively expanding the scope of tourism promotion. Finally, we would also like to thank the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of Nusa Mandiri University for providing facilities, academic guidance, and technical support at every stage of the activity implementation. We hope that all the support and synergy that

has been established will continue, so that Sedari Village can develop into a community-based, competitive, and sustainable tourism destination.

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