

## Department of Biology, IPB Starts Tourism UKICIS Research 2023-2026 in the Belitung Island



Researchers at the Department of Biology, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FMIPA) IPB University have conducted research on the use of biological resources for sustainable and integrated tourism. The series of research under the United Kingdom-Indonesia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Sciences (UKICIS)-IPB which is funded by the Education Fund Management Institute (LPDP) will last for four years. This research is divided into seven research groups or work packages (WP). This major research involved IPB University lecturers and lecturers from other universities such as the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Gajah Mada University (UGM) and the University of Indonesia (UI).

UKICIS IPB University Tourism Group Research Coordinator, Prof. Miftahudin explained that research conducted by the Biology Department raised the topic "Sustainable and Integrated Tourism Based on Biological Resources in Belitung".

According to him, the choice of Belitung Island as a research location was motivated by the collaboration that had been carried out with the Belitung Regency government since 2018. This included IPB University's support when the Belitung Geopark was proposed as a UNESCO Global Geopark. Followed by cooperation in the use of organic waste with the Belitung Regency Environmental Service.

"We started this activity with a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the local governments of Belitung and East Belitung. The aim is to equalize perceptions and understanding so that this project can run well," he said some time ago.

He added, this research aims to identify the potential of local wisdom and biological resources as well as the ecosystem of Belitung Island for the development of sustainable tourism. This research also wants to create innovations based on the utilization of local wisdom and biological resources to produce products that can increase tourism.

"We also want to empower the community in utilizing innovation to drive a sustainable tourism-based economy," he added. According to him, UKICIS research will be carried out in various locations across Belitung Island. Each location will be adjusted to the focus of research conducted by IPB University lecturers and students.

In his explanation, each WP has a different research focus. WP 1, coordinated by Dr Triadiati, examines tourism based on agriculture, forestry and marine ecosystems. Then WP 2 focused on researching bees, honey and propolis on Belitung Island which they wanted to develop. This WP is led by Dr. Rika Raffiudin.

"Furthermore, WP 3, which is coordinated by Dr. Rika Indri Astuti, will study microbes at ex-mining sites that can be developed to support tourism activities. Then WP4 which was coordinated by Prof. Rd Roro Dyah Perwitasari, explored the diversity of wild animals to support tourism. Moreover, Belitung Island has tourism based on endemic wild animals," he said.

The next study, he continued, was conducted by WP 5 which was coordinated by Prof. Tatik Chikmawati, discussing the ethnobiological aspects of Belitung. Namely local wisdom that is commonly practiced by the community, especially focusing on the use of medicinal plants for herbal medicine.

"Then WP 6 led by Prof. Hamim, conducted research related to efforts to improve organic waste management. Meanwhile, WP 7, coordinated by Dr. Puji Rianti, will discuss carbon footprint and carbon active for sustainable tourism," he said.

In the research process which will last until 2026, Prof. Miftahudin and the team expect local government support through related agencies for assistance and liaison with the community and managers of tourist destinations.