

# Local Government Organizational Response for Realizing the Maritime-Oriented Development Sustainability in Riau Island

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**Abstract.** The rural coastal development in the Riau Islands still shows stagnation for achieving its arrangement. To maximize the sustainable development benefits on rural coastal with maritime recognition in the Riau Islands, it is crucial to align the rural government responses with the specific needs and challenges faced by each rural area. This approach can help minimize the tendency for such initiatives to fail. Through the use of qualitative descriptive research design, researchers emphasize the technicality of primary data collection with key in-depth interviews from the rural community, local businesses and also empower academics which expertise relevantly. Gradually and systematically, information was collected and managed to produce a valid and reliable conclusion. The research results illustrate that each rural characteristic shows a different picture of citizen trust conditions. However, there is a major node of citizen trust vulnerability which includes aspects concerning, the plan for allocating needs and using rural development budgets that are misperceptions both shown by the citizen and the rural government itself. Thus strengthening the social learning process through the support of relevant in-depth inquiry from the sociology disciplines and anthropology concerning rural development will complement the efforts which fostering the sustainable citizens trust towards their rural government.

## 1 Introduction

The rural Government in the decentralization era for development paradigm became a strategic point of development in Indonesia. The implementation of the village government wheel is an integral part in the context of the development administration of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. As one of the main subjects of development at the village level, the local rural government actively interacts directly with the community. So that local rural governments have a strategic role as the spearhead in achieving national development goals as mandated by the constitution. Integrally this spirit has also been reflected through Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, which was passed and promulgated on January 15, 2014, has become an effort to manifest state recognition and respect for villages with their

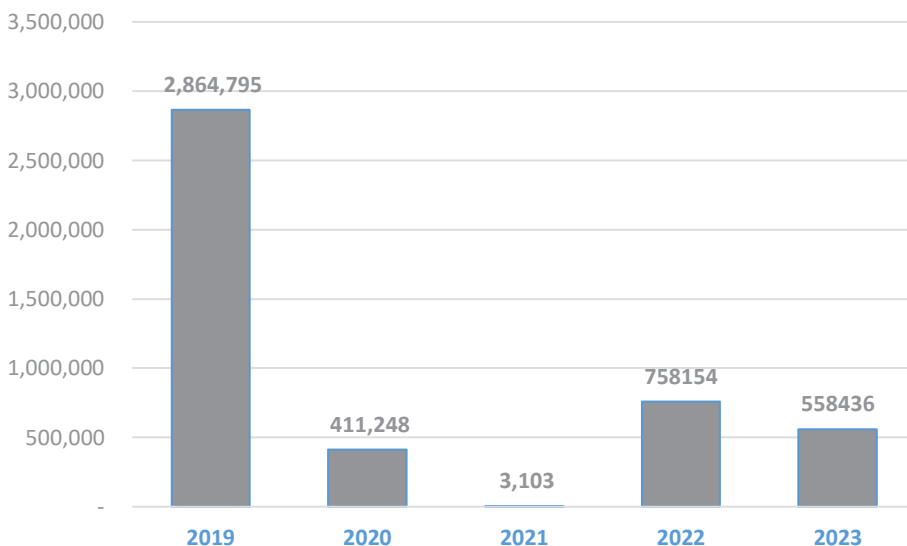
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diversity. In the Law on Rural development, there are two things that are the main key, namely what is called develop a village and or rural development. Rural Development means the need for a form of participatory action from the rural government itself with the community in building the village because without participatory action, the failure rate in develop the rural coastal is very large (1).

The motivation in the general discussion above illustrates the urgency of realizing the success of rural development in a decentralized perspective which in the last 3 years has actually faced very significant challenges after the Corona virus disease (Covid-19) Pandemic. The economic joints of rural communities are one of the fundamental points that feel a sharp decline as Indonesia strives to get out of the Covid-19 Pandemic crisis. The economic impact also puts pressure on the focus of financing for local rural development needs (2) which is felt in real terms starting from the central, provincial, district or city government levels, to the implementation of the wheels of government at the village level. This social phenomenon systemically certainly provides a new direction for the rural development awareness, namely mainstreaming rural development and implementation to get more progressive and sustainable performance because of the demands of recovering from pandemic conditions more quickly and securely (3–5). This rationale motivated the research team to explore systematically the rural government's organizational as the development stimulus dynamics that were running so significantly.

In relation to the discussion, the condition of the Covid-19 Pandemic that has passed has had a very significant contraction on the economy, especially Riau Island tourism, where the majority of the perpetrators are the community. Job loss (6), which also extends to beach-based ecotourism areas, islands and other tourist area characters (7).



Source: BPS Riau Island Province, 2023.

The general tourism development in Riau Islands Province certainly contracted due to the pressure of the Covid-19 Pandemic situation. The economic routine of many people who depend on their family's economy is the ecotourism business of terrestrial forests and mangrove forests. This phenomenon illustrates that ecotourism business players who contribute the structure of the tourism economy in the Riau Islands have also experienced a significant contraction, especially in the dimension of reduced income. The decline in the

trend of ecotourism business income in mangrove coastal forest ecotourism areas (*downline*) as well as terrestrial forests (*upline*) has a real and widespread impact on efforts to meet the basic needs of the community such as the trend of declining consumption ability. This phenomenon occurs causally because in their routines the community already has a strong dependence on the benefits of the forests they manage both ecologically, sociologically and economically (8). The impact of conditions after the Covid 19 pandemic has been felt by the ecotourism business community in the Riau Islands. This is actually paradoxical, when in fact the strategic advantages of *Upline* and *downline* attractions are a very unique source of income because the existence of these two types of attractions has a strong relationship. This geographical condition is different from that applicable to forest tourism areas on major islands in Indonesia or even in other countries (9).

This factual condition certainly requires a responsive thought and attitude by the rural government, especially villages with coastal tourism (Maritime) characters that are strategically spread and found in the Riau Islands Province. The organizational response of rural government in the context of this study is assumed to be *the next rural development implication* in Indonesia, especially villages with the character of rural coastal tourism area. This locus has empirically shown a significant phenomenon that morally requires new thinking improvements as a guide to better rural governance practices in the future. This assumption is also an effort to answer the importance of restoring the rural development process comprehensively where the locus of local rural coastal tourism is actually the locus of development administration which is very fundamental for the sustainability of development nationally. The tourism sector, which is the backbone of people's income in most coastal tourism villages, is the leading locus that feels the impact of the decline related to the Covid 19 Pandemic crisis situation (10–12).

For the dynamic development of rural coastal tourism development according to the discussion of the previous paragraph, the need for new knowledge continues to grow related to the theme of the organizational response of the Busung rural coastal government in realizing the sustainability of maritime-minded development occupies an urgent position. The development of knowledge or ideas proposed through this study intends to explore to see how the readiness of the Riau Islands Provincial Government in responding to environmental challenges that are accelerating in the application of the best value for rural tourism development through increasing the organizational responsiveness of rural coastal tourism government.

## 2 Literature review

The organizational response in this study has a reference to the ability of the local rural government as a local organization with the authority to autonomously solve the problems of its community in the context of developing the rural tourism area in small island areas. This conception of thinking is still very rarely developed in the perspective of administrative disciplines that should pay more attention to efforts to develop thinking systematically for the stability of achieving development performance at specific ecological limits such as small coastal island areas in Riau Island Province.

The development modernization paradigm or linear with the classical administrative paradigm describes that the effectiveness of the implementation of public organizations depends on the organizational response carried out. This means that when local governments show a response only to meeting development needs physically, it reaps criticism that it turns out that the results obtained from development only provide benefits that are not optimal for the community (13). The effectiveness of the program is equivalent to the policy of local governments to build influenced by several variables such as the existence of intervention by

external subjects, specific attention to meeting the basic needs of the community such as family food needs and / or increasing attention to the dynamic social learning process (14).

The next paradigm concerns the development delineation movement or which is linearly in accordance with the new public management paradigm. The perspective developed has a marked difference with the previous paradigm. Where the focus of thinking on various supporting theoretical conceptions tends to show efforts to improve the performance of public organizations through the development and instillation of private sector values in achieving organizational goals (15) or as a form of value-added transformation for the tradition of governance (16). This development occurred in response to the rigidity of the administration of the wheel of government found in many studies where the real dominance of regulatory rules has limited the creativity and innovation that should be able to be carried out by people in public organizations or government into a format of strategic creativity management (17,18). In fact, various expert thoughts that arise in the paradigm of independence development are actually in accordance with the paradigm of new public administration management, especially in terms of the process of changing the structure of social development of the community in an effort to develop new income generating (19).

The last paradigm that describes the openness of the system, the basic values of democratic guidelines or that is in line with the thinking of the New Public Service has placed development democracy above all else. The existence of the subject has also filled an equivalent position with a balanced description of authority and duties. The dynamics of the implementation of public organization management in the perspective of new public service vary greatly (20). Starting from changing the terminology of thinking about the subject of society to become a citizen subject with a more down-to-earth character, for example, it has included the meaning of citizen as a sub-system of organization as a whole and balanced with other development subjects, to the existence of a government subject that is equal and balanced in role with society which was only to act as an object or party that only receives more benefits.

It is on the basis of this discussion that this study places the position of organizational responses shown by local governments as part of new innovation that develops specifically at the locus of maritime natural resources-based areas or small islands. The location and role of traditions and family aspects of local government at the locus of this study phenomenon are really specific as shown by outliers of development performance that tend to be far away if with other regions in Indonesia. Geographical barriers have ushered in development efforts in both human resources and economic development, becoming very difficult to develop. Thus, insights, recent observations, and new knowledge greatly help these efforts, which in this study are limited only to the responsiveness of local government organizations. This is based on the assumption and belief of researchers that internal forces have a very strategic opportunity to elaborate problems and realize them into concrete actions to improve practice and for developing mindsets.

The ecotourism potential in many locations in Riau Islands Province can be utilized to bridge the gap in rural areas; however, the dominance of ecotourism management business organizations in these places still fails to prioritize the involvement of local organizations and the rural citizens, resulting in a lack of independence in management. Furthermore, the local people's disinterest in becoming ecotourism managers, and their preference for working as laborers, further exacerbates the situation (21). The focus of the research is on promoting community independence in conjunction with rural governments that have tourism potential in the Riau Islands. The aim is to analyze how local governments are responding to the challenges faced by rural communities and innovating to solve problems to help them become more independent. The main subject of this research is to understand how to build rural villages with a focus on independence. This effort can be explained through the alignment of national development policies, such as the Law on Villages (22). However, in terms of

implementation, it still has a long way to go. The rural community and rural government, from an organizational perspective, still do not demonstrate sufficient ability and empowerment to independently realize their performance on rural coastal development.

The organizational response of local government in this study refers to the meaning of democratic thinking. Where the ecotourism entrepreneur community of mangrove coastal forests and terrestrial forests has positions and tasks that are as important as existing local governments, in this case it refers to local village governments. Measurement of organizational response is very appropriate using the new public service paradigm. In addition to the locus of research is the ecotourism environment of forests and mangroves in coastal areas and small islands, the social condition of Malay people also has a tendency to open society so that in carrying out its role in local organizations still prioritize family relations. However, the meaning of the organizational response is certainly different from the experience of organizational management during the past Covid-19 pandemic because it tends to override long-term impacts such as drastically weakened economic growth, psychological impact management responses and weaknesses in government support that spread in such a way (23). This research tends to agree on the meaning of organizational responses as social organization learning machines. Thus, important organizational responses are measured in studies concerning the initial process of local organizations receiving change inputs in the form of direct stimuli that are closely related to the program to achieve organizational performance. Thus, the organizational response refers to the fundamental commitment of local organizations (African reference -US) according to the focus of this study is coastal village government, as well as its determination on participatory organizational decision making.

The organizational decision-making process is seen as a presence to place guiding values for achieving organizational performance because directly this study adheres to the values of openness and kinship according to the cultural character and social conditions at the research location, which is still very thick with Malay customs. These projections of local organizational commitment include various indications.

### **3 Method**

Managing the rural-level local organizations, especially in the Riau Islands, requires a fairly complex systematic approach due to the development that both geographically and historically, some rural locations show a complex character and are far different from other regions in Indonesia. Thus, researchers decided to apply a dynamic research approach option, namely utilizing a qualitative approach that has the advantage of its ability to reveal research information in depth with enormous potential adjustments in the research field (24). In its embodiment, researchers have understood previously that historically the research location has a record of Malay community norms that are quite strong and are still maintained. However, the villagers who exist today have experienced the development of different population compositions where migration flows are large enough to compensate for the composition of the original population. Geographically, most of the research locations in villages have the potential to be like ecotourism businesses, actually facing complicated challenges where the areas that stretch are different and united by archipelagic water areas. Based on this description, the researcher then assumes that the use of qualitative descriptive approaches tends to be appropriate to explore the phenomenon of organizational responsiveness of the rural government in the Riau Islands.

In an orderly manner, researchers operationalize the organizational response of rural government in Riau Islands into several indications, namely (1) the organizational response of the rural government in carrying out its main function as the authority to formulate the rural development policies, (2) the organizational response of rural government in carrying

out routines of planning and empowering budget resources for the rural development, (3) and finally related to organizational responses of rural governance in the perspective of receiving benefits from development programs and policies felt by the citizen. The efforts to rural development require the consideration of three important indications. Most local rural in the Riau Islands still receive minimal assistance from both academics and top-level government as autonomous units. Proper collection of research data and information is crucial, and it has been carried out using secondary data support such as official reports and planning documents at the Riau Islands Province level. The primary research data obtained previously using an interview mechanism for key informants consisting of academics, practitioners from the relevant Regional Apparatus Work Unit in Riau Islands Province, village heads, and community leaders, both representing religious and cultural figures relevant to the pre-compiled indications, is certainly empowered by the main data collection used in this study.

The research primary data was in the form of excerpts of interviews that were recorded first a week earlier and again poured into transcripts of field interview results. This data was managed in the past by a research team that limited its classification into previously developed indication sub-themes. To corroborate research information generated through the previous field interview process, it is necessary to use secondary data. The management of interview results requires the examination and validation of secondary data to ensure coherence between the information obtained from the interview results and the reality presented by the previous government. Additionally, information reliability is enhanced in the final stage by cross-checking with academic experts from universities.

## 4 Results

It is widely acknowledged among academics in Indonesia that society plays a crucial role in driving development. This sentiment is not merely a slogan, but has been formally recognized in village development policies across the country. As a result, members of society are now considered the primary actors in planning, implementing, and evaluating development initiatives in their respective villages (25,26). Promoting citizen trust in local-level development is a common phenomenon in divergent thinking. It is similar to the organizational landscape in simple thinking, where academics in Indonesia have recognized the position of society as the main actor of development. This recognition is not just a slogan, but it has also gained formal acceptance in village development policies in Indonesia, where the society plays a crucial role in planning, implementing and evaluating development in their respective citizen. (27). However, recent research has confirmed that achieving the desired development goals still requires efforts to empower communities. This suggests that the commitment to building villages by placing the community as the main subject is a serious and dynamic challenge that cannot be realized with mere formal means or procedures. Instead, innovative solutions that effectively address the problems faced by villages need to be implemented in order to succeed. Even in this case, some experts and academics tend to mistakenly believe that assisting society to achieve empowering values requires parallel terminology and perspectives. Despite this, people may feel hesitant about aligning themselves with this approach. The results of this study show that alignment with previous thinking also means that, as organizational human resources possessing greater value, we should feel inferior to the community, as it is the community that has faced the challenges of development a real village and has passed the test.

The efforts to self-sustain rural development with specific characteristics closely relate to the organizational response of rural governments in Riau Islands. The character of ecotourism rural coastal in the border areas of the country strongly supports the welfare of citizen. The reflection of the rural government's main duties and work clearly shows their organizational response. An interesting finding in this research location reveals that the citizen feels the rural



government is currently busy with mere routine tasks and work, while the rural government explains that the tasks and work of rural development are in accordance with the conditions and expectations of all parties. The organizational response of the rural government affects this indication, demonstrating that the community is still experiencing limited development benefits. During the subsequent discussion, it became evident that the community's acceptance and trust in the outcomes of rural development must reflect the good organizational response of the rural government, which is equally beneficial. This outcome illustrates the extent to which both the rural community and government pursue the potential for sustainability in rural development as the preferred subject in independent rural development in the Riau Islands.

#### **4.1 The local implements its duties and functions as an organizational response.**

The primary purpose of village governments, particularly in the context of independent village development, is to conduct developmental affairs. This is achieved through community empowerment in the provision of village public facilities, such as village roads, bridges, irrigation systems, markets, and joint meeting halls. The developmental role carried out by rural governments is a testament to the success of effective, efficient, and equitable governance in the current era. Researchers' opinion aligns with the rural government's efforts to innovate through development programs for the government above and non-government parties, as well as creating self-help participation from the rural community or citizen itself (28) The rural government is highly interested in implementing the rural development movement comprehensively, in order to empower the citizen with appropriate power to come up with building ideas and actively participate in the development of their village. However, the study results indicate that there are still responses not following these wishes, as the implementation of the main duties or functions of the rural government in the research location still revolves around the narrow sense of implementing rural development administration. The participation of rural governments in various development coordination agendas, maintenance programs for village office facilities and infrastructure, and community services that come to the village office all contribute to the best value for the village.

The interviews conducted during field research indicate the need for special development to prepare human resources to participate in the ecotourism business in rural coastal areas. This applies to most small island areas. In addition, secondary data supports the existence of promising tourism potential at the rural level. However, the village government's organizational response to realizing its main task in development is not yet optimal in supporting the empowerment of the community and young people in the village. It is clear that there is a limited number of human resources involved in coastal and terrestrial forest ecotourism locations, and their roles are limited to cleaners or other positions classified as 'weak positions'. The results of this analysis are in line with the findings (29) Local authorities in villages often fail to empower their communities, resulting in limited access to economic resources. Moreover, past policies tend to overlook the importance of developing villages as an integral part of national development.

The rural governments, particularly those with natural resources suitable for land and coastal forest ecotourism, are innovating to advance their development goals during the pandemic. The focus is on empowering the community in these villages located in the Riau Islands region. The research discussion in this report explores the gaps in efforts that can be addressed to improve the current situation. Interviews with community leaders and academics have confirmed that the local rural government should innovate to promote community independence and enable them to independently participate in every economic

activity related to utilizing natural wealth and other unique characteristics of the village. As society continues to evolve, it's becoming increasingly important for individuals to acquire a range of soft skills that enable them to access growing sources of income. Learning is a key tool in this effort, as it can assist communities in comprehensively developing the skills they need to thrive in their respective fields. (30). Therefore, the rural government's approach to fulfilling its principal responsibility for the development of the village is aligned with the needs and growth challenges of the citizen, following a clear and direct path.

## **4.2 Organizational response at resources allocating as a plan**

The law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages reflects that the rural as a primary have autonomous and original autonomy governments, which grants them privileges compared to 'kelurahan' or other areas at local Indonesia (31). The policy in question declares that a village, referred to as a legal community unit with territorial boundaries, is authorized to regulate and manage government affairs, uphold the interests of local communities based on community initiatives, recognize and respect traditional rights and rights of origin within the government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The village holds the power of autonomy to govern its own affairs and manage its resources. This autonomy is exercised through the election of the village head, who leads the government. The village is also empowered to create and enforce regulations, which are formally established and implemented by the village head in consultation with the rural consultative body. These regulations form the legal framework that guides the village's activities and decision-making. The rural government is presented with numerous opportunities to improvise, particularly in the areas of planning and allocation of available resources. These improvisations are crucial for the rural development with unique characteristics, such as the small island regions situated along the state border of Indonesia. The improvisation in the context of allocative planning of resources aims to provide the necessary support to these villages, to enable them to grow and develop in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

The findings clearly depict a worrisome state of the organizational response, which is yet to demonstrate a promising trajectory. This is evident from the development performance of several villages situated in the border area of Riau Islands Province, where a majority of them are still grappling with a disadvantaged status. Furthermore, despite some achievements in the development process, the effectiveness of the development programs has not reached a satisfactory level (32). During research discussions, it was discovered that achieving rural development in the border area of Riau Islands Province presents significant challenges. The community faces difficulties in terms of accessibility to economic and trade centers, and also experiences scarcity of raw goods required for production activities, such as LPG gas and diesel for fishermen. The efforts to promote rural development in archipelagic areas that share sea borders with other countries are often hindered by the challenge of complying with international standards and regulations. This poses a significant barrier to the success of such initiatives (33).

According to recent research, the challenge of breaking old development habits has emerged as a major concern for the research team. Specifically, the planning process requires consensus on resource allocation, but there is often a lack of constructive discussion between the community, community representative institutions, and elements of the rural government. This makes it difficult to make progress and improve development outcomes. The lack of any meaningful discussion process suggests that the village's deliberative behavior remains purely ceremonial. It has not yet evolved into a serious planning and resource allocation exercise aimed at addressing common problems or challenges that may arise in the coming year. However, there is also another possibility that could indicate a different trend. Perhaps



the rural community as a whole is currently experiencing a state of relative stability and contentment, with no pressing concerns about the availability of basic necessities of life. Upon conducting interviews and further research, it was discovered that despite the alternative measures taken, there still exists a significant number of individuals who are struggling to meet their monthly financial needs within the community. The discussion concluded that the village government and the community require additional support to enhance their development efforts. This can be achieved through improved organizational response, effective planning, and allocation of development resources to ensure maximum efficiency.

### **4.3 Acceptance sustainability by beneficiaries**

The level of acceptance that the community shows towards the actions and outcomes produced by the rural government in the context of development is a crucial aspect. The community's willingness to embrace and derive benefits from the development initiatives is directly linked to their active involvement and constructive participation in the development process (34). Establishing a sense of trust within the community can significantly enhance the rural development performance and lead to better outcomes. The relationship between a rural government and its community is a crucial aspect of development efforts. The community's acceptance of the government's actions and initiatives is essential for the success of any development project (35). When rural communities participate actively and play a positive role in the development process, it leads to greater community trust in the government and the development process. This trust, in turn, becomes a powerful force that can improve the overall performance of the rural development initiatives.

The research interview results shed light on the direction of the positive organizational response of rural governments in the Riau Islands. According to the findings, this response plays a crucial role in achieving better community trust. However, the research also revealed some concerning indications. Upon tracing secondary research data, it was discovered that the community had previously rejected some of the steps taken by the rural government as part of development programs. This rejection was mainly due to the fact that several physical development programs had been carried out without taking into account the ideas and aspirations of the citizen. In other words, the community felt disappointed and disengaged from the development process. According to some studies, instances of rejections like the one mentioned earlier, can often be attributed to insufficient socialization efforts by the local government. This means that there may be a lack of communication or education on the part of the government regarding the policies and procedures involved, leading to misunderstandings and ultimately, rejections (36). In many cases, the reason behind community rejection of development programs initiated by local governments can be traced back to insufficient socialization efforts by these authorities. Local village governments often fail to effectively communicate with the community about the development plans and projects in a formal manner, through channels such as media outlets. As a result, the community may be left feeling uninformed and disconnected, leading to resistance towards the development program. These findings have been confirmed through research, which has delved deeper into this phenomenon. During the research, it was observed that in many villages, the rejection of development initiatives was not solely due to the lack of efforts on the part of the local government to socialize the implementation process. Instead, the community members felt the need for tangible results to be produced by the village government to prove the effectiveness of their efforts. In other words, the locals were looking for concrete evidence that the government's development initiatives had a positive impact on their lives before they could fully support them. This statement implies that as time passes,

rejection of a particular idea or proposal will gradually shift towards a more inquisitive approach. This shift occurs when the community starts to witness tangible benefits or outcomes resulting from the implementation of the proposed public goods. Such benefits can include an improved ability to solve problems and address challenges faced by the community. In summary, the community's initial skepticism is replaced by curiosity and a desire to learn more about the potential benefits of the proposed public goods.

## 5 Conclusion

The research focuses on studying the responses of rural coastal governments towards potential ecotourism features of archipelagic areas. The study aims to provide a detailed understanding of the location-specific and urgent measures that these governments take to address issues related to rural development in the Riau Islands. The research aims to develop innovative ways to promote the sustainable development of these areas. The study suggests that the best way to tackle the problems faced by rural communities is to work together and promote a sense of independence. By doing so, the Riau Islands' rural communities can plan, organize, and evaluate their development progress more effectively. The research findings indicate that the local village government's response to community needs is not yet aligned with the problems they face. However, the study's significance lies in the fact that there is still a strong interest in improving rural development and serving the needs of the citizen better. The Riau Islands are aiming to create unique ecotourism villages with their own distinctive character. To achieve this, it's important to improve development behavior that prioritizes togetherness and filters out the adoption of other regional development strategies. The rural governments need to collectively think about how to effectively and efficiently carry out their main functions of development, planning, and allocating activities, while also ensuring equity. Additionally, fostering citizen trust and acceptance of rural development projects is crucial for the success of this initiative. By addressing these issues comprehensively, Riau Islands can realize a more efficient and characterful village development process..

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