

Formulating Marine Tourism Service Standards for Soetan Island, Pesisir Selatan Regency

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Abstract Standardizing marine tourism services is essential to ensure the quality and safety of visitors. With standardization, marine tourism service providers can ensure that all aspects of services, such as equipment, facilities, and human resources, meet the established criteria. This will increase visitor confidence and reduce the risk of accidents. In addition, standardization also helps improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services so that visitors can enjoy a better tourism experience. Standardization of marine tourism services also has a positive impact on the local economy and environment. With increasing service quality, tourists will be more likely to return and recommend the destination, thereby increasing local economic income. Therefore, we must implement and strictly monitor the standardization of marine tourism services to maintain the quality and sustainability of the marine environment. A standard operating procedure (SOP) document embodies the realization of service standardization. We prepared the SOP through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Soetan Island management. Four FGDs took place, leading to the creation of four SOP documents for Soetan Island's marine tourism services. This SOP document is a guide for Soetan Island Tourism Management in providing services to tourists, which support the realisation of decent work and service that leads to the economic growth.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the post-pandemic era, travel trends have shifted significantly (Li et al., 2021). To help revitalize the tourism industry, it is essential to understand how people's travel preferences have changed since the pandemic (Kusumaningrum & Wachyuni, 2020). Tourism development is also one of the priority programs of the West Sumatra Provincial Government. The province has considerable tourism potential, offering a rich combination of natural attractions, cultural heritage, and a growing creative economy. In response to these trends and aligned with West Sumatra's tourism development policies, one of the most promising destinations for further development is Soetan Island, located in the North Mandeh area of Pesisir Selatan Regency. However, access to information about this destination remains limited, primarily reaching only local tourists. In reality, Soetan Island holds strong potential to contribute to business growth and regional income.

Its appeal lies in its open natural environment, commitment to sustainability, safety, health-oriented offerings, peaceful atmosphere, and preservation of local wisdom (Zainal et al., 2024).

Several obstacles hinder the development of the Soetan Island tourist area. These include unattractive packaging of tourist attractions, limited product diversification, inconsistent quality of tourism services, ineffective promotion and communication, outdated business operations, and a shortage of skilled human resources (Özgit & Öztüren, 2021). Additionally, a limited market share affects visitor consistency and sustainability (Potjanajaruwit, 2023). The destination tends to be crowded on certain days but experiences low visitor turnout on others. Addressing these management issues cannot be achieved through a single intervention. Therefore, this community engagement initiative focuses on improving the quality of

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tourism services by developing standardized operating procedures tailored to the needs of Soetan Island's tourism sector.

A SOP is a set of guidelines for tourism managers that outlines the processes, steps, and operational standards within an organization (Nazir et al., 2023). SOPs are designed to ensure that every decision, action, and use of resources within the organization is carried out effectively, consistently, and systematically in accordance with established standards. In addition, SOPs serve as evidence of compliance with regulations and operational procedures, helping maintain quality and accountability in service delivery.

One of the main constraints in developing the Soetan Island tourist area is the reliance on conventional business operations that lack proper standardization, particularly in the management of personnel and equipment in the field. The absence of clear SOPs means that operations are still carried out based on immediate needs rather than careful planning. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to fully optimize the standardization of tourism services. Bozkurt (2012) highlights that standardization is crucial for all tourism activities, especially marine tourism, which is classified as high-risk. Implementing standard operating procedures not only reduces risks but also helps mitigate potential hazards (Jayasinghe et al., 2024). SOPs related to equipment management also improve the durability and longevity of supplies and gear (Eskandarzadeh et al., 2023) while enhancing safety and comfort for users. Without effective management and standardization, equipment and facilities can become safety hazards, posing risks to tourists themselves (Cavlek, 2002).

In line with efforts to deliver professional services, standardizing operations across all marine tourism activities is essential (González-Morales et al., 2021). Standardization helps reduce risks and ensures preparedness for potential challenges. Establishing clear service standards also contributes to building a stronger brand image within the community while enhancing the overall quality of services. More importantly, it supports the long-term sustainability of the marine tourism ecosystem in the Soetan Island area (Auliya & Prianti, 2022; Bazazo & Alananzeh, 2020; Favro et al., 2009; Goffi et al., 2019). The primary goal of this initiative is to develop a comprehensive SOP document that covers both field operations and administrative procedures, serving as a practical guide for tourism management on Soetan Island.

2. METHOD

2.1 Activity design

The SOP preparation activity employed a qualitative approach. Data were collected through a series of FGDs with key stakeholders, including tourism managers, local community members, and supporting actors such as vendors, transportation providers, and other small businesses involved in tourism. The FGDs aimed to identify key components necessary for developing SOPs for tourism services on Soetan Island. In addition to the FGDs, a

literature review of relevant previous studies was conducted to gather more comprehensive insights. Based on the findings from both the FGDs and the literature review, a general framework for the SOPs was developed. Through discussions with the implementation team, four specific service SOPs were finalized to support the management of high-quality and sustainable tourism on Soetan Island.

2.2 Data collection

The data were collected through FGDs with tourism managers, local community members, and tourism support actors such as traders, transportation providers, and small business owners. The involvement of both managers and community members was highly relevant, as they served not only as key tourism stakeholders but also as residents directly responsible for ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism in the area. A total of 20 informants were recruited for the FGDs. Additional participants could have been added if further data were deemed necessary.

The FGD method was chosen because it allowed for the collection of diverse views, insights, and perspectives from the participants (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2017). It also provided flexibility to capture emerging ideas and themes during the discussions (Boateng, 2012). Our FGD design followed the methodological framework outlined by (Van Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). This activity consisted of two main stages: (1) conceptualization and data collection, and (2) data analysis. During the first stage, we developed FGD guidelines by identifying the target groups and determining the key topics to be explored. We then conducted interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the necessary components for the SOPs, followed by the FGDs with stakeholders. The second stage focused on data analysis, which involved classifying and quantifying various aspects identified in the participants' responses. An overview of the analysis procedures is presented in Figure 1.

2.3 Measurement

Based on the objectives of this activity, we developed interview and FGD topics to collect relevant data. These topics were also informed by input and preliminary information from stakeholders. The topics discussed comprised: (1) Evaluation of Tourist Experiences, which focused on assessing tourists' impressions, satisfaction, and expectations regarding their experiences in the tourism area; (2) Tourism Product Development, which explored new ideas and concepts for expanding tourism products, particularly those related to the cultural, natural, and historical potential of the area; (3) Tourism Management, which identified key challenges in managing the tourism area and formulated appropriate solutions related to infrastructure, environmental management, service quality, and community participation; (4) Service Quality, which aimed to improve services offered to tourists, including cleanliness, friendliness, and responsiveness of staff; (5) Tourist Needs and Preferences, which focused on identifying tourists' expectations, needs, and preferences to enhance the overall tourism experience;

(6) Infrastructure Development, which discussed the development and improvement of essential infrastructure to support tourism growth; and (7) Environmental Management, which addressed strategies for sustainable environmental management to minimize negative impacts and preserve ecological balance.

2.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data from the FGDs were analyzed using content analysis (Kim & So, 2022). The implementation team discussed the findings and used them to develop the tourism service SOP. The analysis process began with the preparation stage, which involved transcribing all conversations, editing for accuracy, and coding the data to facilitate further examination. Following transcription, content analysis was conducted to identify key themes and categories, while thematic analysis was applied to classify the data according to these themes. The next stage involved data processing, which comprised open coding to generate initial codes, axial coding to connect those codes to broader themes, and selective coding to refine and identify the core themes. The results of this analysis were then used to develop the conceptual framework and structure of the SOP. Based on these findings, we also formulated recommendations for improving tourism services. The final step involved compiling a report on the analysis results and presenting it to relevant stakeholders to obtain feedback as a form of validation. This process ensured that the FGD analysis produced accurate and reliable information to support the development of the SOP.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The proposed SOP model was discussed during the activity implementation team meeting. The team reviewed the structure and logic of the model and provided feedback to refine it into a more appropriate, comprehensive, and up-to-date SOP framework. Based on the outcomes of the community service activities, four tourism service SOPs were developed at this stage. These consisted of: (1) SOP for Tourist Arrival Services, (2) SOP for Tourist Departures to Tourist Destinations, (3) SOP for Accident Handling, and (4) SOP for Disaster Evacuation. Each SOP was designed to support the delivery of consistent, high-quality, and safe tourism services on Soetan Island.

3.1 SOP for tourist arrival services

Mandeh Island is one of the most popular tourist destinations in West Sumatra, located just two hours by land from Padang City. The Mandeh tourist area comprises several islands that visitors can explore, such as Taraju Island, Soetan Island, Sironjong Besar Island, Sironjong Ketek Island, Marak Island, and Kapo-Kapo Island. To ensure the safety, comfort, and quality of service for visitors, it was necessary to establish clear procedures to manage the flow of tourist arrivals to Soetan Island (Bozkurt, 2012). As highlighted by Bazazo & Alananzeh (2020), the purpose of this SOP was to facilitate the smooth and orderly handling of tourist arrivals, ensure the safety of visitors during the arrival process, create a welcoming and organized experience, and maintain compliance with local safety standards and regulations.

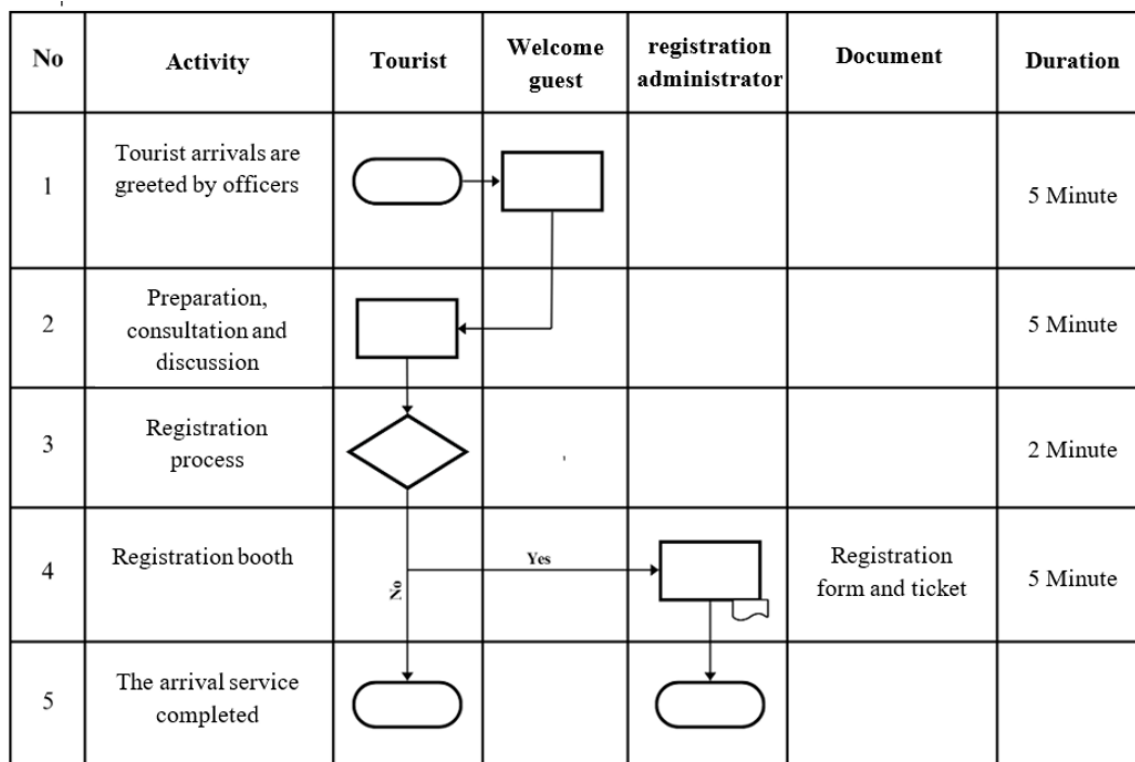


Figure 1 . SOP for tourist arrival services

According to Figure 1, the SOP for Tourist Arrival Services is described as follows.

1. Welcoming Tourists: Upon arrival at the Mandeh Island pier, tourists are welcomed by the tourism management team. The team provides initial guidance to ensure tourists have a smooth and organized experience.
2. Consultation and Information: Tourists are directed to a designated area where they can consult with staff about available tour packages and receive detailed information about the options.
3. Decision-Making: Tourists are given the freedom to decide whether to proceed with a tour package to the islands within the Mandeh area. If they choose not to continue, the arrival service process concludes at this point. If they decide to proceed, the process continues to registration.
4. Registration and Payment: Tourists complete the registration process at the counter, make the necessary payment, and receive a ticket as an official document and proof of purchase.
5. Completion of Arrival Process: Once the ticket is issued, the arrival service process is considered complete. Tourists are then ready to proceed with their departure to the selected destination island.

3.2 SOP for departure services to tourist destinations

After tourists are welcomed and registered for a tour package to the surrounding islands, they begin the departure process using a speedboat to the chosen destination. Clear procedures are necessary to ensure an organized, safe, and efficient process from departure to arrival. Following Kim & So (2022), the purpose of this SOP is to ensure that the entire departure process from Mandeh Island to the destination islands is conducted safely, orderly, and in compliance with applicable safety standards.

According to Figure 2, the departure service procedure for tourists is described as follows.

1. Ticket Verification: Staff check each tourist's ticket and verify that the number of passengers matches the speedboat's maximum capacity.
2. Capacity and Compliance Check: If tourists have valid tickets and the passenger load complies with safety limits, the process continues with a safety check and briefing. If not, tourists are directed to return to the registration counter to resolve the issue.
3. Safety Equipment Inspection: Staff inspect the availability and condition of safety equipment, such as life jackets, ensuring they are functional and safe for use.

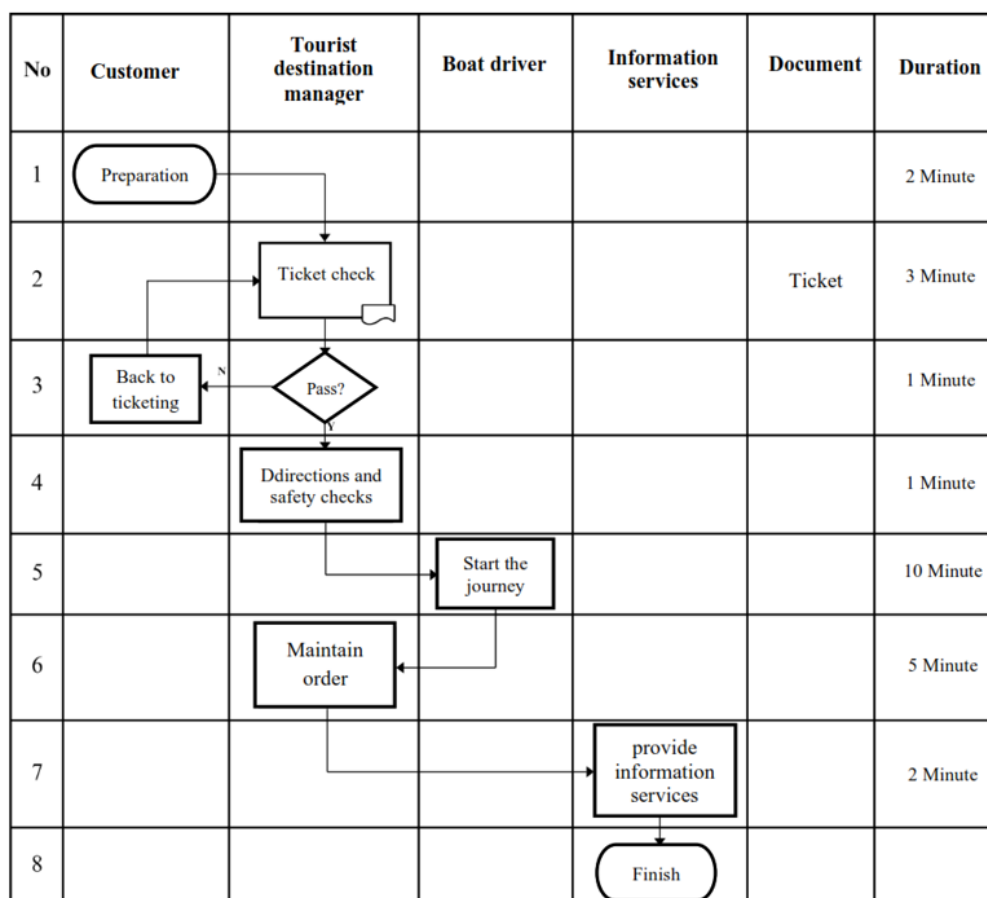


Figure 2 . SOP for departure services to tourist destinations

4. **Safety Briefing and Boarding:** Before boarding, tourists receive a safety briefing about the trip, including guidance on behavior during the journey. Tourists are then directed to board the speedboat in an orderly, turn-based manner.
5. **Departure Process:** The speedboat departs at a safe speed, with the driver adjusting according to weather and sea conditions.
6. **Onboard Safety Monitoring:** Staff ensure tourists are seated properly, wearing life jackets, and that no items or behaviors compromise the boat's balance during the trip.
7. **Arrival and Disembarkation:** Upon arrival at the destination island, staff conduct a final safety check before allowing tourists to disembark. Tourists are then directed to the island's information and service center for guidance on available facilities, activities, and attractions.

3.3 SOP for accident handling services

The islands in the Mandeh area offer a variety of activities and attractions for tourists. However, each activity carries the risk of accidents. Therefore, it is essential

to implement effective accident management procedures to ensure the safety of tourists and to provide timely and appropriate assistance (Jayasinghe et al., 2024). The high volume of visitors on the islands necessitates clear, structured procedures for handling emergencies. The purpose of this SOP is to provide clear guidance on the steps to take in the event of an accident, ensuring a fast, safe, and well-coordinated response from the management and rescue teams.

According to Figure 3, the accident handling service procedures are as follows.

1. **Accident Reporting:** Tourists or witnesses report the accident to the nearest tourism management officer at the scene.
2. **Initial Assessment:** The safety or rescue team conducts an initial examination of the victim to assess the severity of the injury and determine appropriate first aid measures. If possible, the victim is moved to a safer location.
3. **First Aid:** The team administers first aid based on the type and severity of the injury. This may include bandaging wounds, performing CPR, or stopping bleeding.

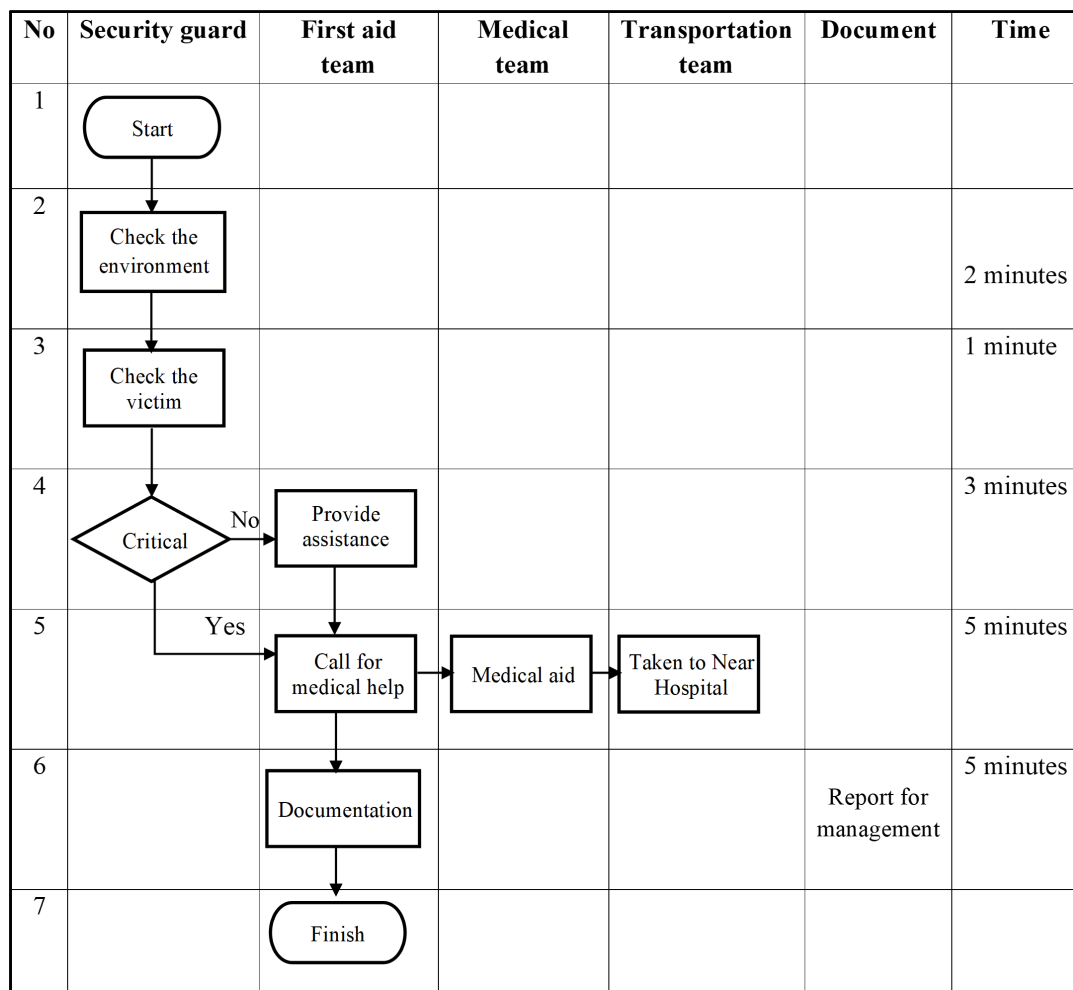


Figure 3 . SOP for accident handling services

4. Medical Assistance Request: If the victim's condition is serious, the team immediately contacts local medical services and prepares for evacuation to the nearest hospital or clinic.
5. Victim Evacuation: The victim is transported to the nearest pier or evacuation point using a speedboat or vessel that has been prepared to transfer them to a medical facility.
6. Incident Reporting and Documentation: Once the emergency response is complete, the management team is responsible for filing an official incident report and documenting the entire event for evaluation and future improvements in safety protocols.

3.4 SOP for disaster evacuation services

Island tourism is a popular attraction for visitors but is inherently vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and storms. Therefore, it was essential to establish a clear and structured evacuation mechanism to ensure the safety of both visitors and staff, especially given the island's remote location and the potential for limited access to external emergency assistance (Nazir et al., 2023; Jayasinghe et al., 2024).

This SOP was designed to enable a swift, safe, and well-coordinated response during natural disasters, aiming to minimize risks and potential losses. The procedure ensures that all evacuation steps are executed effectively in emergency situations, prioritizing the safety of everyone on the island.

Based on Figure 4, the disaster evacuation procedure was described as follows.

1. Receiving Disaster Information: The security guard or tourism management received disaster warnings from BMKG (Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency) or other official sources. Upon receiving the alert, the tourism manager immediately assessed the situation and initiated evacuation preparations, including activating the island's warning siren.
2. Issuing Early Warnings: The security team issued early warnings through loudspeakers, communication devices, or direct announcements from personnel in the field.
3. Coordinating Evacuation Instructions: The security team coordinated with the management team to issue instructions to all tourists, guiding them toward designated tsunami-safe zones or evacuation points.

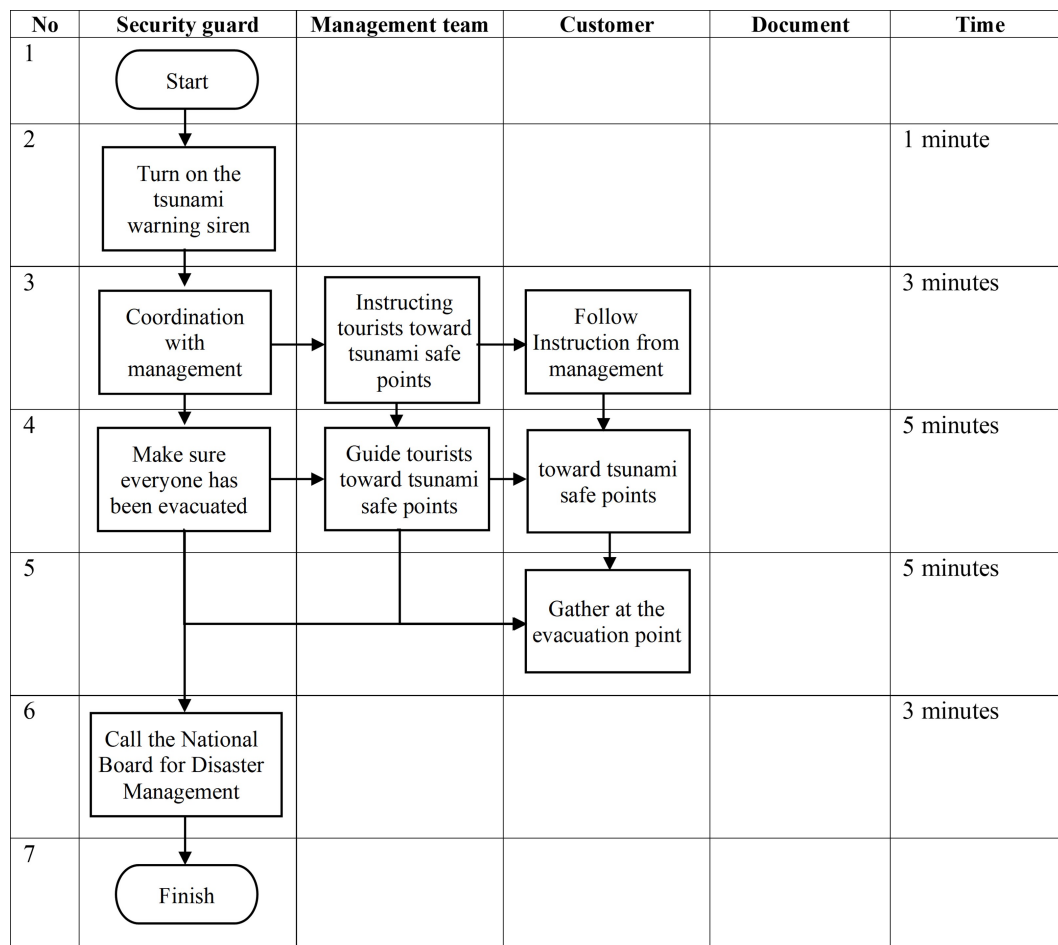


Figure 4 . SOP for disaster evacuation services

4. Gathering at Evacuation Points: Tourists and staff were directed to the designated evacuation areas. The security team cross-checked the list of evacuees against the registration data to ensure that no one was left behind.
5. Ensuring Complete Evacuation: The security team verified that all tourists and personnel had safely reached the evacuation points.
6. Evacuation to Safer Locations: If the situation remained manageable, tourists were kept at the safe point on the island. However, if the threat escalated, the evacuation continued via speedboat to the nearest safe location on the mainland. Safety equipment was rechecked before departure.
7. Coordinating with Authorities: The tourism manager contacted the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) or other relevant government bodies to request further assistance and coordinate additional evacuations if necessary.
8. Post-Disaster Evaluation and Assistance: After the evacuation was completed, the medical team assessed the health of all tourists and personnel, provided first aid to anyone injured, and identified those needing further medical care. Recovery steps were then carried out in accordance with guidance from BNPB and SAR (Search and Rescue) teams as part of the disaster response and management process.

4. CONCLUSION

The development of marine tourism in the North Mandeh area, particularly on Soetan Island, holds significant potential to become a leading destination in West Sumatra, offering pristine natural beauty and rich local wisdom in an environmentally friendly setting. However, several key challenges persist, including limited marketing reach, the absence of standardized services, and insufficient human resource competencies. Currently, tourism promotion is still largely focused on local markets, operational procedures remain partially standardized, and staff lack sufficient expertise in delivering professional tourism services. Addressing these challenges requires strategic interventions, one of which is the development of comprehensive service SOPs. The preparation of SOPs—covering tourist arrivals, departures, accident handling, and disaster evacuation—is essential to enhancing both the safety and comfort of visitors. This initiative represents a critical step toward improving the quality, consistency, and safety of tourism services. Implementing SOPs enables tourism managers to strengthen visitor trust, improve customer satisfaction, and enhance the reputation of the tourism operation. Furthermore, it significantly reduces the risk of accidents and environmental harm while promoting operational efficiency and cost savings. Ultimately, the establishment of these standardized procedures supports the sustainable growth of marine tourism in the North Mandeh area.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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