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Creating 'Circuit' Diplomacy: The Motives of the Indonesian Government in Hosting Various International Sporting Events

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the Indonesian government's motives in selecting and hosting various international sports events in recent years. Although the various impacts and potential losses of hosting massive sports events have been widely studied globally, until now there has been no research specifically analyzing the Indonesian government's motives in choosing to remain aggressive in hosting international sports events amid post-pandemic recovery challenges, infrastructure disparities, and budget efficiency. This study uses qualitative methods and a Systematic Literature Review, where academic literature was searched via Google Scholar and systematically selected through inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as quality evaluations. The results show that hosting prestigious events such as the Mandalika MotoGP, FIFA U-17 World Cup, FIBA Basketball World Cup, and F1 Powerboat was driven by government motives to strengthen soft power capacity and nation branding, aiming to shift Indonesia's image from an exotic developing country into a modern and competent actor on the global stage. Beyond serving as a public diplomacy instrument, these events were utilized as policy catalysts to accelerate regional infrastructure development and stimulate local economic equity. Through the integration of sport-tourism strategies and cultural preservation as implemented in Mandalika and Lake Toba, the government successfully generated multiplier effects including increased Local Genuine Revenue (PAD), job expansion, and sustainable investment attraction.

Keyword:

Sports, Mandalika, Nation Branding, Sport Diplomacy, Sport Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Sports are no longer merely physical competitions, they have evolved into an effective political instrument and economic catalyst. Hosting sports events stimulates economic growth for host regions through a domino effect driven by ticket sales, merchandise, hospitality, and services, thereby creating job opportunities and boosting productivity across various industries (Mules & Dwyer, 2006).

The sports sector is rapidly expanding, with total annual revenues reaching \$2.3 trillion. A major driver of this growth is sport tourism, that is travel undertaken to participate in or observe sporting activities, as well as to visit sports attraction sites such as stadiums (Roche et al., 2013). Sport tourism is currently experiencing significant growth fueled by accessible and affordable transportation for spectators, improved online ticketing systems, and the rising popularity of international tournaments such as the FIFA World Cup, Olympic Games, NBA, and others (Revindo et al., 2019a).

Today, sports increasingly intersect with global politics and diplomacy. This trend is driven by the emergence of national governing bodies and international sports organizations like FIFA, standardized global rules, intense competition among national teams, and the establishment of flagship international competitions like the Olympics and World Cup. This globalization of sports advances athletics as a strategic arena for commodity production, cultural consumption, and capital accumulation (Beissel & Andrews, 2023).

Sports stadiums worldwide are progressively designed with innovative concepts to capture audience interest as sports overlap with entertainment, tourism, business, design, and art. Hosting international sports events serves as an effective mechanism for attracting investment and generating revenue for host cities through tourism (Nauright & Zipp, 2018). This further solidifies the role of sports as a powerful asset for elevating a country's global standing.

For instance, in 2022, Qatar hosted the 22nd FIFA World Cup. Prior to this landmark event, Qatar had established itself by hosting major sporting competitions including the 2006 Asian Games, 2011 AFC Asian Cup, 2015 World Handball Championship, and 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships (Al Thani, 2021). Similarly, Brazil hosted the 2014 FIFA World Cup, spending up to \$1.1 billion solely on stadium renovations, followed by the 2016 Summer Olympics with a budget of \$4.6 billion for supporting infrastructure (Penfold, 2018). These examples reflect an escalating global race among nations to host international sporting events.

Prior to 2020, Indonesia primarily focused on hosting regional-level sports events. Examples include the inaugural Asian Beach Games in Bali in 2008 involving 45 Asian nations, the 2011 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Palembang, the 3rd Islamic Solidarity Games in 2013, and the 2018 Asian Games and Asian Para Games (Gultom, 2018; Olympic Council of Asia, 2008).

In recent years, however, Indonesia has become noticeably more aggressive in hosting international sports competitions. This includes the 2021 World Superbike (WSBK) at the Mandalika Circuit involving 24 international riders. Subsequently, on March 18, 2022, at the same circuit, Indonesia successfully hosted the prestigious MotoGP event after a 25-year hiatus (Rahmadana & Prakoso, 2022; Detikcom, 2022).

Other major events hosted by Indonesia include the 2023 FIFA U-17 World Cup, marking the country's first time hosting an international FIFA tournament (McKinnon, 2023). Furthermore, Indonesia co-hosted the 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup alongside Japan and the Philippines (FIBA Basketball, 2023). Co-hosting models like this are expected to enhance

visibility, economic opportunities, and prestige for smaller or emerging nations (Walzel & Eickhoff, 2023).

Prior literature utilized by the authors predominantly focuses on the social and economic impacts of hosting international sports events. A review by Sholikhatus et al. (2024) found that the MotoGP event in Mandalika contributed to diversifying local livelihoods, reducing reliance on metal ore mining.

Additionally, the 2023 FIFA U-17 World Cup held across Jakarta, Bandung, Solo, and Surabaya generated significant benefits for local tourism and creative economy sectors (Nuryana et al., 2023). Research by Budiarto and Qibthiyyah (2022) revealed that hosting the National Sports Week (PON) successfully stimulated both short and long-term economic growth while boosting local tax revenue over a two-year period.

Beyond economic dimensions, sports play a pivotal role in national political dynamics. Al-Dosari (2021) noted that major international sports events symbolize a host nation's political, social, and economic stability, thus, hosting the FIFA World Cup projected Qatar as a stable state relative to its volatile neighbors in the Middle East.

Similarly, China has leveraged mega sports events as part of its soft power strategy. Jeong et al. (2024) argued that by hosting the 2022 Winter Olympics, China demonstrated its status as a rising superpower with political and economic influence capable of rivaling the United States, Japan, and South Korea. Both studies highlight how major sports events serve not only as economic engines but also as political instruments for cultivating a favorable international image.

However, literature also highlights potential drawbacks for countries that overemphasize hosting international sports events through aggressive infrastructure expenditure. Rocha (2017) demonstrated that although Brazil's hosting of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympics was executed without major operational flaws, it ultimately failed to resolve deep-seated long-term issues regarding political unrest, economic instability, and social equity. Furthermore, several newly constructed stadiums were left underutilized while debts incurred during construction remained under repayment (Leal de Oliveira et al., 2020).

Similar trajectory occurred in South Africa during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Research by Harris (2011) revealed that developing nations bear a disproportionately higher financial burden than developed nations when hosting mega events. Resources allocated toward stadium construction could have yielded greater public welfare benefits if directed toward other pressing domestic sectors.

The aforementioned literature highlights nations striving to build their international image through sports hosting, a trend mirrored in Indonesia. Despite these insights, research specifically analyzing the Indonesian government's motives for aggressively pursuing international sports events, despite the documented risks and negative impacts remains unexplored. Therefore, this study aims to examine and elucidate the core motives behind the Indonesian government's strategy in hosting international sports events.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach to ensure that social phenomena, actors, groups, or settings are not reduced strictly to variables, but are examined holistically to reflect actual conditions (Taylor et al., 2015). Additionally, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method was employed to identify, select, evaluate, and synthesize relevant academic

literature to answer the central question regarding the Indonesian government's motives for hosting international sports events.

Academic literature was gathered from Google Scholar using keywords including "Sport Tourism" OR "Sport Diplomacy" OR "Soft Power" OR "Nation Branding" AND "Indonesia" OR "Mandalika" OR "Danau Toba". To ensure quality and contextual relevance, gathered literature was filtered using specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, as outlined below:

Table 1. Literature selection process using inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Decision
Articles published in reputable scientific journals	Inclusion
Articles written in Indonesian or English	Inclusion
Articles addressing motives, impacts, regulations, soft power, nation branding, tourism, or infrastructure development related to international sports events in Indonesia	Inclusion
Articles published between 2019 and 2026	Inclusion
Articles irrelevant to tourism development or Indonesian sports policy	Exclusion
Articles focusing purely on technical or tactical aspects of sports matches	Exclusion
Articles published prior to 2019	Exclusion
Duplicate articles and studies outside the research scope	Exclusion

Source: processed by the author

Retrieved data were subsequently evaluated for quality using the following criteria questions:

- QA1. Was the article published within the 2019–2026 timeframe?
- QA2. Are the inclusion and exclusion criteria clearly and appropriately defined for this review?
- QA3. Does the literature search comprehensively cover relevant studies on the subject?

Data analysis was conducted by first collecting various articles that met the established keywords and criteria. The collected data were then sorted by title and abstract to eliminate duplication and articles that were not relevant to the research context. After the sorting process, the remaining articles were thoroughly read to ensure they answered the research questions. The filtered data were then classified into specific themes, nation branding, economics, and infrastructure, to draw conclusive and holistic conclusions regarding the Indonesian government's motives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. RESULT

Economic Performance and Tourist Arrivals

Indonesia has demonstrated the capacity to host major international events even while recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Financially, the Indonesian sports industry boosted the national economy in 2024, reaching a total value of Rp 39.45 trillion, an increase of Rp 2.17 trillion compared to the previous year (Rahmah, Triadi, & Prasetyo, 2025).

A flagship international event hosted by Indonesia is the MotoGP championship held at Mandalika. Data released by the Mandalika Grand Prix Association (MGPA) shows an

increase in spectator attendance at the 2025 Mandalika MotoGP compared to the previous year, rising from 121,252 to 140,324 spectators, a 15.73% growth. Attendance in the Paddock and VIP Village areas grew by 36% year-over-year. This reflects heightened tourist interest in attending the MotoGP event in Mandalika while visiting surrounding tourism attractions (Secretariat General SEZ, 2025).

The 2022 MotoGP event in Mandalika generated an economic growth rate of 7.76% for West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) province during that year. NTB's regional revenue gained Rp 14.25 billion from tax contributions, alongside Rp 606.92 billion in tourist spending during the event. Small local vendors around the circuit selling food, souvenirs, t-shirts, and traditional Lombok woven fabrics also experienced higher sales revenues (Sholikhatun, Kusuma, & Istiqomah, 2024).

MGPA data further indicates that during the 2025 MotoGP event in Mandalika, hotel occupancy across NTB reached 93%. Due to full hotel capacity, local residential homes, homestays, and guesthouses from Central Lombok to Mataram were rented by visitors unable to secure rooms near the main event area. The Ministry of Tourism and the NTB Provincial Government estimated an economic turnover of Rp 4.8 trillion from the 2025 Mandalika MotoGP across accommodation, transportation, culinary, and creative economy sectors. By June 2025, the Mandalika SEZ absorbed 19,010 workers, up significantly from 4,600 workers employed during the 2022 event (Secretariat General SEZ, 2025; Rahmatika, 2024).

Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development correlates directly with economic expansion. Today, physical infrastructure is a strategic asset, as a nation's infrastructure maturity reflects its global competitiveness. Furthermore, infrastructure investments serve as effective measures to reduce poverty and social inequality by increasing economic efficiency and national productivity (Negara, 2016, in Cook & Singh, 2016). In Indonesia, historical infrastructure deficiencies have hindered optimal economic growth; consequently, starting in 2015, the government accelerated national infrastructure projects, raising public spending from Rp 154.7 trillion to Rp 410.7 trillion in 2018 (Mubin, 2019).

This push included revitalizing venues used for the 2023 FIFA U-17 World Cup, such as Jakarta International Stadium, Si Jalak Harupat Stadium in Bandung, Manahan Stadium in Solo, and Gelora Bung Tomo Stadium in Surabaya (Arianto, Isnanto, & Syakur, 2024). Stadium upgrades must adhere to strict FIFA standard specifications required for official tournament hosting (Bahtiar et al., 2025). Partnering with PT Nindya Karya, the Ministry of Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) executed renovations covering pitch quality improvements, locker room and media center upgrades, additional seating, lighting enhancements, and improved venue access points (Andreas, 2025).

At Lake Toba, in collaboration with PT Adhi Karya, the PUPR Ministry constructed essential infrastructure to support F1 Powerboat event. Works included constructing docks and a dry paddock supported by pile foundations, public restrooms, Sapo Batak cultural structures, perimeter fencing, drainage systems, and surrounding landscaping with a total national budget (APBN) allocation of Rp 35.9 billion (Pribadi, 2023).

Additionally, the construction of the Mandalika International Circuit successfully established a home venue for hosting MotoGP and World Superbike (WSBK) rounds. Beyond the circuit, auxiliary infrastructure projects were completed in Mandalika to ensure visitor safety and comfort, including road construction, a 10 km perimeter fence, the 4,000-capacity

Nurul Bilad Mosque, Kuta Beach Park equipped with children's play areas and public amenities, and a Tourist Lifeguard and Safety Center (Frederick et al., 2022).

In preparation for the 2022 MotoGP, airport operator PT Angkasa Pura I extended the runway at Lombok International Airport from 2,750 meters to 3,300 meters to accommodate larger cargo aircraft like the Boeing 777 carrying team logistics. Furthermore, the airport apron was expanded from 108,000 m² to 136,300 m², increasing Lombok International Airport's capacity from 22 to 24 aircraft parking stands (Prasetyo & Puspitasari, 2022).

Government Regulations and Policies

In 2022, to support sustainable tourism recovery post Covid-19, the Indonesian government issued Director General of Immigration Circular No. IMI-0532.GR.01.01 of 2022 regarding Immigration Reliefs. Effective April 6, 2022, the circular applied to travelers from 43 countries (Indratna, 2022).

Regarding tourism development, in 2019 the government designated five Super Priority Destinations (DSP), strategic national tourism areas distributed across western, central, and eastern Indonesia recognized for unique cultural and natural appeal. These comprise Lake Toba (North Sumatra), Borobudur (Central Java), Mandalika (West Nusa Tenggara), Labuan Bajo (East Nusa Tenggara), and Likupang (North Sulawesi) (Waruwu et al., 2023).

Developing these DSPs represents the operationalization of the 2010–2025 National Tourism Development Master Plan under Government Regulation (PP) No. 50/2011. This framework establishes guidelines to elevate destination quality and scale, establishing tourism as a primary economic driver (Widjaja, 2023).

Mandalika was formally designated a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) via Government Regulation No. 52/2014, reinforced by Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs Decree No. 557/M/Ker/07/2020, appointing PT Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) as the entity managing operations across the Mandalika SEZ (Affandi et al., 2024).

Tourist Impressions

A destination survey by Girsang et al. (2024) evaluated visitor perceptions at the 2023 Mandalika MotoGP across the 6A framework (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, Activities, Accommodations, and Ancillary services). Findings revealed that synergies across these six dimensions during MotoGP enhanced Mandalika's overall appeal as a premier tourist destination.

Furthermore, content analysis by Badsty and Alfirdaus (2025) covering media coverage across five nations (UK, Italy, Spain, Germany, and the US) indicated that hosting MotoGP projected an image of Indonesia as an exotic, attractive destination featuring distinct cultural elements, such as rain shaman traditions, warm community interactions, and stunning tropical landscapes.

Building an international circuit in Mandalika aligns with Lombok's established reputation as a global travel destination. At the 2015 World Halal Travel Summit in Abu Dhabi, Lombok won two prestigious awards, World's Best Halal Tourism Destination and World's Best Honeymoon Destination. Located in Central Lombok, Mandalika offers natural attractions including Kuta Beach, Merese Hill, Tanjung Aan Beach, Seger Beach, and Sade Cultural Village (Muliana & Khabib, 2025).

Field Dynamics and Conflict

Despite its achievements, Mandalika's development has faced operational challenges. Conflict arose between the Mandalika Hotel Association (MHA) and local authorities concerning hotel room pricing regulations. MHA argued that local officials misjudged market

dynamics by attempting to cap room prices amidst surging demand, urging authorities to gather empirical market data prior to enforcing price controls (Affandi et al., 2024).

Additionally, friction surfaced between the Regional Development, Research, and Innovation Planning Agency (Bapperida) and ITDC regarding Mandalika SEZ master planning. Although Bapperida holds ultimate authority over regional spatial planning, it felt sidelined regarding Mandalika's infrastructure design because ITDC maintained sole operational authority over the SEZ. Achieving long-term SEZ goals requires multi-stakeholder consensus and aligned coordination among ITDC, Bapperida, and regional reGENCY governments (Affandi et al., 2024; Suryadi S. et al., 2026).

B. DISCUSSIONS

Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding on the Global Stage

Nye (2008) defines soft power as an actor's ability to achieve objectives through attraction rather than coercion, relying on intangible assets such as culture, political values, and credible foreign policies. Soft power yields tangible influence when foreign actors seek guidance or model their aspirations after a nation's achievements.

Examining Qatar's sports strategy shows that major event investments helped diversify its national economy away from heavy reliance on oil and gas revenues (Naier, 2021). Promoting sports, leisure attractions, cultural heritage, and high-end hospitality repositioned Qatar as a competitive tourism hub in the Middle East. For nations lacking traditional soft power channels such as established global cultural exports, hosting mega sports events provides an effective initial entry point toward long-term soft power accumulation (Grix & Brannagan, 2024).

Historically, Indonesian public diplomacy relied on four primary soft power pillars, politics and national values, economic and tourism, socio-cultural, and education, research and innovation (Astuti et al., 2025). Core initiatives included the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) with the aim of introducing Indonesia as a Pancasila democracy to foreign countries, Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarships (BSBI), and the Indonesia GastrodiploMACy Series (IGS) (Nuaba, 2025). Consequently, sports remained an underutilized soft power asset.

The authors suggest that Indonesia is currently executing an image transition, shifting from an exotic developing nation to a modern country capable of executing complex global events to international standards. The Mandalika Circuit in West Nusa Tenggara serves as a flagship facility cementing Indonesia's position on the annual MotoGP calendar (Wantara et al., 2025).

Successfully organizing high-profile events demonstrates national stability, resilience, and safety (Herlangga & Irawan, 2025). It reflects Indonesia's ambition to build world-class infrastructure, signaling to global audiences that the nation possesses operational capacity on par with developed powers.

Stimulus for Local Economies

Sports competitions of various scales require adequate preparation, from regulations to technical matters such as infrastructure. In this case, infrastructure development becomes the foundation for the country's feasibility in carrying out various activities. When an area is designed in the context of tourism, it is very appropriate to say that tourism development, including infrastructure development, specifically seeks to meet the needs of the poor in that area. Therefore, active policy interventions are essential to ensure tourism growth delivers direct benefits to local communities. In developing economies, governments bear central

responsibility for structuring tourism models, particularly when using sports to drive economic performance.

Economic growth generated by sports industries unfolds across three distinct phases, pre-event preparation, during-event activity, and long-term post-event legacy. Early economic impact manifests during venue construction through private sector investment, benefiting transport and construction sectors (Revindo et al., 2019b). Then, during the event, both local and international tourists and participants tend to spend money on merchandise, souvenirs, food, and so on. Furthermore, tourists also spend money on accommodations such as tickets, hotels, restaurants, and transportation, driving demand in the industry and creating jobs.

Notably, recent sports hosting choices in Indonesia extend beyond the capital city of Jakarta, helping mitigate regional infrastructure disparities. Indonesia's profile rose significantly after co-hosting the 2018 Asian Games (the 18th Asian Games Jakarta-Palembang). Selecting Palembang alongside Jakarta enabled regional infrastructure expansion (Revindo et al., 2019b).

Similarly, hosting MotoGP at Mandalika provided economic momentum to a region previously receiving less central attention. The Mandalika International Circuit in Central Lombok demonstrates the integration of international sports hosting with regional destination branding (Riska, Basuki, & Suriadi, 2026). Consequently, local employment patterns shifted from traditional primary sectors toward tourism services aligned with visitor demands.

Selecting Sade as a supporting site was strategic, given its establishment as a cultural tourism village under NTB Governor's Decree No. 2/1989 (Pratiwi, Sari, & Dinanti, 2019). Local economic activity expanded through increased demand for goods, expanded transaction volumes, and sectoral diversification. Because tourism is a primary foreign exchange earner for Indonesia, the sector remains a key growth engine (Lesmana et al., 2022). Combining traditional heritage architecture with sport tourism demand in Mandalika exemplifies effective integration between sports hosting and local cultural preservation.

Among Indonesia's five Super Priority Destinations, Mandalika and Lake Toba were chosen for international sports hosting. Staging the F1 Powerboat (F1H2O) World Championship at Lake Toba provided post-pandemic economic recovery while raising North Sumatra's international profile (Widianingsih et al., 2023).

The involvement of two DSP tourist destinations in hosting major international sporting events demonstrates how Indonesia combines tourism and sports to reap the dual benefits of combining the two. As a result, visitors attending sporting events not only enjoy the competition but also the various tourist attractions available in the surrounding areas.

Indonesia's 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) prioritized inclusive, sustainable economic growth built on regional competitive strengths (Santoso & Zulian, 2025). Events like F1 Powerboat, WSBK, and MotoGP directly support this framework by boosting Local Generated Revenue (PAD) through tourism and creative industries (Taupikurrahman & Suwandana, 2024). Additionally, it also increases the doors of international cooperation through cultural and sports-based diplomacy and stimulates the development of regional infrastructure and public services. (Drianawati & Undang, 2023; Penti et al., 2026).

Acceleration of Regional Infrastructure

The government's motive closely aligns with regional economic equity and accelerated infrastructure delivery through Special Economic Zone (SEZ) frameworks (Lubis, 2025). For instance, Mandalika was structured to boost regional investment, employment, and economic

output. Tourism projects in the region reflect the government's commitment to providing world-class tourism infrastructure, from hotels and circuits to business tourism facilities (Suryadi S. et al., 2026). SEZs serve as intervention tools to create regional economic growth poles that generate multiplier effects across surrounding communities. SEZ success depends on infrastructure quality, policy consistency, institutional capacity, and domestic economic linkages.

The initiative in determining the SEZ itself is based on the potential and resources owned by the region, such as export processing, logistics, industry, technology development, tourism, energy, and other economics. Mandalika's SEZ status originated from an application submitted by the Indonesian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) in 2014 (Estriani, 2019). Culminating in Government Regulation No. 52/2014 establishing Mandalika as a global tourist destination (Rasyid & Darumurti, 2022).

The author argues that the central government places a high priority on developing promising and potential tourism to represent Indonesia globally. For example, the government projects Mandalika as one of Indonesia's essential destinations, promoting Indonesia's tourism image to the international community. This has far-reaching implications, as Mandalika is not solely a sports tourism attraction through its circuit, but also has the potential to attract a global community through the development of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) (Satiadji, 2023).

The authors emphasize that tourism potential enables developing countries to improve living standards and improve the well-being of their communities (Yuli et al., 2025). This is also evident in the development of Mandalika as a leading destination in Indonesia. Since its designation as a SEZ, development in Mandalika has focused on accelerating economic development in Central Lombok Regency (Ardana et al., 2020). As a result, the positive impact was not only due to the MotoGP event in Mandalika itself, but also to the impressive feedback it generated, attracting up to 102,801 spectators (Taupikurrahman & Suwandana, 2024). This means that, from an economic perspective, tourism development has resulted in increased local incomes and promising job opportunities relevant to the region's needs.

Regulatory Steer: Making Sporting Events a Catalyst for State Policy

The Indonesian government increasingly views sport tourism as an economic driver comparable to traditional tourism sectors. This focus extends beyond leisure to encompass broader structural growth. Over the past decade, sport tourism has gained significant policy attention (Kodrat, 2026). Despite budget realignments within the Ministry of Youth and Sports in early 2025, national commitment toward advancing sports development remained firm.

On the other hand, the country's capacity to advance sports tourism even after the pandemic, including its budget efficiency, demonstrates Indonesia's potential to advance the sports industry even in times of crisis (Julvirta, Wibowo, & Kurniawan, 2025). Meanwhile, regulations related to sporting competitions have undergone significant changes, forcing countries to comply with various regulations, such as health protocols mandated by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Putri, 2021). However, with the easing of health crises such as the pandemic, countries have relaxed their stance on holding such activities while maintaining and prioritizing public health in organizing sporting events.

Despite the post-crisis transition, the authors believe Indonesia has the potential to advance its sports industry and the concept of sports tourism due to its various competitive advantages in attracting tourists. Indonesia's tropical climate allows for outdoor activities,

offering a variety of sports, driven by Indonesia's rich natural resources (Julvirta, Wibowo, & Kurniawan, 2025).

Indonesia's success in organizing international-scale events can serve as a reflection of how developing countries offer themselves and ensure their country's position as an ideal host for international events. For example, Indonesia was appointed as host of the 2018 Asian Games, the largest Asian Games event in history (Revindo et al., 2019b). Of course, the success of this event stems to a large extent from the contributions of many parties. For example, no fewer than 11,000 local organizers were involved as part of the 2018 Asian Games organizing committee, including volunteers and task forces from various elements (Prayogi & Trihartono, 2023).

Hosting of international sporting events acts as a catalyst, forcing the acceleration and adjustment of cross-sectoral regulations in Indonesia. This is evident in the adjustment of global health protocols, the expansion of airport capacity by state-owned enterprises, and the implementation of policies by the Indonesian government to facilitate the entry of foreign tourists. These various policies reflect the government's efforts to boost attendance at these events.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, the author concludes that the Indonesian government's motives for scheduling various international sporting events are based on its optimism in boosting the country's soft power capacity. Various international events, including sporting events, have been held in recent years, even as Indonesia faces crises such as the pandemic. Furthermore, the author recognizes that budget constraints affecting the sports sector also impact the country's capacity to organize international-scale sporting events.

The study highlights the necessity of sustained government commitment to support both global-scale events and local sporting initiatives. Strengthening the sports sector requires synchronized coordination between central and regional authorities. Furthermore, multi-nation partnerships, particularly among Global South nations, are essential for maintaining event hosting continuity, as seen with regional Asian Games cycles. Collaboration remains a foundational element for successful sports hosting in Indonesia.

As a recommendation, the author emphasizes that sectors driving soft diplomacy still need to be developed more aggressively, with sport being a fundamental catalyst worthy of being a reflection in ensuring the country's good name is maintained and maintains a trusted reputation. Indonesia has received positive feedback through various international events, where the author also concludes that the international community appreciates the culture and other fundamental elements that accompany and characterize Indonesia. The author recommends that government strive to highlight Indonesia's cultural richness and unique characteristics so that similar events in the future can attract a more diverse group of individuals.

Policymakers need to formulate regulations that actively involve regional institutions like Bapperida, not just ITDC, in spatial planning to align area design with regional needs. Furthermore, local governments need to collaborate with hotel associations like the MHA in Mandalika to design rational room price limits that won't trigger conflict and harm the existing tourism ecosystem.

However, this study has a major limitation in its reliance on secondary data. The data collected was limited to a review of scientific literature, academic articles, and websites. As a result, the resulting analysis does not fully capture the internal dynamics at the policy-making level or the real-world impacts experienced by local communities. As a direction for

further research, empirical studies using in-depth interviews could be conducted to measure the impact of international sporting events on the lives of local residents.

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