



# PERSPECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF SDGS

## The Case of Seruyan, Indonesia

01 / 2022



# Moving Towards Green Economy in the Advancement of SDGs

Following the awareness in multiple aspects to support the future of development, new concepts have been established. The Rio+20, which was held in 2012 by the United Nations and attended by global leaderships, have birthed the sustainable development concept, recognizing the issues within the environment and the development in the last few decades that go hand in hand, and therefore can no longer be viewed separately (Lavrinenko et al., 2019)<sup>1</sup>. With preserving finance, social responsibility, and environment in mind, the sustainable development concept focuses on “people, prosperity, peace, partnership, and planet”. In 2015, the United Nations classified the concept into seventeen “Sustainable Development Goals” blueprint, grouping the global goals for each specified area.

In the context of economy to support sustainable development, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) led the implementation of “green economy” which focuses on economic growth stemming from investments into activities that allow carbon emission and pollution reduction, social inclusivity, prevention of ecological losses, as well as efficiency of energy and resources. Other than environmental and energy improvement, the green economy also focuses on improving well-being and eradicating poverty. A country’s transition to a green economy could very well be complicated in practice due to the complexity of the existing “traditional” economy which has provided livelihoods to its population—however, looking at the number of environmental and social issues as the implication of the economy, the move forward is now more urgent than ever.

In Indonesia, the national and sub-national government has been highly encouraging the advancement of SDGs and transitioning towards a more holistic approach in addressing the ongoing economic, social, and environmental problems—including but not limited to climate change, loss of freshwater and food resources, social inequality, land conversion, and more.

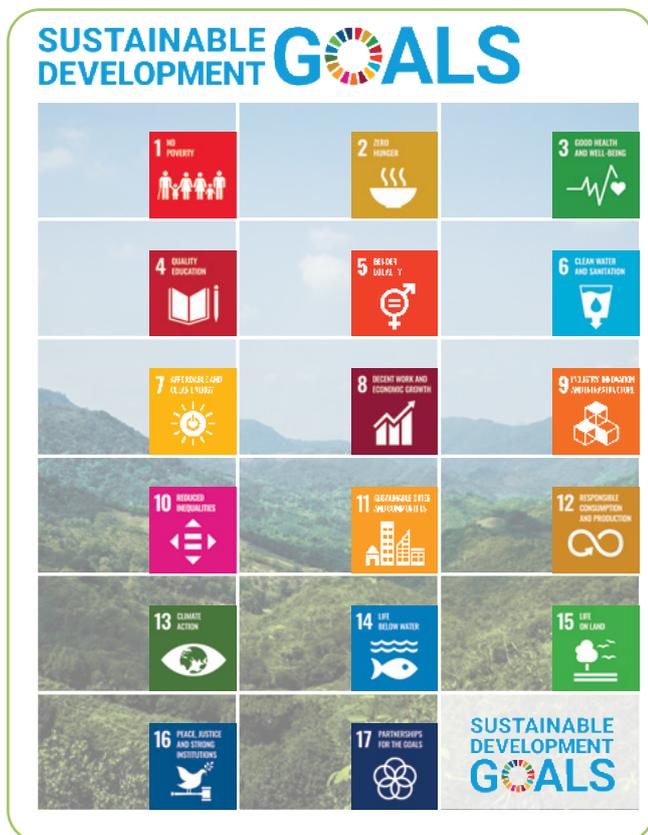


Fig 1. The Sustainable Development Goals

Strategic policies and research have been prepared to further implement this in both the national and the sub-national districts, some of which are:

- Presidential Regulations 59/2017: Sustainable Development Goals
- National Action Plan 2021-2024: Sustainable Development Goals
- Regional Action Plan and Roadmap 2016-2030
- National Medium Term Development Plans
- Regional Medium Term Development Plans
- Ministerial Regulations of the Home Affairs Ministry 07/2018: instruction for each sub-national district to conduct Strategic Environmental Assessment as a part of preparing the Regional Medium Term Development Plans

## Driving Factors that Support Sustainable Business

### Microeconomics and macroeconomics conditions

The growing concern for nature has given a new market for sustainable products<sup>2</sup>. The trend for sustainable products demand is now rising at a higher progress at about 16% in 2016-2020 globally and continues rising with the emergence of the recent COVID-19 global pandemic. In addition, social media has also played a part in increasing awareness of the deteriorating nature, with a 65% rise in social media related to biodiversity and nature loss in the last four years. As for Indonesia, the country has a 24% increase in consumer clicks for sustainable goods—one of the highest among developing countries. The numbers show that the market is no longer small, and the consumers have challenged traditional value chains inflicted by the global activism and media influences that result in their actions. Consumers have asked companies to provide a sustainable product journey, from sourcing the materials to the methods of getting the goods to the consumers' hands. This influences the growth in trade of sustainable materials that comes into developing the products, for example the growth in sales of sustainable-certified palm oil during the past decade<sup>3</sup> indicating not only a demand for sustainably sourced materials, but also a sustainable supply chain in general.

Other than the finished goods, the customers have investigated the sourcing (including the responsible use of land and water sources), labor and human rights, and non-cruelty animal testing. Consumers tend to believe that when it comes to driving positive social change, brands bear as much responsibility as governments. Some companies have addressed these issues by not only offering more responsible goods and services, but gradually adjusting their value chain to create more planet-friendly products. It is also reported that a 45% increase in the number of companies committed to sourcing practices that protect biodiversity during 2016-2020. Other governing bodies have also set their monitoring and evaluating standards for companies' sustainability in general, such as requiring carbon and



environmental accounting, sustainability reporting, as well as mandatory CSR programs.

Following suit to the aforementioned facts, macroeconomics in the context of monetary, financial, and fiscal policies are also an integral part to social and environmental states. The macroeconomic including green economy views sustainability as one of its goals, ensuring the macroeconomic policies are adhered:

- Stability in jobs, prices, investment, trade, interest rate, economic growth, and GDP
- Higher national income per capita, showing the betterment of economic well-being of a population and larger rate of employment
- Environmental sustainability
- Equitable distribution of wealth.

## Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Principal Investment

Supporting sustainable development through investment in sustainable business has now been highly encouraged, considering the urgency of the global issues supported by the market demands. Companies have started integrating the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) indicators of investing when building their portfolio, making sure that the business they are investing in comes from responsible and trustworthy sources. The principle stems from companies looking to manage their growing assets and mitigate business risks that could hinder their investment growth.



Fig 2. Key Principles of ESG Investment (adapted from UN Principles of Responsible Investment)

Considering the ESG factors does not only mean avoiding portfolios in companies with unsustainable business practices but meaning that the initial study must be more informed and vigorous. Cerqueti et al (2021)<sup>4</sup> finds that with ESG investing, the financial performance of higher-ranked ESG funds has lower value loss compared to those with lower-ranked ESG funds. Therefore, not only that ESG principles help in sustainable, risk-based decision making, investment portfolios acknowledging ESG indicators have also proven to perform above market standards with prospects to yield better.

The advancement of SDGs and ultimately its complete achievement will be supported by the mobilization of funding and resources<sup>5</sup>. As of now, the funding scheme has been supported by the Indonesia Environment Fund) and the SDGs Financing Hub, a financing innovation concept coordinated by the Ministry of National Development Planning of the Republic of Indonesia. Other than the Indonesian government, funding opportunities are open to private sectors to help bridge the financing needs, which is estimated to be around USD 548 billion for non-government funding for 2020-2024. Investment in practices that support sustainable development, therefore, presents an answer for this gap.

# Seruyan: The Pilot Project

With the plans and strategies by the government in place in the advancement of SDGs, as well as principles supporting shift to green economy, Indonesia still has yet to climb up the SDG index ladder among the 193 UN member states, currently on the 97th as of 2021<sup>6</sup>. The interlinkages of each SDG subgoals are shared by provinces and cities in the nation; however, the achievement ranks differ between the regions due to varying circumstances and situations of availability and access to resources as well as each of their political state. Since the SDG strategies are evaluated

on a regional basis and compiled nationally, provinces and cities in the country have integrated SDG points in their development plans. Therefore, it becomes important that the implementation of SDG in these regions are conducted holistically with collaboration across stakeholders.

An example in Indonesia carrying out a holistic, collaborative way in its SDG implementation is the Seruyan District in East Kalimantan, which was appointed as a pilot project for jurisdictional approach. Jurisdictional approach, despite it being fairly new for the country, is a promising worldview for regions in the country to achieve their SDG-related goals.

## Seruyan

Extending over an area of 16,404 km<sup>2</sup> in the Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, Seruyan Regency is a town that stands by the Seruyan river comprising 10 kecamatan (sub-districts). The regency is welcoming

its second decade of administration with 162,906 population in its stead following its establishment in 2002. Surrounded by the lush Indonesian rainforests, Seruyan shares its Seruyan Hilir sub-district with the neighboring West Kotawaringin regency for the infamous orangutan conservation area, Tanjung Puting National Park.

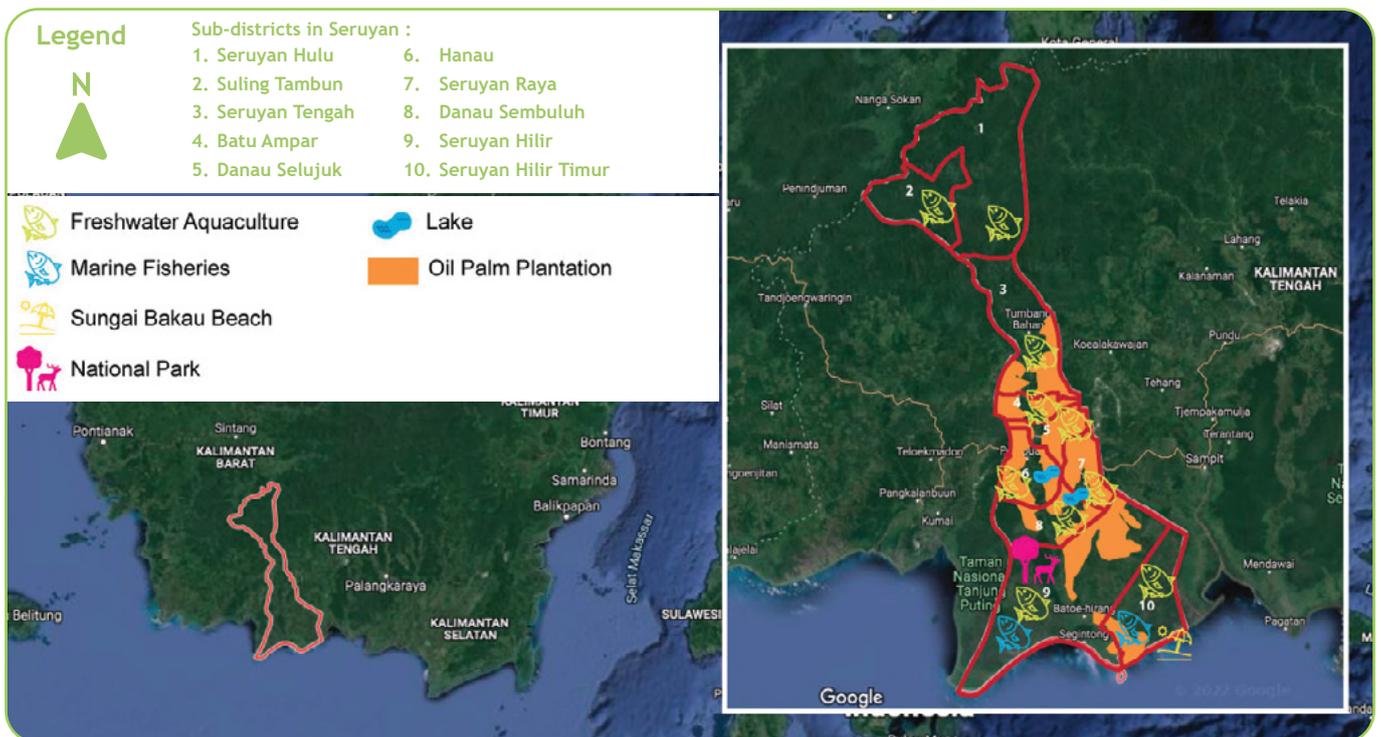


Fig 3. Seruyan Location in Indonesia’s Borneo Island

The current leadership of the regency has envisioned Seruyan SEHAT: “Sejahtera, Elok, Harmonis, Aman dan Tentram” (prosperous, nice, harmonious, safe and peaceful) as its main goal from 2018-2023. Aiming to wisely manage their resources, the leadership shows awareness and commitment towards the achievement of SDGs by translating their vision and mission into seven regional mid-term development plans (RPJMD),

which are also specified and interrelated to The Global Goals. Sustainable development, which is taken to mean efforts to ensure the betterment of current and future livelihoods for the regency’s population, has therefore become the government’s goals from multiple aspects, such as cultural, environmental, social, as well as economic.



Fig 4. Seruyan’s Regional Medium Term Development Goals as connected to The Global Goals (reproduced by CPPM ITB)

Seruyan boasts its agricultural, forestry, fishery, as well as process manufacturing industries among others as the regency’s largest contributors to its growth, creating more opportunities for the local economy to thrive from its land use. As of 2020, the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries<sup>7</sup> have provided around 36% to the district’s gross regional domestic product (GRDP), followed by the process manufacturing industry which has been responsible for 30-32% of the district’s annually. All those are dominated by the palm oil plantations, driving its economy with a promising growth of 5% each year, mainly in the areas of Seruyan Tengah, Hanau, dan Danau Sembuluh sub-districts. The palm oil plantations in Seruyan include both large-scaled and small-scaled industries that produce both crude oil and edible oil. To further propel the economy forward, the district government

has been encouraging investments in upstream and downstream palm oil production and has integrated plans to increase investment realizations in the future.

As for efforts to increase sustainable funding, Seruyan’s Investment Board One Stop-Service has been focusing on increasing investment yearly, which is hoped to be supported by the betterment of our licensing services. The board plans to provide as much information as they can in regard to Seruyan’s potentials and our studies in investment opportunities, be it through offline and online promotions. The board also makes sure that these (investments) are all based on compliance to existing regulations; not only considering the economy, but also the environment.

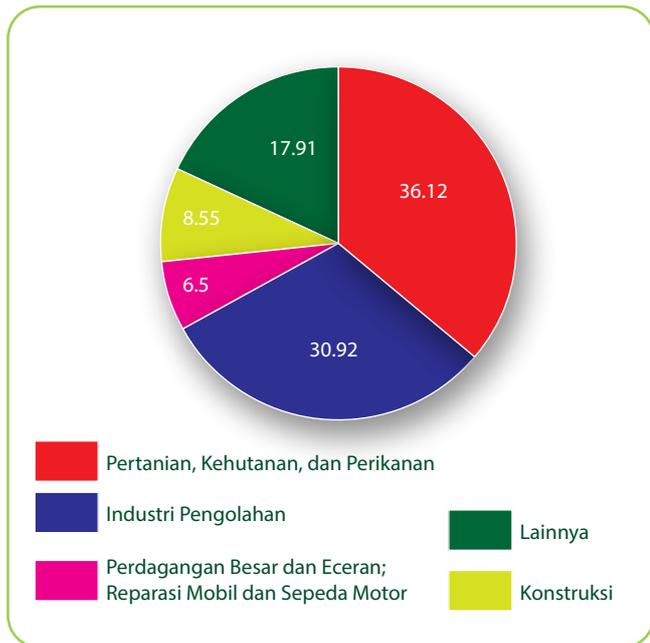


Fig 5. Seruyan's GRDP distribution per 2020 (BPS Kab. Seruyan, 2021)<sup>8</sup>

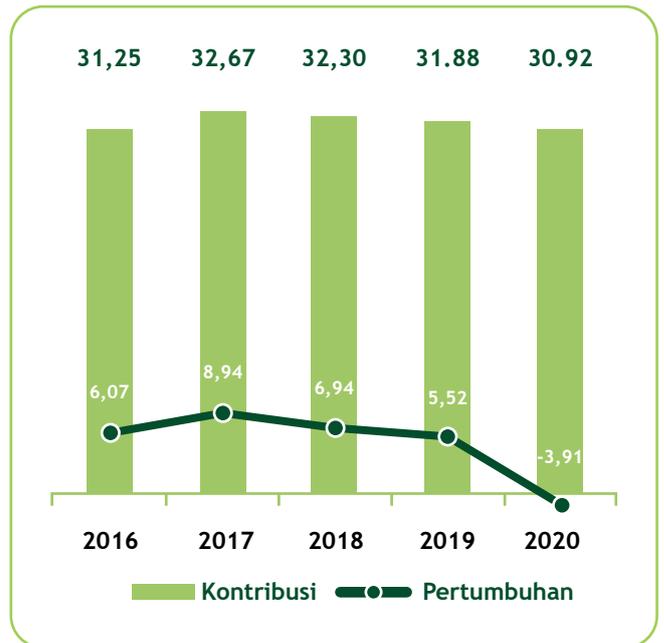


Fig 6. Contribution of the process manufacturing industry to Seruyan's GRDP (BPS Kab. Seruyan, 2021)

## Seruyan, SDGs, and Jurisdictional Certification

Seruyan has pledged to fully support the advancement of SDGs by showing willingness<sup>9</sup> from their leadership, supported by the province commitment as well<sup>10</sup> based on Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah No. 5/2011 on Sustainable Plantation Management. One of the most prominent actions was to apply as a pilot city to implement a jurisdictional approach. Jurisdictional approach is a fairly new concept, promoting the achievement of sustainable development goals in an administrative area by emphasizing on stakeholders collaboration and integrating resource optimization in a holistic manner. Jurisdictional approach is specifically tailored to assist in the regency's medium term plans as translated by the country's national plan overall.

In this context, Seruyan commits to planting sustainable palm oil in the area, facilitated by the Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil Production (RSPO) as supported by the national sustainable palm oil movement (President Instruction 6/2019 on Rencana Aksi Nasional Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit Berkelanjutan (RAN-KSB/National Sustainable Palm Oil Action Plan). The jurisdictional approach strategy is supported by the Presidential Regulation 44/2020 on Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil to produce palm oil that pertains to sustainability standards as an end-to-end process.

The strategy involves:

- Reduce forest fire
- Reduce deforestation rate as well as conserve High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) areas, the method involves using Carrying Capacity and Environmental Capacity as specified in the Environmental Protection and Management Law (Law No. 32/2009)
- Prevent social conflicts from commodity productions
- Empower small palm oil farmers, indigenous communities and Seruyan locals

Getting the jurisdictional area certified has proven to be more cost-efficient than certifying individual/specific groups of smallholders<sup>11</sup>. The approach does not only benefit smallholders in terms of land tenure and legality, but the government and private sector are also helped in the growth of the economy by the sustainable palm oil production. The benefits for the stakeholders through the jurisdictional approach initiatives are as follows:

- **Smallholders:** land tenure and legality, increased productivity and selling power of their commodities
- **Government:** mapped data of all stakeholders, increased sustainable investments, achievement of local and national goals through responsible efforts
- **Private sector:** certified sustainable commodities, ease of business and reduced conflicts

Seruyan is assisted by various NGOs to help with the jurisdictional approach concerning palm oil, as well as the Lingkar Temu Kabupaten Lestari (LTKL/Sustainable District Association). The LTKL have provided forums for districts that implement jurisdictional approach initiatives to assess each districts' competitiveness measured by sustainable indicators in development, one of which is "TERPERCAYA" established by the NGO Yayasan INOBU at a jurisdictional level. The NGO has assisted Seruyan in their studies on sustainable development goals, empowering the communities and giving education especially to the smallholders. This collaboration further advances Seruyan into achieving SDGs, involving working together with multiple stakeholders-the heart of the jurisdictional approach. This helps bring the region's vision and mission in achieving harmony in collaboration into realization, and as of now, there are multiple private companies<sup>12</sup> operating in Seruyan that have been certified by RSPO for their sustainable palm oil produce, attracting more green investments.



In its efforts to grow the regency into a more prosperous community, Seruyan has also reduced the poverty rate from 7.19% in 2019 and 6.85% in 2020 and increased the average year of population in school from 7,93 years in 2019 to 7,94 years in 2020.<sup>13</sup> This was in alignment with the promising contribution of the manufacturing industries on both the smaller and bigger scales, putting the communities in productive ages to work despite the fluctuation due to the pandemic impacts during 2020. In addition, the government has also been building infrastructures such as the Segitung Port<sup>14</sup> and revitalization of roads to improve access<sup>15</sup>. The improvement will help ease access matters to and from Seruyan, making transporting local commodities more efficient and opening up more opportunities for the Seruyan community. These developments further support the regency's efforts in SDGs as a jurisdiction, and the government is looking forward to developing more robust policies in regards to those commitments on both palm oil productions and other aspects of the development.

The government, along with supporting NGOs are currently researching policies regarding determining HCV areas. This includes restoration and forest fire policies. The aim is for the policies to be published in the Peraturan Daerah Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup (local policy on environmental management) based on mapping and identified capacities, so it is known which areas have experienced degradation in hopes to be conserved or rehabilitated if needed. As of now, the local government's outlook is within the policy areas covering other aspects of the SDGs aside from the environment, such as labor rights and protections, women and children rights, as well as spatial policies. In addition, the government also aims to ensure that everyone gets access to education, at least until middle school.

## Hand in Hand: Collaboration of Stakeholders within Seruyan for SDGs

The idea of achieving SDGs through a jurisdictional approach may seem complex, but the key is collaboration. As a relatively new regency and a pilot project for jurisdictional certification, as of now Seruyan is facing many issues in the advancement of SDGs namely general governance, access limitations to strategic facilities, land rights issues, low productivity rate of smallholders' plantations as well as low education rate & poverty. However, in Seruyan, there is political will & awareness from the Seruyan leadership and community, that they aim to be more "prosper" as stated in their vision statement. This willingness has greatly accelerated the collaboration to advance SDGs in their regency.

Seruyan is assisted by parties such as Yayasan INOBU, an NGO that has facilitated a framework to measure the achievement of SDGs ("Terpercaya") at a jurisdictional level, involving multi stakeholders (e.g. government, companies, NGO, research organizations). Terpercaya<sup>16</sup> provides tools for evaluation, where it oversees the progress and development of jurisdictional approaches based on the sustainable development goals on four categories: environmental, social, economy, and governance. Through this indicator, the goals in the Regional Development Plans are translated to more specific ones, and this offers accountability and transparency for the implementation of the plans.

One of the goals in realization, for example, is the government's initiative to establish working groups (Kelompok Kerja) and CSR forums especially to

obtain the jurisdictional certification by the RSPO. The working group involves palm oil companies, smallholders representatives, local representatives, NGO, and the regency government representatives to address the four jurisdictional approach strategies. Each working group has an expertise according to the issue that the working group is focused on, and the target of each working group is monitored and evaluated for progress. In addition to creating working groups, mapping of smallholders have been found to be resourceful for the regency government to access their information, including environmental performance, plantation assessment, farmer profiles, and other compliance matters. **The process was considered challenging at first, but as of now, according to Yayasan INOBU the smallholders mapping has now reached 70% of all smallholders in Seruyan.** In the area of education, agricultural facilities are also planned to be built in Seruyan, with goals to train farmers with emerging agricultural technologies that are applicable in Seruyan as well as funding the smallholders that are transitioning to more sustainable practices. With the facilities, it is hoped that the smallholders can follow good agricultural practices and therefore get them certified in sustainable palm oil. In addition, in 2019, Politeknik Seruyan<sup>17</sup> was built with three programs, each focusing on bridge and road construction management, agribusiness, and fisheries. The vocational college is also supported by multi stakeholders, for example the private companies help with the faculty members. All those are aimed to improve the quality of human capital in order to support the regency's development.



## Business Opportunities in Seruyan to Support SDGs

Aligned with the goals and objectives of the Seruyan regency to advance SDG and improve the quality of life for its population, Seruyan facilitates the investment landscape for various sectors. In the case of palm oil, the main commodity of Seruyan's agriculture, demand for sustainable palm oil has been growing as the key materials for personal care products, biofuel, pharmaceuticals, and even food. Seruyan's palm oil has a growing trend in production between the 2016 to 2018<sup>18</sup> periods, contributing to 18% total production in Central Kalimantan in 2018. The pandemic impacted the sector and fluctuated the global palm oil price, however the industry remains one of the biggest contributors to the region's GRDP as seen in Figure 5 since the supply has to answer the domestic and global needs of palm oil-based products.

The growth in demand for palm oil means an increasing need to produce more-going hand in hand following recent findings on the rising awareness of the use of sustainable products, creating demands for palm oil that is sustainably sourced. A MarkPlus survey showed willingness of consumers to switch into sustainable palm oil<sup>19</sup> where the choice is available. Sustainable palm oil, which is cultivated on a sustainable standard, can therefore be an answer for the growing demand of palm oil itself while protecting the environment, wildlife, and local communities' wellbeing. The jurisdictional certification that Seruyan is currently in progress for is aimed to provide a more responsible value chain in its palm oil plantations, notably traceability of the production to plantation-not to mention access to premium markets for sustainable commodities. The certification is in accordance with the SDGs concept itself, emphasizing multi-stakeholders, cross-sectoral collaboration and inclusive efforts plantation practices in a jurisdiction.

With the recovering global economy, it is hoped that the investment climate for sustainable palm oil in Seruyan will improve-not only for the private companies, but also for smallholders via micro-credit programs.

Other emerging opportunities come from the fisheries sector where the government is currently encouraging, both from marine and freshwater aquaculture<sup>20</sup>. The potential for the fisheries industry is promising, considering the resources from the Seruyan river and the Seruyan sea, especially in the Seruyan Hilir district. The volume of fish produced from the industry has been increasing within the 2017-2020 period, with a 4% rise in the last two years reaching 17,000 tonnes annually. This presents an opportunity in the future of the Seruyan fishery industry, especially seeing that the infrastructure to strategic facilities are being improved, making it more accessible for trade. In addition to that, Seruyan with its biodiversity and supporting geographical locations also has potential for tourism. The most prominent is Taman Nasional Tanjung Puting, the largest orangutan conservation in the island, one of the areas considered as the country's Kawasan Strategis Pariwisata Nasional (KSPN) with more than 200 rare bird species identified. Ecotourism strategies and projects have been developed and considered to promote the area along with increasing participation from local communities on conservation and alternative economic activities (Meilida et al., 2020)<sup>21</sup>. The Sungai Bakau Beach in East Seruyan Hilir and Seluluk Lake in Hanau also present opportunities in tourism<sup>22</sup>, with goals of empowering the local communities and overall economic growth in the regency while considering the environmental impacts.

## Conclusion

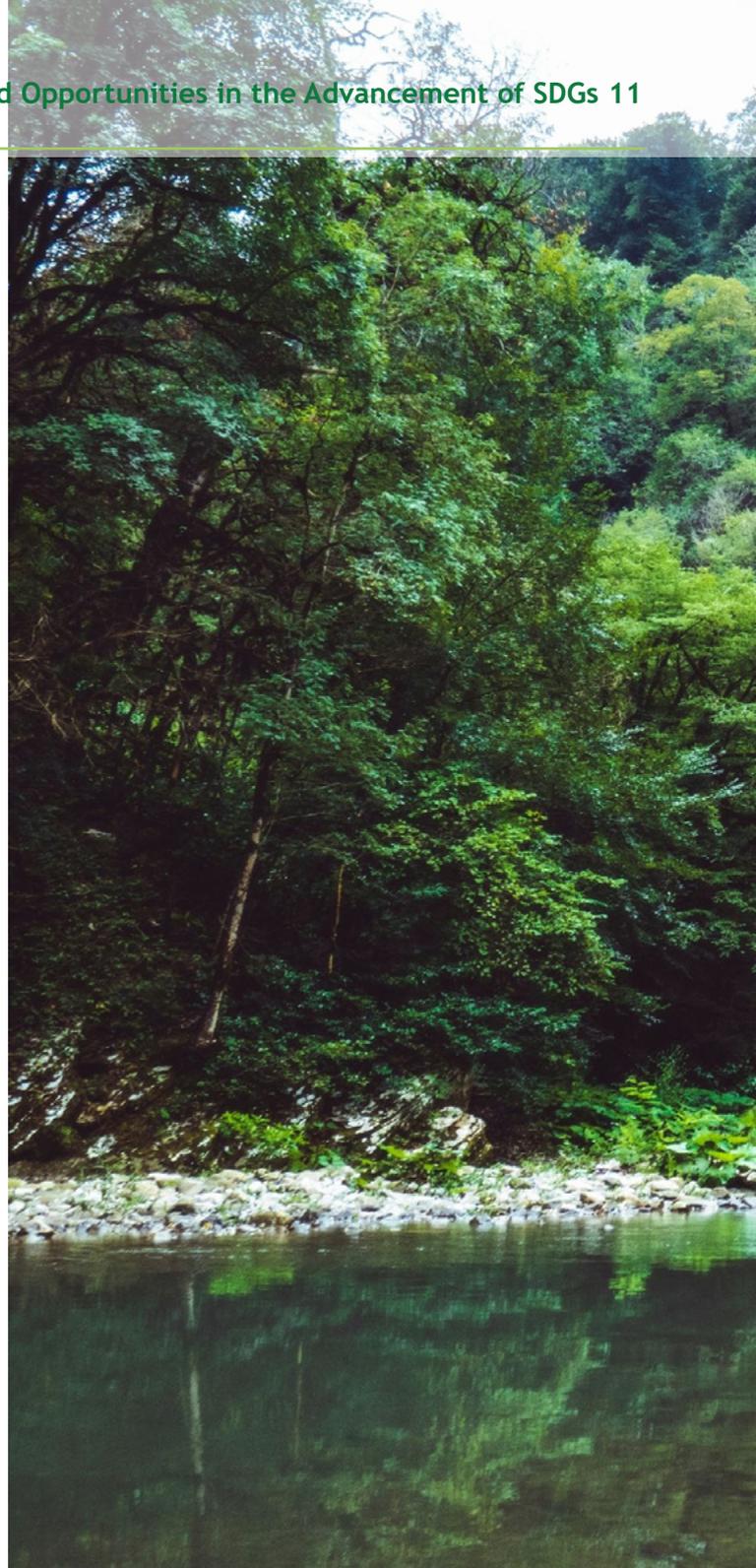
### The Journey of SDGs in Seruyan

Implementation of sustainable practices at a sub-national level has proven to present challenges across dimensions. The challenges include the general governance, in which policies and approaches can be laden by political influences, resource capacity, and funding matters. The journey to advancement of SDGs in Seruyan is still a matter of working out the best ways for everyone since the approach taken heavily relies on collaboration, however Seruyan is monitoring and evaluating the impact of jurisdictional approaches in their advancement of SDGs as of now.

As the key stakeholder in the end-to-end process of SDGs advancement, the government's political will remains the most central in initiating collaborative actions needed for it. Seruyan's current regional administration shows commitment in their goals to advance its development sustainably, therefore laying the groundwork for all the activities and partnerships with private sectors, NGO, as well as the local communities following that. While Seruyan currently focuses on jurisdictional certification, specifically its main commodity the palm oil, it is expected that the plantations bear products using sustainable practices. It is hoped that with the sustainable practices supported by jurisdictional certifications, the local communities in Seruyan can improve their livelihood, the forest ecosystem around can be preserved, and other efforts can be supported such as sustainable tourism and access expansion by infrastructure development. It is hoped that the efforts that Seruyan takes can be taken as examples in other districts that want to solve problems in their administrative area in a holistic way.

### Mitigation of various risks

One of the principles of taking new approaches in a business is to mitigate risks, both existing and new ones that may arise in the future. In the perspective



of the environment, sustainable practices can reduce the risks of climate change-related disasters such as flood, forest fire and landslides. This helps both companies and farmers, especially in the agricultural sector, to have sustainable supply of the commodities and increase the plantations' productivity. Social conflicts can be minimized and protect the rights of local communities, considering there have been related issues in Seruyan in the past. These risk reductions benefit all stakeholders, ensuring the prosperity of livelihoods and conserving the area in the future.

## Recommendations



### Education for innovation

The existence of jurisdictional approaches in Seruyan can also open opportunities for establishing research centers, training, and education facilities, especially since Seruyan is a pilot project implementing the actions for the first time. This can help discover problems within the various sectors in Seruyan industries, as well as encouraging innovations to solve issues in Seruyan. This goes beyond the agricultural sector as the main commodity, but this can be applicable for the growing interests in other industries too.



### Collaboration at a national and global level

Along with Seruyan, the neighboring city of West Kotawaringin has also committed to implementing a jurisdictional approach to ensure their prosperity on a landscape level. Collaboration with neighboring regions will help Seruyan further improve their implementation of sustainable practices, learning from each other's past experiences. Moreover, with Seruyan's vast networks to jurisdictional-certified countries, the learning process will be better than ever therefore propelling the city forward in their advancement of SDGs.



### Encourage monitoring and evaluation on SDG implementation progress at the regional level

Indonesia has held up appealing progress for several aspects of the SDGs, from their evaluation of SDGs progress as a county. Some of the progress was highly affected by the global Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and therefore anticipating sound, robust public policies as well as governmental and non-governmental support. While the country has its own measures to evaluate the SDGs progress, Seruyan is a case study of where the plans and implementations of SDGs are supported by a certain approach, that is jurisdictional certification aiming to view SDGs at a landscape level. The stakeholder collaboration in the jurisdictional approach is assisted by the "TERPERCAYA" Indicator in tracking the progress of the region in their shift towards more sustainable practices in cultivating their palm oil. Regular identification and monitoring of the progress will provide robust assessment for decision makers in Seruyan to better formulate their strategy in growing sustainable commodities and gaining market recognition, as well as collaboration plans in the future. Evaluation of SDGs implementation from time to time should also be conducted across subnational regions in Indonesia, since every goal is linked to each other for the country's success in achieving the SDGs.

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## Tropical Forest Alliance

TFA is a global multistakeholder partnership platform initiated to support the implementation of private-sector commitments as well as to amplify demand-side engagement in major economies towards the transition to reduced deforestation commodity supply chains. Hosted by the World Economic Forum, TFA partners with 170+ organizations - companies, government entities, civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities and international agencies. TFA operates regional platforms in Latin America, West and Central Africa, China, and Southeast Asia.

## SBM ITB

The School of Business and Management (SBM) Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) was established on December 31, 2003. SBM ITB is located at the Main Campus of Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), the best science and technology institute in Indonesia. SBM ITB has a role as the hub and orchestrator to develop and grow technopreneurs in Indonesia. In 2018 SBM ITB gained an international accreditation, ABEST, and in 2021 SBM ITB has become among the limited AACSB accredited schools.

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It is our hope that this study could inspire scaled sustainability commitment and further collective actions across all stakeholders in our journey towards deforestation-free commodities supply chain, other forest-positive shared agendas, and eventually our pursuit towards net zero.

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