

Strategies for Strengthening the Economy Based on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Creative Economy/Tourism to Increase Regional Competitiveness and Encourage a Sustainable Economy in Gorontalo City

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Abstract

Regional economic transformation requires an adaptive strategy in facing the challenges of globalization, especially for Gorontalo City which has launched a vision as a City of Services. Strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy/tourism is the key to increasing regional competitiveness while encouraging sustainable economic growth. This research aims to analyze effective economic strengthening strategies through innovation approaches, MSME empowerment, and optimization of the creative tourism sector to achieve the mission of developing Gorontalo City as a center for services and creative economy in the eastern region of Indonesia. The methodology used in this study is a qualitative method with SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in innovation-based economic development in Gorontalo City. Data was obtained through literature studies, analysis of regional planning documents, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including the government, MSME actors, creative communities, and academics.

The results of the study show that the economic strengthening strategy in Gorontalo City is in the quadrant of the Turn Around Strategy, which focuses on taking advantage of great opportunities in the technology and creative tourism sectors while still overcoming various weaknesses, such as limited human resource capacity and digital infrastructure. The recommended strategic efforts include increasing human resource capacity through digital training, optimizing digital infrastructure, multi-stakeholder



collaboration in the development of the creative sector, as well as providing access to innovative financing and strengthening innovation-friendly regulations. This research recommends that the Gorontalo City government accelerate digital transformation, strengthen synergy between sectors, and provide supporting policies to create an inclusive, resilient, and adaptive economic ecosystem, so as to be able to realize the vision of Gorontalo City as a highly competitive and sustainable City of Services.

Keywords: Economy; regional competitiveness; Strategy; Strengthening; SWOT

INTRODUCTION

Increasing regional competitiveness and realizing a sustainable economy are the main demands for local governments in Indonesia in facing the dynamics of globalization and competition between regions. Regional competitiveness is not only determined by the wealth of natural resources, but also by innovation capacity, quality of human resources, governance, and the ability to develop adaptive and environmentally friendly economic sectors. To achieve this, synergy between innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy is needed as the main foundation for strengthening the local economy. The concept of sustainable economy is very relevant, where economic growth must be in harmony with environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and equitable distribution of welfare for all levels of society. Therefore, an economic strengthening strategy that focuses on innovation and empowerment of creative sectors is key to encouraging inclusive and sustainable growth in areas such as Gorontalo City.

Strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative tourism has proven to be able to accelerate the transformation of the regional economy from the traditional sector to a knowledge-based and creativity-based economy. The application of innovations in the field of tourism and MSMEs, as well as improving people's entrepreneurial skills, can increase added value and expand new business opportunities. Putri (2022) said that innovations in the tourism sector and partnerships with local MSMEs are able to significantly increase regional competitiveness, while strengthening the position of the creative economy as the backbone of sustainable economic development.

The creative economy itself has a central role in accelerating economic growth in various regions of Indonesia, including Gorontalo City. The development of the creative economy requires conducive ecosystem support, both in terms of regulations, incentives, infrastructure, and people's digital literacy. As explained by Rachmawati et al. (2024), the

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success of creative economy development is not only determined by individual creative ideas, but also by the ability to build collaborative networks, utilize digital technology, and support the creation of innovative products based on local wisdom that are able to compete in the global market. Ramatni et al. (2025) underlined that creative economy education and institutional strengthening are important pillars to encourage sustainable tourism and strengthen regional competitiveness through human resource development and strengthening business networks

Furthermore, creativity and innovation are the main cornerstones of creative economy growth in the industrial era 4.0. Gorontalo City has great potential in the performing arts, culinary, crafts, and culture- and nature-based tourism subsectors. According to Mappasomba et al. (2024), the development of entrepreneurial innovations in village tourism is very effective in encouraging the creation of new economic opportunities, strengthening the economic resilience of local communities, and creating a competitive and sustainable tourism ecosystem. Synergy between the government, business actors, creative communities, and universities is needed to realize an innovative ecosystem in the region.

The strategy of strengthening the economy in an area must be prepared contextually according to the characteristics of its locality, including in Gorontalo City. A collaborative approach between the government, the business world, and the community is a key factor in success. Manuhutu et al. (2023) said that the strategy of strengthening the innovation-based economy in coastal and urban areas in Indonesia is successful when supported by strengthening the MSME value chain, providing continuous training, as well as developing digital infrastructure and promoting tourist destinations that are adaptive to global trends. This model is relevant to be applied in Gorontalo to encourage inclusive local economic growth.

As a city that has declared itself to be a service center in the eastern region of Indonesia, Gorontalo City has pursued various programs that have implications for strengthening the economy based on strengthening various service sectors. Transformation towards a service city requires accelerating the improvement of the quality of human resources, digital infrastructure, as well as strengthening public services and a modern creative economy system. This commitment is reflected in various development priority programs that are oriented towards the development of new economic growth centers, strengthening MSMEs, and expanding innovation-based job opportunities. By prioritizing the creative economy and service sector, Gorontalo City is expected to be able to become a catalyst for inclusive regional economic growth, as well



as become an investment magnet and a leading destination in the eastern region of Indonesia.

However, various problems are still faced in the development of the economic sector in Gorontalo City. Classic problems such as limited access to capital, low digital literacy of business actors, weak product innovation, and suboptimal synergy between the government, the world of education, and business people are the main challenges. In addition, the economic structure that is still dominated by the informal sector and the lack of business diversification make regional economic resilience vulnerable to external shocks. Increasing human resource capacity, strengthening regulations that support innovation, and empowering technology-based MSMEs are urgent needs to encourage a resilient and competitive economy in Gorontalo City.

The urgency of strengthening economic strategies based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy is increasingly urgent amid the challenges of global economic uncertainty and the demands of sustainable development. Putri (2022) emphasized that green tourism, strategic partnerships, and infrastructure readiness are needed to strengthen the world of entrepreneurship based on local potential, which ultimately increases regional competitiveness. Manuhutu et al. (2023) who highlighted that strengthening the MSME value chain of tourism and creative economy, sustainable training, and collaboration between stakeholders are the keys to the success of regional competitiveness and the realization of a sustainable economy. As emphasized by Ramatni et al. (2025), strategies to strengthen human resource capacity, build an innovation ecosystem, and multi-stakeholder collaboration are the keys to accelerating the development of the creative economy and sustainable tourism. Without innovation and empowerment of the creative sector, it is difficult for an area like Gorontalo City to survive and transform towards a developed, inclusive, and prosperous city in the future

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regional Competitiveness

Regional competitiveness refers to the ability of a region to attract investment, create added value, and improve community welfare in a sustainable manner through the use of local potential and innovation. Regional competitiveness performance is usually measured through economic, human resources, and infrastructure factors, as well as adaptation to rapid global changes (Fauziah et al., 2020; Azizah & Utama, 2021). Increasing regional competitiveness is closely related to collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the community in building an inclusive innovation



ecosystem. The importance of integration between regional development policies and the development of human resource competencies as the main drivers of regional competitiveness.

Sustainable Economy

A sustainable economy is an economic system that is oriented towards a balance between economic growth, environmental conservation, and social welfare of the community. The application of sustainable economic principles emphasizes the efficient use of resources, social responsibility, and environmental preservation to ensure the sustainability of future generations (Saefullah et al., 2025; Kasmudin et al., 2025). The implementation of a sustainable economy requires synergy between the public and private sectors in creating environmentally friendly innovations. The importance of the company's role in implementing social and environmental responsibility to support a sustainable economy at the local and national levels.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis method used to identify and evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by an organization or region in order to formulate the right strategy. This approach is considered effective in assisting data-driven decision-making and internal-external evaluation of organizations (Zuhair et al., 2025; Fitriatussoleha & Ustanti, 2025). SWOT analysis is able to provide a comprehensive overview of the organization's competitive position so that it can be used as a basis for strategic policy formulation. The benefits of SWOT analysis in efforts to develop marketing and service strategies to increase institutional competitiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The location of this research is in Gorontalo City with the target of the research being OPD in Gorontalo City, the community and other related stakeholders totaling 20 people. The research implementation is January 2025 – April 2025. This research uses a *Mixed method* research approach. *Mixed method* is a research approach that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches with a specific design to answer the research objectives. *The Mix Method* in this study is identical to *the explanatory design* method , which is the main quantitative result which is then supported by qualitative results.

Data collection in this study used questionnaires, observations, documentation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The data analysis used is a SWOT analysis. SWOT

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analysis is an analysis of the internal and external conditions of an organization/activity or business which will then be used as a basis for designing strategies and work programs. Internal analysis includes consideration of the factors of strength and weakness. Meanwhile, external analysis includes opportunity and challenge factors.

The data analysis in this study uses SWOT/TOWS analysis. The steps of the SWOT analysis are taken:

- a. The weight of each answer has an alternative to give a score between 1-4, the more important the influence of factors, the higher the weight that will be given
- b. Each number of questions answered by the respondent is summed by an average of lines.
- c. All answer numbers are accumulated in total in row values, then summed to the number of columns and divided by the number of rows hence the number of columns
- d. The average value of a row that is greater than the average of a column is strength and opportunity. While the average value of a row that is smaller than the average of a column is a weakness and a threat.
- e. SO is utilizing all strengths by taking into account opportunities, WO is utilizing weaknesses by paying attention to opportunities, ST is utilizing strengths by paying attention to threats, and WT utilizes weaknesses by paying attention to threats.

Then the analysis was also continued with a qualitative analysis of the Miles and Huberman model which consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification activities. Where the process of data collection, data reduction, and verification/conclusion is a cyclical process that takes place simultaneously and interacts with each other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of strategies for strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy can be described as follows:

Identification of Internal and External Factors

The description of the results of the SWOT analysis in this study is described as follows:



a. Identify Internal Factors

These internal factors affect the formation of *strengths* and *weaknesses* (S and W). Internal analysis consists of 2 types, namely:

1) Strength

The strength factors in strengthening the innovation-based economy, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy are:

a) Digital Infrastructure Support

Strong digital infrastructure in Gorontalo City as a City of Services supports service efficiency, digital market expansion, and encourages MSMEs and the service sector to innovate, thereby increasing the competitiveness of the creative economy and accelerating digital transformation in various service and product business fields.

b) The Economic Potential of Creative Tourism

Gorontalo City can develop creative tourism based on culture, culinary, and art, which strengthens the identity of the City of Services, opens up opportunities for MSMEs, attracts tourists, and encourages sustainable local economic growth with the support of digital promotion and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

c) Government Policy Support

The adaptive, pro-innovation, and investment-friendly policies of the Gorontalo City government are the main drivers for the growth of the service business ecosystem, creative economy, and tourism through regulations, incentives, and training that strengthen the competitiveness of the City of Services.

d) A Growing Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Gorontalo City's entrepreneurial ecosystem that is integrated with financing, business incubation, and mentor networks supports the growth of technology-based service businesses, encourages innovation, and makes the city a center of economic creativity in the eastern region of Indonesia.

e) Adaptive Human Resource Availability

Gorontalo City's adaptive and skilled human resources in the digital and creative fields strengthen service competitiveness, accelerate innovation, and create a dynamic, collaborative, and ready business environment to face global economic challenges.

2) Debilitation



The weakness factors in strengthening the innovation-based economy, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy are:

a) Limited Access to Capital for Digital MSMEs

Business actors in Gorontalo City as a City of Services still face limited capital, difficulty accessing financing, and lack of understanding of funding alternatives, so that innovation, market expansion, and technology investment are hampered, limiting the growth of the digital economy that is the backbone of the service city.

b) Lack of Digital Literacy and Innovation

Business actors in Gorontalo City still lack digital literacy and innovation, so they are less able to utilize technology for marketing, data, and e-commerce, limiting the development of the creative economy and reducing the competitiveness of city services in the digital era.

c) Regulations Related to the Digital Economy Are Not Optimal

Gorontalo City's digital economy regulations are not optimal, still lagging behind in data protection, digital taxes, and business licensing, thus hampering the innovation climate and causing legal uncertainty for digital-based service business actors.

d) Limited Business Incubation Facilities

The limited business incubation facilities in Gorontalo City limit coaching, mentoring, and network access for startups and service MSMEs, so that the growth of innovative entrepreneurs and the creative economy is not optimal as the pillars of the City of Services.

e) Lack of Collaboration between the Private Sector, Academia, and Government

Collaboration between the private sector, academia, and the government in Gorontalo City is still weak, hindering the development of research, innovation, and policies that support the service ecosystem and reducing the effectiveness of efforts to build competitiveness and a sustainable economy.

The internal strategy factors that are strengths and weaknesses in the strategy of strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy are as follows:



Table 1: Internal rating value factors (strengths and weaknesses)

Yes	Description	Actual Points	Weight	Rating	Score
1	Digital Infrastructure Support	0.72	0.090	2.000	0.181
2	The Economic Potential of Creative Tourism	0.80	0.101	3.000	0.303
3	Government Policy Support	0.80	0.101	4.000	0.403
4	A Growing Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	0.83	0.105	4.000	0.420
5	Adaptive Human Resource Availability	0.70	0.088	1.000	0.088
Number of Strengths			0.485		1.395
1	Limited Access to Capital for Digital MSMEs	0.82	0.103	3.000	0.309
2	Lack of Digital Literacy and Innovation	0.80	0.101	2.000	0.202
3	Regulations Related to the Digital Economy Are Not Optimal	0.83	0.105	4.000	0.420
4	Limited Business Incubation Facilities	0.85	0.107	4.000	0.429
5	Lack of Collaboration between the Private Sector, Academia, and Government	0.78	0.099	1.000	0.099
Number of Weaknesses			0.515		1.458
Number of IFAS		7.93	1.000		
IFAS Score					-0.063

Primary Data Processing Sources, 2025

Based on the IFAS analysis, the results were obtained that for internal factors, a strength score of 1.395 was obtained, while for the weakness score was 1.458. So that these values can be known, the difference between internal and external factors is negative of -0.118 where the strength is smaller than the score value compared to the weakness.

b. Identification of External Factors

These external factors affect the formation of *opportunities* and *threats* (O and T). External factors are factors from outside 5 to optimize the strategy of distributing



agricultural loans for the Village BUM program. External factors consist of 2 aspects, namely:

1) Chance

The opportunities in strengthening the innovation-based economy, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy are:

a) Rapid Growth of the Digital Economy

The rapid economic potential opens up opportunities for Gorontalo City as a City of Services to expand the market, increase MSME innovation, and accelerate the transformation of the technology-based service sector, tourism, and creative economy.

b) Central Government Support and Sustainable Economic Program

Central policy support, incentives, and sustainable economic programs provide opportunities for Gorontalo City to develop service MSMEs, encourage green products, and build an inclusive and environmentally friendly business ecosystem.

c) Development of Digital-Based Tourism and Creative Economy

Digitalization of tourism and the creative economy strengthens promotion, increases visits, and expands the market for local products of Gorontalo City as a City of Services, while strengthening the region's cultural identity globally.

d) Increasing Awareness of the Circular Economy

The circular economy trend encourages Gorontalo City to create environmentally friendly service businesses and MSMEs, process waste into creative products, and strengthen sustainable regional economic competitiveness.

e) Access to Global Technology and Innovation in business

Global technology access allows Gorontalo City to accelerate service innovation, collaborate internationally, and build a highly competitive entrepreneurial ecosystem at the national and global levels.

2) Threat

The threats to strengthening the innovation-based economy, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy are:

a) Fierce Competition with Other Cities in Economic Transformation



Gorontalo City as a City of Services faces stiff competition from big cities that are more prepared in terms of infrastructure, capital, and network, so it needs a differentiation strategy to attract investment, talent, and tourists.

b) Cybersecurity and Data Protection Threats

Cyber threats and weak data protection in Gorontalo City can reduce digital trust, disrupt service business operations, and hinder the growth of the creative economy and digital innovation.

c) Dependence on Unstable Technology Infrastructure

Dependence on unstable digital infrastructure makes Gorontalo City prone to technological disruptions, thereby hindering the development of innovation-based service businesses and reducing the attractiveness of digital investment.

d) Society's Resistance to Digital Change

Some people in Gorontalo City are still reluctant to adapt to technology, hindering the transformation of digital services, widening the digital divide, and slowing down the growth of the creative economy.

e) Social and Cultural Impact of Automation and Digitalization

Automation and digitalization in Gorontalo City can cause unemployment, erode local culture, and create social disruption if not integrated wisely in the development of the City of Services.

As for the external strategy factors that are opportunities and threats in the strategy of strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy as follows.

Table 2. External rating value factors (opportunities and threats)

Yes	Description	Actual Points	Weight	Rating	Score
1	Rapid Growth of the Digital Economy	0.88	0.108	2.000	0.216
2	Central Government Support and Sustainable Economic Program	0.88	0.108	4.000	0.433



Yes	Description	Actual Points	Weight	Rating	Score
3	Development of Digital-Based Tourism and Creative Economy	0.90	0.110	4.000	0.441
4	Increasing Awareness of the Circular Economy	0.80	0.098	3.000	0.294
5	Access to Global Technology and Innovation in business	0.78	0.096	1.000	0.096
Number of Opportunities			0.520		1.480
1	Fierce Competition with Other Cities in Economic Transformation	0.77	0.094	3.000	0.282
2	Cybersecurity and Data Protection Threats	0.83	0.102	4.000	0.408
3	Dependence on Unstable Technology Infrastructure	0.73	0.090	1.000	0.090
4	Society's Resistance to Digital Change	0.83	0.102	4.000	0.408
5	Social and Cultural Impact of Automation and Digitalization	0.75	0.092	2.000	0.184
Number of Threats			0.480		1.371
Number of EFAS		8.17	1.000		
EFAS Score					0.108

Primary Data Processing Sources, 2025

Based on the EFAS analysis, it was obtained that the value of opportunity factors owned by the strategy of strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy was 1,480 and the threat factor was 1,371. So when compared, the opportunity factor is greater than the score of the threat.



SWOT Analysis Chart

Based on the IFAS and EFAS tables, the description of the location of the strategic quadrants is presented in the following figure:

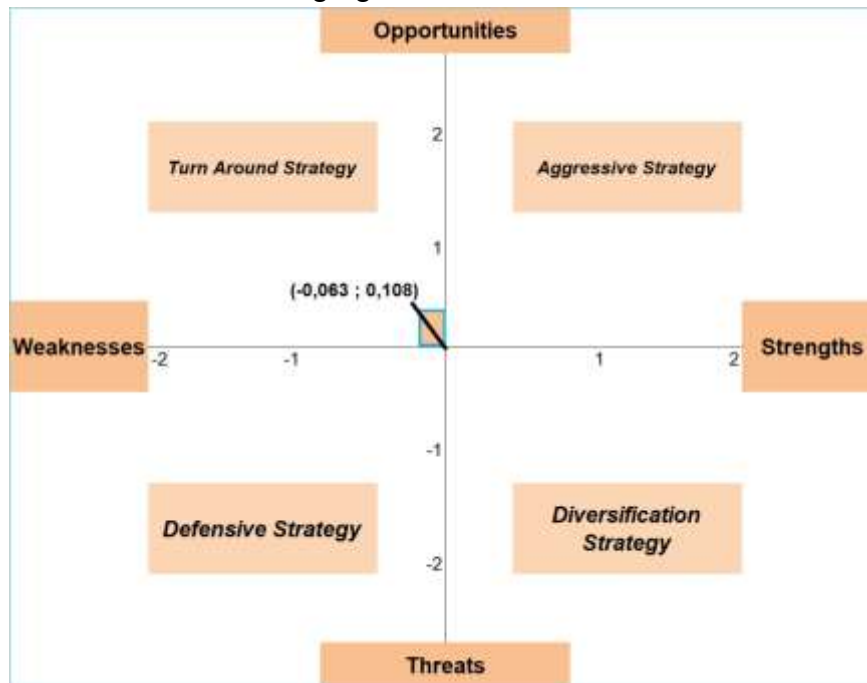


Figure 1: SWOT Analysis Diagram

Figure 1 shows that the position of the strategy for strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy is in quadrant 3 or the Turn Around strategy in the SWOT analysis. The Turn Around strategy focuses on making optimal use of various external opportunities while minimizing existing internal weaknesses, such as limited human resources, technology, and market access. The implementation of this strategy is relevant for regions that have growth opportunities in the creative economy and tourism sectors, but are still faced with various structural challenges and resource management that has not been maximized. According to research by Zuhair et al. (2025), the implementation of the Turn Around strategy in the creative economy sector has been proven to accelerate innovation adaptation and increase competitiveness through the development of collaborative networks and the use of digital technology. In addition, Fitriatussoleha & Ustanti (2025) emphasized that this

strategy is also effective in improving the internal weaknesses of institutions or regions by optimizing external opportunities, so that sustainable economic transformation can be achieved gradually through multi-stakeholder synergy and sustainable innovation

Various strategic steps in strengthening the innovation-based economy, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism to increase regional competitiveness and encourage a sustainable economy in Gorontalo City are carried out with 5 strategies, namely:

a. Capacity Building of Human Resources and Digital Literacy in the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Creative Economy Sectors

Increasing the capacity of Human Resources (HR) and digital literacy in the innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative economy sectors is the main foundation in the Turn Around strategy, especially in facing the challenge of low technological competence in Gorontalo City. This effort is very important considering that Gorontalo City has positioned itself as a City of Services in its development vision. Digital technology-based training programs, business innovation workshops, and digital entrepreneurship certification for MSME actors are real steps so that local human resources can adapt to the needs of the increasingly digital and dynamic service market. A study by Widiyanti and Wijayanti (2022) proves that digital training for MSMEs increases readiness and competitiveness in the industrial era 4.0. Meanwhile, Putra et al. (2023) emphasized the need for collaboration between local governments, educational institutions, and the private sector to accelerate digital literacy and build innovation networks that are relevant to the potential of regional services.

Furthermore, strengthening the capacity of human resources based on innovation and digitalization not only has an impact on individual productivity, but also directly improves the creative economy and service ecosystem of Gorontalo City. Strategic collaborations with universities and training institutions can give birth to applied research, the development of digital startups, and the incubation of creative businesses that strengthen the city's identity as a center for modern services. Dewi & Rachmawati (2021) revealed that cities that have succeeded in building a creative economy ecosystem based on cross-sector collaboration show more competitive service growth. Susilo and Shalihah (2019) highlight the importance of local government policy support in innovation and digitalization training, so that creative service MSMEs in the regions are able to penetrate the global market. With this integrated strategy, Gorontalo City can strengthen competitiveness while encouraging a sustainable economy based on services and creativity.



b. Optimizing Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity to Encourage the Creative Economy

Optimizing digital infrastructure is one of the main pillars in strengthening the development of the creative economy and increasing the competitiveness of Gorontalo City as a City of Services. The availability of equitable internet access and reliable digital connectivity is indispensable to support the activities of creative business actors in marketing products, expanding business networks, and adapting to the global digital ecosystem. The Gorontalo City Government can collaborate with the private sector in the construction of high-speed internet networks and digital public service centers, so that local business actors are able to compete in the national and international markets. The importance of internet access in accelerating the digitalization of MSMEs and increasing the growth of the creative economy (Astuti & Suriani, 2019). Meanwhile, Aditya & Novani (2022) show that the development of comprehensive digital infrastructure is able to encourage collaboration, innovation, and effectiveness of service-based businesses in the regions.

In addition, strengthening digital infrastructure in Gorontalo City must be followed by the development of supporting facilities such as co-working spaces, digital creative centers, and technology training for business actors and the community. This facility can be a space for cross-sector collaboration to grow technology-based startups, accelerate the birth of digital innovation in the field of creative economy, and develop the digital tourism sector based on local culture. Putra & Fatimah (2023) stated that the existence of co-working spaces and digital incubators is very effective in encouraging collaboration and expanding regional creative economy market opportunities. Furthermore, Setiawan & Muda (2018) revealed that the use of information and communication technology in the service sector is able to increase economic productivity and create sustainable growth, especially in service-oriented cities such as Gorontalo. By optimizing integrated digital infrastructure, Gorontalo City can strengthen its position as a center for creative and highly competitive services in the eastern region of Indonesia.

c. Fostering Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in the Development of Creative and Sustainable Tourism

Encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration is a fundamental strategy in building creative and sustainable tourism in Gorontalo City, especially overcoming fragmentation between stakeholders which has been a major obstacle. The government can play a role as a facilitator, building synergy with the private sector, communities, and academics in order to create program synchronization in the



development of tourism destinations that prioritize local wisdom and sustainability values. Damanik & Weber (2016) said that collaboration between business actors, communities, and the government has proven to be able to accelerate the development of community-based tourism and expand local economic opportunities. Meanwhile, Suryandari (2018) underlined the importance of joint initiatives and cross-sectoral innovations, such as cultural festivals and destination promotion through digital platforms, in increasing regional tourism attraction in a sustainable manner.

In addition, strategic collaboration can be implemented through the development of digital tourism villages, the organization of cultural-based creative events, and the strengthening of partnership networks between creative communities, local governments, and business actors. This synergy will create an innovative and inclusive tourism ecosystem, strengthening the identity of Gorontalo City as a highly competitive service and creative tourism destination. Azis et al. (2021) said that the success of the development of digital-based tourism villages in Indonesia is highly dependent on the collaboration and active participation of various parties in designing programs, training, and destination promotion. The same thing was also expressed by Sari & Sunaryo (2020) that multi-stakeholder partnerships in the development of culture-based tourism significantly encourage local economic growth and regional cultural preservation. By building integrated collaboration, the development of creative tourism in Gorontalo City will be stronger, more competitive, and more sustainable.

d. **Providing Access to Innovation-Based Financing for Creative Business Actors and MSMEs**

Providing access to innovation-based financing is an essential strategy in supporting the growth of the creative economy and strengthening MSMEs in Gorontalo City, especially in the era of digital transformation and knowledge-based economy. Capital limitations are a classic obstacle faced by creative business actors, especially when they want to develop a technology and innovation-based business. Local governments can take advantage of collaboration opportunities with financial institutions, fintech, and take advantage of national programs, such as innovation-based People's Business Loans (KUR) and grants for creative economy development. Fitriani & Hidayat (2023) show that access to innovative financing such as digital loans, incubation funds, and innovation grants can accelerate the growth of creative startups and technology-based MSMEs in the region. Meanwhile, Astuti & Handayani (2018) said that inclusive financing schemes, such as microcredit and innovation grants, are



to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs and support the growth of the local creative economy.

In addition to conventional financing, innovations in providing access to funds such as revolving funds, crowdfunding, and collaboration with non-bank institutions are also very necessary. The Gorontalo City Government can design financing programs that are adaptive to digital developments, as well as provide financial assistance and education for business actors to be able to utilize funding sources optimally. Dewi & Sarwono (2021) emphasized the effectiveness of revolving funds in helping creative MSMEs survive and thrive in the midst of economic challenges, especially for innovation-based startups. In addition, Hafsa (2015) highlighted that technology-based financing support and financial management training are key to encouraging MSMEs to upgrade and strengthen the regional creative economy ecosystem (Hafsa, 2015). The provision of responsive and inclusive access to financing can be the main driver of innovation growth, strengthening the creative economy, and increasing the competitiveness of Gorontalo City.

e. Strengthening Policies and Regulations That Support the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Strengthening policies and regulations that support the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem is key to the Turn Around strategy in Gorontalo City, especially to create a conducive and responsive business climate to digital change. Progressive regulations, such as tax incentives for technology startups, ease of the creative business licensing process, and protection of intellectual property rights are urgently needed to accelerate the growth of the innovation sector. Kusumawardhani (2017) emphasized that the role of supportive regulations, both in fiscal and business protection aspects, is very important for the growth of entrepreneurship in the region. Rahmawati & Pratiwi (2020) also showed that policies that encourage digitalization and intellectual property rights protection are able to strengthen the competitiveness of creative economy actors at the local and national levels.

Furthermore, regulatory adjustments and policy synchronization between the local and central governments are needed so that the strategy to strengthen the creative economy runs optimally and is in line with the needs of business actors in the innovation sector. Cross-sector collaboration, community involvement, and monitoring policy implementation must be the main focus, so that policies are not only administrative but also substantive in supporting the growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Arafah & Wulansari (2021) said that inclusive policies that are able to



accommodate the aspirations of creative economy actors and provide adequate supporting infrastructure. Pratono (2016) said that the government's alignment through innovation policies and business incentives so that MSME and startup actors are able to adapt and develop in the digital era. With strong regulatory support and innovation-friendly, Gorontalo City can build a healthy and sustainable creative business ecosystem.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategy of strengthening the economy based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative economy/tourism in Gorontalo City aims to increase regional competitiveness and encourage sustainable economic growth based on the SWOT analysis is in the Turn Around Strategy quadrant, which focuses on taking advantage of great opportunities in the technology and creative tourism sectors by overcoming various weaknesses, such as limited human resource capacity and digital infrastructure. Strategic efforts include increasing human resource capacity through digital-based training, optimizing digital infrastructure to support the innovation ecosystem, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in the development of the creative economy sector. In addition, providing access to financing for innovation-based MSMEs and strengthening regulations that support the digital ecosystem are important factors in encouraging inclusive economic growth. By implementing this strategy consistently and sustainably, Gorontalo City has the potential to become a center of creative economy and innovation in Gorontalo City, increase regional competitiveness, and create a resilient and adaptive economic ecosystem, especially in achieving Gorontalo City's mission as a City of Services.

The Gorontalo City Government is advised to optimize the implementation of human resource training based on various needs in the digital era, expand digital infrastructure, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration and access to innovative financing so that creative economy and tourism growth can run optimally, regional competitiveness increases, and create an inclusive and sustainable economic ecosystem in the midst of global dynamics.



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