

*The Katalis Podcast*

# The Rise of Sustainable Travel

Interview with Alfonso Pardede, CEO, PT Flores Prosperindo

## **Sondang**

Pak Alfonso, first of all, congratulations on hosting the 2023 ASEAN Summit in Labuan Bajo and TanaMori. It must have been quite a process to land such an achievement.

## **Alfonso**

Indeed, it has been a long journey for TanaMori. This started in 2017 with several Indonesian ministers conducting an investment roadshow to Australia. After returning to Indonesia, they began to see the potential of Labuan Bajo to be offered to Australia. We, Flores Prosperindo (FP), are one of the developers who then received their support and were introduced to Australian investors. Starting in 2018, FP has been collaborating with the Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), to develop a world-class tourism area, beginning with the preparation of a master plan, feasibility studies done by world-class consultants, and this process continued. Finally, in the fourth quarter of 2019, President Joko Widodo made the announcement that Indonesia will hold the presidency of the G20 and in 2023 would host the 2023 ASEAN Summit. He wanted the location to be in a place other than Bali, and of course this was in line with the "10 New Balis" program at that time. Thus began the visit of Pak Luhut Panjaitan, Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, to TanaMori at the end of 2019 and continued with the President's visit to Labuan Bajo in early 2020. So the preparations continued. But then in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began and all plans were postponed. As the condition improved, the government then issued Presidential Decree No. 116/2021 to accelerate infrastructure development both outside and within the TanaMori area related to the preparation of the 2023 ASEAN Summit.

## **Sondang**

There are several super priority tourism destinations, but it was Labuan Bajo that the President chose. Such a big achievement.

## **Alfonso**

That's right, it is such a blessing for us, and for Labuan Bajo in the Regency of Manggarai Barat, East Nusa Tenggara Province. We see this as a real commitment by the government to develop tourism areas in eastern Indonesia or areas that are still lagging behind in terms of economic development. We have seen extraordinary government support. And don't forget that Labuan Bajo has a world-class attraction, namely the habitat of the Komodo dragon.

## **Sondang**

I would like to know more about TanaMori. It's a world-class tourism area and has been declared as one of the super priority tourism destinations. The main concept that TanaMori carries is sustainable tourism. Globally there is indeed a trend towards sustainable tourism, but what is the definition of this concept for you as an entrepreneur engaged in the premium tourism sector?

## **Alfonso**

From the start, our vision has been to become a world-class, sustainable tourism destination, and we have implemented the pillars of sustainability into our master plan. What we've seen during the COVID-19 pandemic for the last three years shows that we're on the right path, and that given the current challenges such as climate change, there has been a paradigm shift with tourists demanding

more aspects of sustainability, especially tourists visiting premium tourism areas. We believe that the development of premium tourism cannot be separated from the concept of sustainability aspect. This will add value to the areas and is expected to lead to positive social impacts on the local community, economy and environment, as well as all related stakeholders.

**Sondang**

What exactly do tourists demand when it comes to sustainable tourism?

**Alfonso**

What we see now is that there has been a change. It used to be that tourists preferred to stay in a hotel or resort and enjoy the facilities. However, with the onset of the pandemic, there has been a slight change. Now, tourists want to interact outside the hotel or resort area. They want to be able to communicate and interact with the local community. This is also how premium tourism can deliver a positive impact on the local community. They must be able to benefit from the presence of the tourists.

**Sondang**

In developing your business model and planning your marketing strategy, Australia is a top choice, such as evident through your partnership with Katalis. What are your plans to attract Australian investors?

**Alfonso**

With the activity we have been carrying out with Katalis since last year, that was an initial teaser to attract Australian investors to invest in TanaMori. The benefits from the IA-CEPA and the sustainability aspects that will be carried out, and training or capacity building plans for the surrounding community and preparation of the right investment prospectus, these all will add to the attractiveness of TanaMori for Australian investors. And geographically speaking, TanaMori isn't too far from Australia either. We also have support from the Indonesian government, especially through embassies, consulates-general in Australia, and relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Investment through the Indonesia Investment Promotion Center in Sydney, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Bappenas, and also Australian-Indonesian cooperation institutions such as AIBC and IABC. We will continue the coordination efforts to attract more Australian investors to invest in TanaMori.

**Sondang**

You are actively engaging with stakeholders in Australia. Does this mean the majority of your target market are Australian tourists?

**Alfonso**

Indeed, back to when we started in 2017, we realised Australia is the closest target market geographically. There are large numbers of Australian tourists visiting Bali, even ranking highest on the list. Geographically, the position of TanaMori or Labuan Bajo is not too far from Bali and the current feel of Labuan Bajo, TanaMori, reminds you of Bali in the 1980s. So we think this is the right moment to collaborate with Katalis to attract Australian tourists or investors in the future.

**Sondang**

Give three reasons why tourists should visit TanaMori.

**Alfonso**

Firstly, given TanaMori's location close to Rinca Island, part of the Komodo Island National Park, only about five kilometers from the sea, we can enjoy the beauty of Rinca Island which is one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites. And also because TanaMori's location faces the west, we can enjoy the sunset directly from there. Secondly, the distance from the airport to TanaMori is only 30 minutes by

car and along the way there are many spectacular views for tourists to enjoy. This also adds value or attractiveness to TanaMori. And thirdly, with the TanaMori tagline 'collection of wonders', in the TanaMori area there will be many attractions such as Marine World, theme parks, and marinas. In addition, tourists can do activities such as hiking, water activities, and so on, and enjoy other facilities in the area. If you think of Labuan Bajo, you may think of island hopping, but in TanaMori there are many choices of activities to do on the mainland, keeping tourists there longer in the TanaMori area.