



***METI KEI CHARM FESTIVAL IN BUILDING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION IN THE KEI ISLANDS, SOUTHEAST MALUKU***

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***Abstract***

*Natural preservation and cultural heritage are essential to maintaining sustainability and diversity. This research aims to analyze the role of the Meti Kei Pesona Festival in building natural and cultural heritage preservation and identify its contribution to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage on Kei Island. The research method used is a case study involving interviews, observation and secondary data analysis. The research results show that the Meti Kei Charm Festival is vital in preserving nature and cultural heritage. Through this festival, local people and visitors can appreciate the natural beauty of Kei Island and learn more about the culture and traditions inherent in the local community. The festival also makes a significant economic contribution to the local community. Therefore, the role of the government and other stakeholders is vital in supporting the Meti Kei Charm Festival and efforts to preserve nature and cultural heritage. Based on the research results, policy recommendations are proposed to develop natural and cultural heritage preservation, including developing nature conservation programs, introducing local culture through education and tourism promotion, and the government's active role in infrastructure development and sustainable management of natural resources.*

***Keywords:*** *Natural Sustainability, Cultural Heritage, Charm Festival*

***Abstrak***

Kelestarian alam dan warisan budaya adalah dua elemen penting yang saling terkait dalam menjaga keberlanjutan dan keberagaman. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran Festival Pesona Meti Kei dalam membangun kelestarian alam dan warisan budaya serta mengidentifikasi kontribusinya terhadap pelestarian alam dan warisan budaya di Pulau Kei. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kasus dengan melibatkan wawancara, observasi, dan analisis data sekunder. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Festival Pesona Meti Kei memiliki peran penting dalam menjaga kelestarian alam dan warisan budaya. Melalui festival ini, masyarakat lokal dan pengunjung dapat menghargai keindahan alam Pulau Kei serta mengenal lebih jauh tentang budaya dan tradisi yang melekat pada masyarakat setempat. Festival ini juga memberikan kontribusi ekonomi yang signifikan bagi masyarakat lokal. Oleh karena itu, peran pemerintah dan pemangku kepentingan lainnya sangat penting dalam mendukung Festival Pesona Meti Kei dan upaya pelestarian alam serta warisan budaya. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, rekomendasi kebijakan diajukan untuk membangun kelestarian alam dan warisan budaya meliputi pengembangan program pelestarian alam, pengenalan budaya lokal melalui pendidikan dan promosi pariwisata, serta peran aktif pemerintah dalam pembangunan infrastruktur dan pengelolaan sumber daya alam yang berkelanjutan

***Kata kunci:*** *Kelestarian Alam, Warisan Budaya, Festival Pesona*

## INTRODUCTION

Natural preservation and cultural heritage are two interrelated elements in maintaining the sustainability and diversity of our world (Zahriani, 2020). Beautiful nature and rich cultural heritage are priceless treasures that provide identity, beauty, and wisdom to humans. Both aspects strongly influence human life, individually and collectively (Suryanti & Indrayasa, 2021).

Living in nature provides a deep, heart-touching experience, feeling close to nature's wonders and greater power. Natural beauty, such as towering mountains, enchanting waterfalls, sparkling beaches, and lush forests, inspires humans and radiates irreplaceable natural wonders (Dhita et al., 2019; Lasaiba, 2023).

However, natural sustainability is not just about enjoying natural beauty; it requires maintaining the balance of the natural ecosystem to remain sustainable (Niman, 2019). Protection and maintaining the natural environment are human responsibilities because every action that damages the environment will hurt human life and future generations (Dermawan et al., 2023). Maintaining sustainability with nature means recognizing the importance of maintaining ecosystem sustainability, respecting biodiversity, and implementing environmentally friendly practices in everyday life (Ardiyansyah, 2014; Lasaiba, 2022)

The Meti Kei Enchantment Festival is one of the cultural events in Indonesia's spotlight. The festival not only offers stunning natural beauty but is also a celebration of rich cultural heritage. Through the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival, natural preservation and cultural heritage are brought together in a platform that promotes sustainability and diversity. The Meti Kei Enchantment Festival is also a place for international meetings and interactions between local communities and tourists.

This research aims to explore and examine the complex relationship between cultural heritage and environmental sustainability, focusing on the sustainable context. The novelty lies in the effort to bridge the understanding of how cultural heritage can be a determining factor in achieving environmental sustainability within a sustainable framework. By exploring this relationship, it is hoped that it can provide new insights that can enrich conservation policies, environmental management and cultural heritage preservation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage plays a vital role in reflecting a society's rich history and life that has developed over centuries. As highlighted by Huda & Feriandi (2018), the concept of cultural heritage includes various elements that are a reflection of the identity of a community or nation, which are not just physical heritage in the form of historical buildings or valuable artefacts but also include values, traditions, language, arts, architecture and knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

Cultural heritage is also a source of pride and inspiration for many people worldwide. Tumpal Simarmata & Sinura (2015) emphasize that by recognizing and preserving cultural heritage, a society can feel proud of its history and celebrate the achievements of its ancestors. Local identity and traditional wisdom are also an integral part of cultural heritage. Erlin et al. (2018) highlight that through cultural heritage, people can inherit local values and wisdom tested over time, including ethics and

wisdom in utilizing natural resources. The importance of cultural heritage is not only limited to the local level but also has a global impact. By continuing to preserve and promote its cultural heritage, a country can become a centre of attraction for international tourists.

### **Natural Sustainability**

Natural sustainability creates balance and harmonious interaction between humans and their environment. Nature is not just a place but home to various ecosystems, flora, fauna and natural resources that form the essence of life. This view aligns with the thoughts of Stevanus (2019), who underlines how important it is to maintain ecological balance to support human survival.

One key aspect of nature sustainability is the recognition of human dependence on ecosystems that provide vital resources. Rachman (2022) highlights that it depends on nature for food and clean water, healthy air, and various other basic needs. It is essential to understand that natural diversity also creates beauty and human beauty and prosperity) highlights that beautiful nature provides basic needs and maintains mental and emotional health. Green landscapes, clear water and biodiversity, create an environment that supports human well-being. Therefore, preserving nature is not only for ecological interests but also for human happiness and health.

### **Building Harmonization of Cultural Heritage and Environmental Sustainability**

Natural preservation and cultural heritage are two aspects that are interrelated and influence each other. Beautiful and well-preserved nature can be a source of inspiration for various forms of human cultural expression. An understanding of art, music, dance and traditional stories that reflect the deep connection between humans and nature. Ardiwidjaja (2016) underlines the importance of nature as a source of inspiration for creating works of art that reflect the beauty and wonder of the surrounding environment.

Cultural heritage plays a vital role in preserving and caring for nature. Traditional practices contained in cultural heritage often include sustainable ways of managing natural resources. Arthana et al. (2018) highlight how cultural heritage can guide understanding and implementing environmentally friendly practices, such as wise use of resources, sustainable agriculture and sustainable forest management.

However, severe challenges in preserving nature and cultural heritage in the modern era include climate change, environmental damage, rapid urbanization, and uncontrolled modernization, which can threaten these two aspects. Widari (2021) notes that increasing development pressure can result in the loss of green land, damage to natural ecosystems, and even the loss of historical sites with high cultural value.

Therefore, awareness of preserving nature and caring for cultural heritage is crucial. Warawarin et al. (2017) emphasized that a balanced approach between the development and conservation of nature and cultural heritage can ensure the sustainability of natural resources, which are essential for human survival. Integrating cultural heritage values in development planning can help create a balanced and sustainable environment.

Education also plays a crucial role in building awareness of preserving nature and cultural heritage. Kausar (2019) highlights that involving the community in learning, understanding environmental and cultural values, and promoting responsible attitudes towards nature and cultural heritage can form a more aware and caring generation.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive method to provide a systematic, factual and accurate description of the factors related to phenomena in the field (Mulyadi, 2013). The research focus is the Kei Islands in Southeast Maluku, an area rich in cultural heritage with great potential for sustainable tourism development. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data samples by considering specific considerations (Lenaini, 2021).

The chosen research location, the Kei Islands, offers a rich cultural landscape and a stunning natural environment. Research informants were representatives from Southeast Maluku Regency's Tourism Office and Culture Service, local community leaders, and village heads. It is hoped that the diversity of informants can provide a holistic view regarding efforts to preserve cultural heritage and environmental sustainability in the area.

The data was collected through a case study using interview techniques, observation and secondary data analysis. Interviews are used to obtain information and ideas through interactive dialogue with informants. Meanwhile, observations were carried out directly in the field to observe the conditions and dynamics of preserving nature and cultural heritage. Secondary data, such as records from institutions, organizations, or individuals, is also essential for understanding the research context.

Data analysis was carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner, which aims to describe the problems that arise and relate them to the variables that have been determined. An interpretive approach provides meaning to human actions involved in Southeast Maluku Regency Government initiatives and activities related to preserving natural and cultural heritage in the Kei Islands (Siregar, 2016).

It is hoped that the results of the data analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between natural sustainability and cultural heritage in the context of sustainability. The Southeast Maluku Regency Government's initiative to introduce regional culture and the wisdom of the Kei people is considered a step that has particular meaning and purpose to maintain and revive cultural aspects that may be threatened by modernization and globalization, as well as increasing the potential for sustainable tourism in the area.

By understanding the dynamics between nature conservation and cultural heritage preservation, this research hopes to contribute positively to development planning, tourism management, and local cultural preservation. The implications of the findings can be a basis for policymakers effective strategies in supporting environmental sustainability and cultural heritage preservation, not only in the Kei Islands. However, they can also be applied to other contexts with similar challenges.

## DISCUSSION

### Natural Diversity of the Kei Islands

The Kei Islands are part of Southeast Maluku Regency, which is located in Maluku Province and consists of several groups of islands, such as Kei Kecil, Kei Besar, Kei Dulah, Tanimbar Kei, Kuur, Dulah Laut, Tayandu and Taam. There are also several small uninhabited islands. Kei Kecil is the centre of tourist destinations and economic activities. Overall, the Kei Islands have 68 islands, of which 55 have attractive tourism potential. The Kei Islands are a hidden paradise that offers stunning natural beauty, especially white sandy beaches, and are the main attraction for visiting tourists. The

following is a description of the enchanting white sand beaches and coral reefs on the Kei Islands:

1. Pasir Panjang Beach: Pasir Panjang Beach is one of the best destinations to enjoy the natural beauty of the Kei Islands. Its long coastline and fine white sand create a calming and enchanting atmosphere. The clear and calm sea water makes it the perfect place for swimming, snorkelling, or just soaking your feet while enjoying the stunning panorama.
2. Ohoidertawun Beach: Located on the island of Kei Besar, Ohoidertawun Beach is a hidden paradise with stunning natural beauty. The clean and fine white sand spreads widely along the beach, creating a beautiful contrast with the sparkling sea water. The spectacular coral reefs near the coast are enough to attract divers and snorkelers to explore the extraordinary underwater biodiversity.
3. Ngurbloat Beach: Ngurbloat Beach, also known as Pasir Timbul Beach, is a stunning destination in the Kei Islands. At low tide, beautiful coral reefs are revealed and form pathways connecting the surrounding small islands. Soft white sand and calm sea water create an enchanting view. Visitors can walk along the raised sand paths or just relax on the beach while enjoying the beauty of the surroundings.
4. Ohoidertutu Beach: Ohoidertutu Beach offers a stunning combination of clean white sand and colourful coral reefs, making it a paradise for snorkelling and diving lovers due to its unique underwater biodiversity. Visitors can explore beautiful coral reefs, swim with various tropical fish, or simply relax on the beach while enjoying the calming views.

The Kei Islands are also a paradise of biodiversity and an extraordinary wealth of marine life. The Kei Islands offer a rich and diverse marine ecosystem, which makes them a major attraction for divers, snorkelers and nature lovers. The following is a description of the biodiversity and richness of the Kei Islands' marine life:

1. Coral Reefs: The Kei Islands are surrounded by spectacular coral reefs, home to various species of coral, colourful fish and other marine life. Healthy, well-maintained coral reefs provide an essential habitat for marine life and play a critical role in maintaining ecosystem balance.
2. Fish Diversity: The waters of the Kei Islands host an impressive diversity of fish. Visitors can encounter various species of tropical fish, from small fish swimming in groups to large fish such as sharks and rays. The Kei Islands are also known as shelters for the rare Napoleon fish and the stunning manta rays.
3. Rare Marine Biota: The Kei Islands are home to several rare and protected species of marine biota. One of them is sea turtles, which breed on beaches. Visitors have the unique opportunity to see the process of hatching eggs and releasing baby turtles into the sea. Several species of turtles, such as green turtles and hawksbill turtles, can also be found in the waters of the Kei Islands.
4. Underwater Love: The Kei Islands are a paradise for divers and snorkelers with crystal clear waters and stunning coral reefs. Its underwater beauty offers stunning views, from colourful coral gardens to diverse marine life, such as nudibranchs, exotic fish, starfish and attractive shellfish.

The Kei Islands are an invaluable destination for nature lovers and fans of underwater beauty. The extraordinary biodiversity and richness of marine life in the Kei Islands ensures a memorable and immersive experience in exploring the beauty and uniqueness of the marine ecosystem. Through sustainable conservation efforts, all

humans need to maintain the richness of marine biota to remain sustainable and maintained for future generations.

### **Kei Islands Cultural Heritage**

The Kei Islands have a rich and varied artistic heritage, especially in the form of dance, music and traditional fine arts. The following is a description of the three traditional art forms: Dance in the Kei Islands plays an essential role in the expression of culture and identity of local communities. Traditional Kei dances often depict stories and myths about everyday life and the natural environment. The graceful and rhythmic dance movements depict natural beauty, fishing activities and traditional rituals. The dancers wear traditional clothes that enrich the dance performance. These dances are entertainment and an essential means of maintaining and respecting traditions and connecting the younger generation with their cultural heritage. According to Mr Andreas Resubun, in the festivals, a bow dance or arrow dance was performed by a thousand elementary school (SD) students, while high school (SMA) students performed the saw at the dance.

The arrow dance is a traditional dance that is typical of the Kei Islands people. Which involves archery and rowing movements carried out by a group of men. In the context of the Meti Kei Charm Festival in Ngilngof Village, the arrow dance has a special meaning as a dance of honour to welcome visitors who attend. In the past, ancestors used improvised tools, such as bamboo, in war, and the arrow dance reflects this history. On the other hand, the sawwat dance is also an essential part of the festival. The saw dance symbolizes friendliness and carries a strong message of peace. Usually, it is accompanied by sawat music, which uses traditional instruments such as drums, tambourines and flutes. Sometimes, collaborations with Tifa Totobuang's music are also carried out, which is information obtained from an interview with Mr. Andreas Resubun.

The Meti Kei Enchantment Festival promotes regional foods typical of the Kei Islands, Southeast Maluku, to attract visitors. Some of them are Tun-tun Tatoi, Sir-sir Vuut, Enbal lev-levan, Enbal-bubuhuk and Kamatil. Various types of souvenirs are available, such as chocolate enbal, cheese enbal and peanut enbal, with various variations conveyed by Nelly C. Bangun, who provided information regarding typical foods and souvenirs that could be enjoyed during the festival.

The traditional music of the Kei Islands has unique characteristics and is rich in traditional instruments. One instrument often used is the tifa, a large drum made of wood and animal skin. The sound of the Tifa is used to accompany traditional dances and ceremonies. Musical instruments such as the tifa, tambourine and marwas are also used in various traditional and religious events. Through distinctive rhythms and melodies, Kei Islands' traditional music reflects life, natural beauty, and the cultural values and philosophies held in high esteem.

The traditional fine arts of the Kei Islands include various forms such as carving, weaving, and making wooden statues. Carved and woven ornaments are usually found on traditional objects such as traditional houses, ships and household utensils. The surrounding nature, such as fish, birds and flowers, generally inspire the motifs. Making wooden statues is also a skill passed down from generation to generation. Wooden statues are often used in traditional ceremonies and have deep meaning and symbolism in local community beliefs.

Through dance, music and traditional fine arts, the people of the Kei Islands maintain and preserve their cultural identity. Traditional arts are a means of conveying

stories, establishing social relationships, and respecting nature and ancestors. The Kei Islands can continue to be rich in cultural diversity and artistic beauty by maintaining and promoting traditional arts.

### **Cultural Values Contained in the Traditions and Arts of the Kei Islands**

The cultural values contained in the traditions and art of the Kei Islands reflect local wisdom and people's lives that are sustainable with nature. Some of the cultural values contained in the traditions and arts of the Kei Islands include:

1. **Togetherness and Solidarity:** The traditions and art of the Kei Islands teach the importance of togetherness and solidarity in community life. Through collaborative practices in dance, music and traditional fine arts, the people of the Kei Islands build close, mutually supportive relationships.
2. **Sustainability with Nature:** The traditional art of the Kei Islands contains values that teach the importance of maintaining and living sustainably with nature. The people of the Kei Islands are highly aware of natural beauty and the importance of protecting marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
3. **Calmness and Balance:** Kei Islands art is often characterized by gentle movements, soothing melodies, and symmetrical visuals, reflecting values of calm and balance in the people's daily lives of the Kei Islands.
4. **Spirituality and Belief:** The traditions and art of the Kei Islands are often closely linked to spiritual beliefs and religious values. Through dance, music and traditional fine arts, the people of the Kei Islands express their belief in and respect for ancestral spirits and spiritual forces.
5. **Symbolic Beauty:** The traditional art of the Kei Islands contains symbolic beauty that symbolizes cultural values and traditions. The symbols used in traditional dance, music and fine arts have deep meaning and connect society with history and ancestral heritage.

Through appreciation and practice of cultural values, the people of the Kei Islands can maintain and preserve their cultural heritage and pass it on to future generations. Cultural values are also an essential foundation in building social sustainability, preserving nature and enriching the lives of the people of the Kei Islands.

### **Meti Kei Enchantment Festival as an Important Event in Building Natural Conservation and Cultural Heritage**

The Meti Kei Charm Festival is essential and promotes natural preservation and rich cultural heritage in the Kei Islands, Southeast Maluku Province, Indonesia. Based on an interview with Mr Andreas Resubun, he explained that the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival is held by the entire Kei community, with the Ohoi Ngilngof community as the host or main organizer. The festival is held annually in October and has become a popular tourist attraction. The Meti Kei Enchantment Festival was held from 19 to 22 October 2017 in Southeast Maluku Regency, with Manyeuw and Ohoi Ngilngof sub-districts as hosts, which was conveyed by Nelly C. Bangun, who provided information regarding the implementation and objectives of the festival. Due to its beauty, the Kei Islands have been given the title "The Most Hidden Paradise" by the Ministry of Tourism in 2016. This event plays a significant role in preserving and introducing its natural beauty and unique cultural riches.

Based on the results of an interview with Mr Andreas Resubun, before the Meti Kei Festival, there was an opening ritual involving raising areca nuts, which was carried out in conjunction with prayers led by the king and Ohoi traditional elders. The ritual is carried out as part of the initial Wer Warat process. The aim is to ensure the smooth implementation of the Meti Kei Charm Festival from start to finish.

One of the main goals of the Meti Kei Charm Festival is to raise awareness of the importance of preserving nature. The Kei Islands are known for their stunning natural beauty, such as expansive white sand beaches, spectacular coral reefs and abundant biodiversity. The festival educates the public and tourists about preserving the Kei Islands' natural ecosystem and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Through various activities, seminars and discussions, the Meti Kei Charm Festival invites all parties to become protectors of nature and maintain environmental sustainability.

The Meti Kei Enchantment Festival is also an essential means of promoting the rich cultural heritage of the Kei Islands, featuring traditional arts performances depicting the richness of local culture. Based on an interview with Mr. Andreas Resubun, the Pesona Meti Kei Festival (FPMK) uniquely presents typical Kei art and culture. One of them is the Wer Warat process, a fishing tradition carried out by the Kei people, which also displays Kei traditional dances that show that cultural heritage. There is a typical Kei Islands food exhibition that displays the culinary diversity of the area. The festival is a forum for the Kei people to maintain traditions and customs, especially in catching fish together, a process carried out by Kei ancestors in the past during the Meti Kei season. Tourists who come to the festival can also learn about traditions and daily life -local community day through cultural exhibitions, workshops and other participatory activities.

Based on the results of interviews with Mrs Nelly C Bangun, it can be seen that the entire community actively participated in the Meti Kei Charm Festival, making contributions from preparation to implementation of the main event. The community is actively involved in ensuring the success of the festival. Furthermore, the results of the interview with Mrs. Mariana Resubun showed that the community felt happy and proud of the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival to introduce the natural beauty and local wisdom of the Southeast Maluku Islands to the world. Through the cultural and natural arts performances displayed, this festival can attract the attention of tourists and domestic artists.

The Meti Kei Charm Festival also has a positive economic impact on the local community. Through this festival, tourism in the Kei Islands increases, opens up new employment opportunities and increases the community's economic income. This festival is an influential tourism promotion event, attracting the interest of both local and international tourists and driving related economic sectors such as hotels, restaurants and local craft businesses. Overall, the Meti Kei Charm Festival is essential in building sustainability between nature and cultural heritage. Based on an interview with Mrs Nelly C Bangun, the Pesona Meti Kei Festival positively impacts community participation in organizing the festival and the local trade sector. The community actively participates in this festival and reaps benefits through increased trade activities.

Furthermore, the results of the interview with Mr Andreas Resubun showed that the Meti Kei Charm Festival had a positive impact on Regional Original Income. The arrival of tourists, both from within and outside the country, increases sales of typical Kei Islands food, thereby increasing people's income, especially traders. Facilities and



infrastructure on Kei Island can operate well because of the high number of visitors coming from outside the city.

The Meti Kei Charm Festival creates a comprehensive visitor experience by building sustainability between nature and cultural heritage. This festival presents stunning natural views and provides in-depth insight into local culture and the importance of preserving nature in this modern era.

### **The Role of Local Government in Introducing the Charm of Meti Kei**

The government has made various efforts to introduce the Meti Kei Charm Festival to the public. Based on the results of the interview with Mr Andreas Resubun, the local government provides support and actively participates in Pesona Meti Kei activities by collaborating with the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy to introduce the Pesona Meti Kei Festival to the Indonesian and international community.

In the current era of technological development, festival promotion can be done through social media to make it more easily accessible to people at home and abroad. Since the 2022 Meti Kei Festival, the number of tourists attending from within the country and abroad has increased significantly. The following are some of the efforts made:

1. Promotion through mass media: The government carries out promotions such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines by holding interviews, publications and advertisements to increase public awareness about this festival. Through mass media, information about the Meti Kei Charm Festival can reach various levels of society at home and abroad.
2. Utilization of social media: The government is actively utilizing social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to promote the Meti Kei Charm Festival, create festival accounts and upload photos, videos, and information related to the festival regularly. Social media allows governments to interact directly with the public and reach a wider audience.
3. Participation in tourism exhibitions: The government participates in tourism exhibitions at home and abroad and has booths or booths displaying information about the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival. Through this exhibition, the government can introduce the festival to visitors, tourists and tourism actors from various countries.
4. Collaboration with the tourism industry: The government collaborates with the tourism industry, such as travel agents, hotels and airlines, by creating special tour packages that include a visit to the Meti Kei Charm Festival. This collaboration with the tourism industry helps increase ecotourists' exposure and interest in the festivals.
5. Funding and subsidies: The government provides funding and subsidies to the Meti Kei Charm Festival organizing committee, which helps ensure the smooth running of the event and better quality of the festival. The government can also subsidize tourists or festival participants to encourage community participation.
6. Promotion team formation: The government formed a special promotion team to introduce the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival. This team consists of experts, government officials, and promotional personnel dedicated to marketing the festival, developing promotional strategies, organizing promotional events, and managing promotional content to increase the festival's appeal.

The efforts made by the government in introducing the Meti Kei Charm Festival are crucial to increasing the popularity and impact of the festival. With effective

promotion, this festival can attract more tourists and visitors, provide economic benefits to local communities, and promote the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Kei Islands to the international world. Based on the results of an interview with Mr Kristianus Ell, the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival was initially visited mainly by local tourists, especially those who like to holiday in domestic tourist destinations. However, in recent years, this festival has begun to attract the attention of artists from the nation's capital. Even Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy attended the Pesona Meti Kei event. In its development, the Meti Kei Enchantment Festival has succeeded in attracting visitors from the national level, and there are even foreign tourists who attend the momentum of this festival.

## CONCLUSION

Meti Kei Enchantment Festival in building natural sustainability and cultural heritage in the Kei Islands, Southeast Maluku; it can be concluded that the Kei Islands are a hidden paradise that offers fantastic natural beauty, especially white sand beaches and enchanting coral reefs and has biodiversity and rich marine life. Extraordinary, attracting divers, snorkelers and nature lovers. Gudaya's heritage is rich and varied, especially in dance, music and traditional fine arts. This traditional art is a means of maintaining and preserving cultural identity, conveying stories and respecting nature and ancestors.

The traditions and art of the Kei Islands reflect cultural values such as togetherness and solidarity, sustainability with nature, tranquillity and balance, as well as spirituality and belief. These values strengthen people's relationship with nature and maintain local wisdom. Through the Meti Kei Charm Festival, the Kei Islands succeeded in promoting its natural beauty, preserving its cultural heritage, and conveying important cultural values. With ongoing conservation efforts, the Kei Islands can continue to be rich in cultural diversity, natural preservation and lasting cultural heritage for future generations.

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