



Indonesia-Singapore Strategy Cooperation Diplomacy in the COVID-19 Pandemic in Batam City

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi kerjasama diplomatic antara Indonesia dan Singapura saat situasi Covid-19. Objek dari penelitian ini yaitu hubungan bilateral antara Indonesia-Singapura serta peneliti memahami dan menganalisis dari strategi kerjasama yang telah dilakukan kedua negara saat situasi pandemic covid-19. Metode yang digunakan penulis dalam penelitian ini yaitu metode kualitatif yang mana akan menjawab fenomena yang lebih komprehensif. Metode ini bersumber dari studi literatur, dokumen tertulis, pencarian online serta dokumen pendukung lainnya yang relevan yang akan digunakan sebagai teknik pengumpulan data sekunder. Kerjasama antara Indonesia-Singapura telah terjalin sejak 1967 hingga sekarang. Situasi covid-19 membawa dampak bagi kedua negara tersebut. Singapura yang berbatasan langsung dengan Kota Batam, salah satu wilayah di Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia, berdampak dari terjadinya pandemic covid-19. Hampir semua negara yang ada didunia melakukan berbagai kebijakan pembatasan mobilitas dari wisatawan hingga perdagangan. Situasi pandemic ini, memberikan peluang baru bagi Singapura-Indonesia khususnya di Kota Batam, dengan membuat sebuah kerjasama baru saat pandemic covid-19. Strategi yang dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kerjasama diantara kedua negara dibidang wisatawan hingga investasi dan pembangunan disebut "Three bridges" yaitu terdiri dari jembatan travel bubble, jembatan infrastruktur dan jembatan digital. Strategi pembangunan "Three bridges" sebagai strategi untuk meningkatkan kerjasama saat situasi kedua negara dilanda covid-19, sebagai program multidimensi yang akan dijalankan dikemudian hari. Bahkan, antara Singapura-Kota Batam memiliki kedekatan diwilayah perbatasan dari berbagai sektor bidang kerjasama. Sehingga, dari situasi pandemic ini dapat meningkatkan kerjasama diplomatic antara Indonesia-Singapura yang merupakan negara yang berbatasan langsung serta dibantu pemangku kepentingan antara kedua negara.

Kata Kunci: Koorporasi, Diplomasi, Kerjasama, Kota Batam.

Abstract: This study aims to determine the strategy of diplomatic cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore and have bilateral relations between Indonesia and Singapore and for researchers to understand and analyze the cooperation strategies the two countries have carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. The method used by the author in this study was qualitative and would answer a more comprehensive phenomenon. This method was sourced from literature studies, written documents, online searches, and other relevant supporting documents that will be used as secondary data collection techniques. Cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore has been established since 1967. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on both countries. Singapore, which is directly adjacent to Batam City, one of the regions in the Riau Islands, Indonesia, was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all countries carried out various policies limiting mobility from tourists to trade. This pandemic provided new opportunities for Singapore-Indonesia, especially in Batam City, by creating a new collaboration. The strategy to increase cooperation between the two countries in tourism to investment and development is called "Three Bridges," which consists of travel bubble bridges, infrastructure bridges, and digital bridges. The "Three Bridges" development strategy, to increase cooperation when COVID-19 hit the situation between the two countries, is a multidimensional program in the future. Singapore and Batam City have proximity in the border area of various sectors of cooperation. Thus, this pandemic can increase diplomatic cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore, which is a country that is directly adjacent and assisted by stakeholders between the two countries.

Keywords: Corporations, Diplomacy, collaboration, Batam city.

Article History:

Received : 2023-04-27

Revised : 2023-06-21

Accepted : 2023-06-27

INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Singapore have been established for a long time in various fields of cooperation, including politics, economy, Buddhism, development, tourism, to education. Indonesia and Singapore are regions located in Southeast Asia and are members of the ASEAN regional organization. The foundation of ASEAN membership is from the “ASEAN Blue Print,” which includes 3 main pillars; economic, political, socio-cultural and security. Therefore, bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore has increased with various new programs to improve diplomatic relations. One of the new programs that Indonesia has run with Singapore is “Three Bridges.” The “Three Bridges” program was a strategy by Indonesia with Singapore in the COVID-19 situation hit the world. In 2022, the implementation of this program aimed to help the people of each country enjoy their holidays because, in the COVID-19 pandemic the two countries reduced mobility of tourists entering the two countries due to the COVID-19 virus. (Sari et al., 2022)

The Government of Indonesia-Singapore conducted bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries (Sebastian et al., 2018). Bilateral relations between Indonesia and Singapore form Cooperation as a commitment to strengthen the relationship between the two together while showing their existence in the ASEAN and International regions (Shichao, 2012). Indonesia-Singapore diplomacy is closely related to national development, especially in Indonesia, which still needs investors (Debrah et al., 2011). The interdependence between the interests of two countries, such as Singapore, which has integrated expertise, and Indonesia, which has abundant natural resources. This factor makes the mutual benefit between the two countries fair and equal (Harto, 2016).

Currently, foreign investment is starting to flock to Indonesia. During the second quarter of 2022, investment realization reached IDR 302.2 trillion. On an annual basis (year on year), investment grew by 35.5% and quarterly by 7%. Especially for foreign direct investment (FDI) reached 54% or Rp 163.2 trillion, growing 39.7% due to the impact that the current global economic situation is uncertain due to the Russian-Ukrainian war. The tightening of interest rates by the American central bank will indeed be a severe challenge to the investment climate in Indonesia in the future.

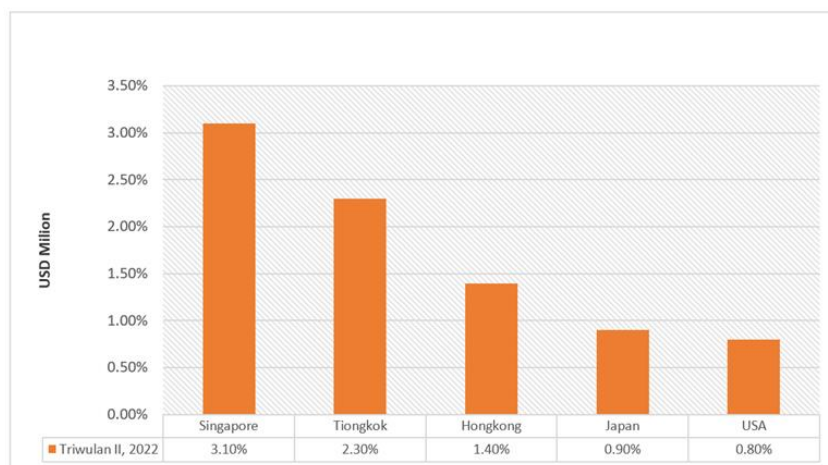


Figure 1. Foreign Investment Countries in Indonesia
Source: Investment Coordinating Board, Indonesia. 2022

The country of origin of investors is diverse. Singapore still holds the highest position at US\$ 3.1 billion. However, it is worth knowing that Singapore is a hub of investors from many other countries worldwide. While the second position is China, with US\$ 2.3 billion. Next are Hong Kong, Japan, and the United States (USA). Singapore occupies the first position in foreign investment in Indonesia in the second quarter of 2022. The investment value reached US\$ 3.1 billion or grew by 27.7%. Batam, located on the border, has a strategic area directly adjacent to Singapore, making Batam one of the growth centers in Indonesia. However, the area of Singapore has limitations, making Batam an option to carry out economic cooperation oriented towards import exports and investment (Putri, 2019).

At the end of 2019, the world was shocked by an outbreak, namely the coronavirus. Over time, it has developed into a pandemic; people's mobility has become limited due to restrictions carried out by each country (McKenzie & Adams, 2020). The spread of this coronavirus even impacts the Indonesian government by issuing a policy limiting activities to ban travel abroad (Djalante et al., 2020). Furthermore, this pandemic has also caused economic sectors to experience obstacles because the government made various efforts to limit trade in the early days of the pandemic to avoid the spread that is increasingly widespread in the country (Sumarni & Bengkulu, 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategy of strengthening cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore was followed with various policies to restore the two countries' economies. The governments of Indonesia and Singapore established bilateral diplomacy in the field of investment and development called the "Three Bridges," such as digital bridges, travel bubble bridges, and infrastructure bridges (Kog, 2006). Both cooperation in the economic sector and the field of defense and security. This cooperation strategy can also be a step toward implementing a geostrategic objective (Priyandita, 2019). Given its status as a significant investment country in Indonesia, Singapore will be the first partner in investment cooperation in 2022. Indonesia's oil, gas, and finance industries have been Singapore's top investment destinations since 2014. Investment in Indonesia by Singapore reached USD 6.5 billion in 2019 and is expected to reach USD 9.8 billion in 2020. This agreement allows Indonesian investors to invest in Singapore and expand their business network.

Diplomacy Concept

Diplomacy is one of the essential instruments in implementing a country's national interest (Ang et al., 2015). Diplomacy is the primary tool in achieving national interests related to other countries or international organizations (Alexandru & Corina, 2014). Through this diplomacy, a country can build an image of itself. In relations between countries, diplomacy is generally carried out from the beginning when a country wants to establish bilateral relations with other countries until the two develop further relations (Melissen, 2005). Diplomacy implements negotiations between countries through official representatives (Saner & Yiu, 2003). The country itself elects official representatives without interference from other parties or countries.

Diplomacy between countries can cover the entire process of foreign relations, both in the formation of foreign policy and its implementation (Gurgu & Cociuban, 2016). Diplomacy also includes operational techniques to achieve national interests beyond jurisdiction boundaries (Burton, 2010). The increasing interdependence between countries has led to increasing international meetings and conferences. Diplomacy is a relationship or relationship, communication, and connection. In addition, diplomacy is a two-way interactive process between two countries to achieve each country's foreign policy (Tago, 2017). Diplomacy and foreign policy to two sides of a coin that cannot be separated (Winter, 2015). It is said so because foreign policy is the main content contained in the implementation mechanism of a

foreign policy owned by a country. At the same time, diplomacy is the process of implementing foreign policy.

Therefore, both diplomacy and foreign policy are interrelated and support each other. Diplomacy continues to develop along with interdependence between one country and another. One process often carried out in diplomacy activities is to use negotiation methods and other diplomatic activities, such as meetings, visits, and agreements (Watson, 2013). Therefore, negotiation is one of the techniques in diplomacy to resolve differences peacefully and advance a country's national interests.

Cooperation Concept

Cooperation shows an agreement between two or more people who are mutually beneficial and contribute or play a role in following the strengths and potentials of each party so that the gains or losses achieved are proportional (Deutsch, 2011), meaning that they are following the roles and strengths of each party. Cooperation shows an agreement between two or more mutually beneficial people who contribute or play a role (Orbell et al., 1988). Therefore, in following the strengths and potentials of each party so that the gains or losses achieved are proportional, they are following each party's roles and strengths. Factors Affecting cooperation explain the achievement of cooperation according to specific requirements by the members involved (Bolton & Ockenfels, 2000; Fehr & Gächter, 2002). These conditions are:

- a) Similar interests; Cooperation will be formed if the same interests are to be achieved by all members. The same interest concerns material and non-material aspects such as moral, spiritual, and spiritual (Johnson & Grayson, 2005).
- b) Fairness Cooperation must agree on the principle of justice; This means that everyone who participates in cooperation gets a reward following his contribution to the implementation of cooperative activity (Rawls, 1991).
- c) Mutual understanding; Cooperation must focus on the desire to understand and understand the interests of the people involved in the joint activity. This understanding will stimulate cooperation based on mutual understanding (Zemin, 1997).
- d) The same goal; Setting the same goals for everyone is not always easy because almost everyone is bound to a group based on their interests to be achieved by the group's success (Locke, 1996). Therefore, specific goals must be able to anticipate the interests of individuals who are members of social groups. However, cooperation will be when everyone has the same goals about what they want to achieve.

In general, cooperation is a grouping among living things. Cooperation or learning together is a team process (group) in which members support and rely on each other to achieve a consensus.

RESEARCH METHODS

A literature study is usually the most popular secondary data collection method (Zed, 2014). The qualitative method produces an idea or idea to produce accurate data from the phenomenon under study. This research can increase concurrent knowledge of facts or social phenomena in the field and then analyze using theorization based on what is observed to validate the data. So that readers can find out the development of knowledge related to the latest phenomena. A literature study is a data collection method directed at searching for data and information through written documents, photographs, pictures, and electronic documents supporting the writing process (Galvan & Galvan, 2017). Data collection techniques by reviewing books, literature, notes, and various reports related to the problem to be solved. This data analysis technique begins with data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification, which is the first step. Data reduction is then carried out

(Miles et al., 2014). Then the second is the presentation of data in a structured set of information that contains various forms, such as; matrices, graphs, networks, and charts.

Furthermore, the third overall data obtained from secondary data is concluded, resulting from the researcher's interpretation of the data obtained. Some secondary data has been concluded and interpreted. Then triangulation is performed by comparing it with secondary data from other informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Diplomacy Strategy neighborhood first

Indonesia has implemented a policy of prioritizing neighboring countries (neighborhood first) for a long time. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this strategy was further strengthened when Indonesia established intimacy with Singapore. As a result, the governments of Indonesia and Singapore are strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries by investing in and building the "Three Bridges," namely digital bridges, infrastructure bridges, and travel bubble bridges. Last year, Singapore's investment reached USD 9.8 billion, or almost IDR 141.5 trillion. This investment increased by 34% compared to 2019. In addition, the digital bridge between Indonesia and Singapore is expected to be realized with Batam as a data center and a digital industry development center in Indonesia.

The Nongsa Digital Park Special Economic Zone in 2021 (SEZ) was inaugurated in Batam. KEK Nongsa Digital Park is predicted to be an entry point for international information technology companies from Singapore and abroad (Alfiandri & Mahadiansar, 2020). The infrastructure bridge will begin with the construction of the Batam-Bintan (BABIN) bridge or the 6.4 km Bridge in 2022. This bridge will make it easier for Bintan business actors to export their agricultural products to Batam for export to Singapore or other countries. In addition, the construction of the Batam-Bintan bridge is expected to increase connectivity from Bintan and Batam to Singapore and vice versa.

Indonesia-Singapore relations are intensive, as seen from the cooperation in almost all fields. There is also a leadership-level meeting between the President of the Republic of Indonesia and the Prime Minister of Singapore, held annually. However, in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was not held. Indonesia chose Singapore for the "Three Bridges" under various strategic matters. In general, according to him, the reasons used by Indonesia are more concentric circles. This cooperation also considers the neighborhood's first context.

On the other hand, in the neighborhood first, Indonesia's closest neighbors are Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam because it is easier to see from the concentric circles where the contents are ASEAN members. Therefore, Indonesia has various modalities needed to increase cooperation and other countries.



Figure 2. Geographical Location of Batam-Bintan Bridge Construction

Source: <https://batampos.co.id/>

Emphasizing Bilateral Cooperation Indonesia - Singapore

Researchers' secondary data findings show that Indonesia and Singapore have officially established diplomatic relations since September 7, 1967. The cooperation covers the economic sector. For example, in 2019, Indonesia exported a production of SGD 21 billion, or equivalent to IDR 224.6 trillion (Mahadiansar et al., 2021). Singapore is among Indonesia's top five trade-partner countries (Anggrasari & Handoyo Mulyo, 2019). Indonesia and Singapore also cooperate intensely in other fields, such as security or the environment. Researchers assess the 'Three Bridges' construction cooperation as a strategic step for the two countries to jointly recover the economy from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The desire to increase investment cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore was apparent after the Indonesia-Singapore Bilateral Investment Treaty 2021. Given its status as a significant investment country in Indonesia, Singapore became the first partner in this investment cooperation (Grundy-Warr et al., 1999). However, the cooperation in constructing the 'Three Bridges' Indonesia-Singapore poses challenges in the country. These include business competition with foreign companies and foreign workers. So we must take advantage of the impact of globalization as a suggestion to continue developing ourselves into a better country.

In addition, Indonesia and Singapore can increase cooperation in security and defense. The form can be joint exercises, visits, professional exchanges, and cross-country courses to increase knowledge and friendship between the two countries' military forces. Singapore is one of the closest neighbors with a maritime border with Indonesia. Although the cooperative relationship between Indonesia and Singapore has been up and down, relations between the two countries tend to be stable. Therefore, consistency and commitment from the two countries in implementing this three-bridge cooperation are needed.

This three-bridge cooperation program is multidimensional, so good coordination between institutions in Indonesia is needed to make this collaboration a success. The three bridges' cooperation can benefit both Singapore and Indonesia. From an economic perspective, this cooperation program can potentially increase trade, investment, and tourists from both countries (Barua, 2020). Some of the things that could be a challenge in the "Three Bridges" program between Indonesia and Singapore include:

1. Sensitive issues in the bilateral relations between the two countries, such as air control.
2. The external environment, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Funding in both countries will require considerable resources, especially considering the infrastructure bridge program.

The exchange of information and interdependence between the two countries can create a culture of cooperation that is more transparent, open, and comprehensive to minimize misunderstandings or conflicts between the two countries. In addition, Indonesia and Singapore have similarities in the regional and global challenges faced, so the two countries can also work together to face these challenges. Therefore, Singapore can make a significant contribution to the development of Indonesia's development.

Optimization of Economic Cooperation

Economic relations between Indonesia and Singapore can be said to be good so far. In economic Cooperation, Singapore has become one of Indonesia's strategic partners (Barua, 2020). In the last five years, Singapore has become one of Indonesia's most significant countries in terms of investment realization (Milia et al., 2018). Moreover, good cooperation is established in terms of trade. In the ASEAN region, Singapore is one of the leading export destinations for Indonesia. Exports to Singapore account for a quarter of Indonesia's total

exports to all ASEAN countries.



Figure 3. Special Economic Zone Development Plan in Batam City

Source: BP Batam, 2021

Indonesia's trade relations with Singapore are good. However, Indonesia's import value is still high. Singapore is also one of the largest importing countries in ASEAN for Indonesia. In fact, in the findings of secondary data researchers obtained from 2018 and 2019, Indonesia's trade balance with Singapore experienced a deficit, or the number of imports from Singapore was more significant than its exports (Jayadi & Retnosari, 2020) because building long-term infrastructure requires a strong commitment from the government because it costs money and requires integration from all ministries or agencies and all economic sectors.

Therefore, anticipation is needed to remind people not to repeat the example of the suboptimal development of the 17 SEZs launched by the Jokowi-JK government (Aritenang & Chandramidi, 2020). Some SEZs are not running optimally due to a non-existent energy supply, poor transportation access, and fewer strategic locations. The construction of digital bridges and infrastructure bridges in the Batam area to build Indonesia-Singapore connectivity is perfect. Cooperation with Singapore will be profitable. Building three Indonesian-Singapore bridges is not without problems. Looking at the previous government, Indonesia has had an unpleasant experience with SEZ development. The construction of the bridge is not the primary goal. The main objective of the development is how to create connectivity between Singapore and Indonesia which in the end can reduce logistics costs which have been expensive, and make Indonesia a country with low competitiveness.

In addition, increase Cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore in other sectors; of course, all parties must receive support. The central government, through BKPM, must be able to build synergies, especially with local governments, which are industrial centers for leading sectors. The government encourages business actors to produce superior products according to the characteristics of market demand, in this case, Singapore. However, the government must prepare various aspects, facilities, and supporting infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Singapore is the largest investor in Indonesia. Indonesia, supported by Natural Resources and Human Resources, makes it one of the investment destination countries. Singapore also considers Indonesia as a partner in economic development. In its development, diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Singapore have been since 1967. As a country bordering Indonesia, Singapore encourages its companies to trade abroad by utilizing the market through

infrastructure, connectivity, and opportunities established in cooperation. As one of the developing countries, Indonesia needs capital or investment for industrialization-oriented development. Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Singapore are not only cooperation in the economic field but in almost all fields. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, every country has made a policy limiting mobility, including Indonesia and Singapore.

Economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened bilateral relations between Indonesia and Singapore for national development. The efforts made by the two countries to strengthen bilateral relations in the restoration of the COVID-19 pandemic situation have made various cooperations in the renewable sector and encouraged the implementation of a travel bubble between Batam, Bintan, Singapore for tourism recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction of Batam-Bintan bridges for export to Singapore, and the construction of a Digital Park in Batam. In addition, bilateral diplomatic Cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore forms a mutual benefit to commercializing the country's foreign exchange.

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