

Work From Bali: Will It Be Effective?

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As reported recently, Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment Affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan proposed a program called 'Work From Bali' (WFB) for public employees under his responsibility and seven other ministries to encourage tourism recovery in Bali. This program will send 25 percent of employees at the said ministries to carry out their work in Bali. In response to this, public policy expert and UGM Public Policy and Management lecturer Professor Wahyudi Kumorotomo advised the government to prioritize necessary programs only and save the budget instead.

He assessed that the National Economic Recovery program was indeed a good step to anticipate an unemployment rise and boost economic growth that was heavily affected due to the pandemic. However, considering the state revenue remained weak, Wahyudi urged all government institutions to spend the budget wisely and think about this aspect when formulating policy.

For information, earlier this year, the government decided to increase the stimulus package from originally IDR 450.1 trillion to IDR 677.2 trillion. As of May 21, 2021, the budget realization was IDR 184 trillion.

"The government should be saving more as the state revenue is still low," he said.



If Work From Bali officially starts, some matters may attract differences of opinion in the community. Wasting the national budget for a program that gives a potentially less significant contribution to the economic recovery should be the last thing the government does, especially during the pandemic when countries across the globe are severely impacted. Many experts deem the program is inefficient and a mere waste of money.

According to Wahyudi, the public may consider the program implementation as a bad example. The general public faces financial challenges, yet the government spends big money on an insignificant program. It also poses the risk of viral transmission despite the implementation of strict health measures. He suggested the government go for other alternatives, such as creating special interest tours, spiritual tours, or other packages that will not potentially cause crowds and guarantee safety for tour operators in Bali.

“The government doesn’t have to create a program that will result in public employees gather to attend meetings and carry out activities in Bali,” he said.

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