Research Article

Operational Capacity on Policy Capacity in the Development of Regional Potential of South Bolaang Mongondow Regency

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Abstract.

The development of superior potential requires quality policy capacity so that it can optimize the output and impact of policies on regional development. This research aims to explore operational capacity on policy capacity in the development of superior potential in the South Bolaang Mongondow Regency. This research uses a qualitative study with a case study strategy, with an exploratory type. The research informants consisted of leaders of regional apparatus organizations (OPD) who have a domain of duties and responsibilities to optimize the development of regional superior potential. Data sources consist of primary and secondary data. The types of data collection consisted of focus group discussions, observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis consists of the stages of data collection, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. The findings demonstrated that South Bolaang Mongondow Regency's agricultural, fisheries, tourism, and cattle industries have the greatest regional potential. Regional policies guide the creation of policies, which are then centrally coordinated and planned by the Regional Development Planning, Research, and Development Agency. Technical OPDs, such as the Agriculture Office, Fisheries Office, and Tourism Office, then implement programs and activities, followed by sub-districts and communities. At the operational stage, there are various obstacles such as human resources, infrastructure, and budget in developing superior potential in various sectors. Therefore, it is hoped that the local government will be able to comprehensively increase policy capacity so that the development of regional superior potential can be carried out optimally.

Keywords: operational capacity, policy capacity, regional excellence potential development

1. Introduction

South Bolaang Mongondow Regency is one of the regions in North Sulawesi Province that has a wealth of natural resources and diverse regional superior potential, especially in the agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and livestock sectors. Although these sectors have great potential to be developed as the main drivers of the regional economy, their utilization has not been optimal to date. Regional macroeconomic indicators have not shown significant development, and the level of community welfare is still at a relatively low level. This raises critical questions regarding the effectiveness of regional

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development policies and the readiness of bureaucratic institutions in managing existing resources. In this context, policy capacity is an important aspect that needs to be examined, especially in the operational capacity dimension which includes implementation, managerial capabilities, as well as technical support and resources in running development programs based on local potential. The low effectiveness of policies in this region indicates an urgent need to review the extent to which operational capacity contributes to the development of superior potential in a sustainable manner.

The urgency of this research is further strengthened when seeing the gap between the potential owned and the existing development achievements. Previous studies often highlight the importance of good planning and the right policy direction, but few highlight how the policy is implemented at the operational level. In the case of South Bolaang Mongondow Regency, various empirical obstacles are the main challenges. First, the limited human resources both in quantity and quality, especially in the technical OPDs responsible for managing the agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and livestock sectors. Second, the infrastructure conditions are not yet adequate to support mobility, distribution of production results, or access to tourism areas that have the potential to be developed. Third, the limited development budget causes strategic programs to not be able to be implemented optimally. In addition, weak coordination between policy planners (for example Bappeda) and technical implementers in the field causes the direction of development to be out of sync with the needs of the community at the local level. Another obstacle that is no less important is the weak monitoring and evaluation capabilities in the regional bureaucracy, which has an impact on the absence of effective feedback in the public policy cycle [1], [2].

The issues raised in this study are closely related to the phenomenon of public administration, especially within the framework of public policy implementation theory and regional bureaucratic capacity. In public administration, the success of a policy is not only determined by the accuracy of policy formulation, but also by the effectiveness of its implementation. Operational capacity as one dimension of policy capacity is a reflection of the readiness and ability of local government institutions to implement policies in a concrete manner. This includes an effective governance system, adaptive work procedures, adequate human and financial resource support, and the capacity to manage relationships between OPDs and with external actors such as the private sector and the community[3]. In the context of complex and dynamic regional development, operational capacity also includes the ability to manage risks, anticipate changes in the strategic environment, and build collaborative systems with local stakeholders. The

focus of this study is to analyze how the operational capacity of local governments in managing and optimizing their superior potentials, as well as what obstacles are faced during the implementation process. This study also aims to provide policy recommendations based on empirical findings to strengthen the effectiveness of the implementation of regional development policies [4].

This study uses the policy capacity theory developed as the main analytical framework. This theory divides policy capacity into three dimensions, namely analytical capacity, institutional capacity, and operational capacity. In the context of this study, the emphasis is placed on operational capacity because it is the aspect that most determines the success of policy implementation at the field level. Operational capacity involves elements such as employee technical skills, budget adequacy, completeness of work equipment, and cross-sector and cross-level government coordination. In previous studies, studies have focused more on the process of policy formulation and evaluation of policy impacts without paying sufficient attention to the implementation phase [5]. Therefore, this study offers novelty in the form of a more in-depth analysis of the operational aspects of implementing regional development policies. By focusing on areas with limited resources and bureaucratic coordination challenges such as South Bolaang Mongondow, this study is expected to be able to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the public administration literature, especially related to how to build effective policy capacity in areas with similar characteristics. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide a basis for formulating strategies to strengthen regional operational capacity and present a model for implementing adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable policies to encourage real and measurable acceleration of local potentialbased development.

1.1. Literature review

Policy capacity in public administration has been a major concern for researchers since the last decade, especially in the context of policy implementation at the local level. that policy capacity consists of analytical, institutional, and operational capacities that must work synergistically so that policies can be implemented effectively. In the context of developing regions, operational capacity is the most crucial aspect because it concerns the ability to implement technical and inter-organizational coordination.[6], [7]

Several studies have shown that weak operational capacity can cause policies to have no significant impact. Like bureaucratic capacity is a primary requirement for the

success of public policy. In the experience of developing countries, policy failures are often rooted in managerial and operational weaknesses of local governments [6], [7]. In addition, [8] also emphasized the importance of strengthening local capacity within a decentralization framework to encourage participatory regional development.

In Indonesia policy implementation still faces technical obstacles, especially in terms of human resources and budget. that the success of village development policies was greatly influenced by the technical and institutional capacity of implementing officers in the field [8], [9]. Meanwhile, [10], [11]stated that the implementation of public policy is largely determined by the interaction between policy as a formal product and the socio-bureaucratic context in which the policy is implemented. This is reinforced through the concept of "street-level bureaucracy" which highlights the role of field implementers as the main actors in the success of the policy. In this context, operational capacity is closely related to how implementers understand, interpret, and implement policies according to the local context [12].

A study [2], [13] shows that operational capacity is not only related to technical aspects, but also includes relational aspects and the ability to build networks between actors. This is important in the context of regional development, where successful implementation often depends on synergy between OPDs and between the government and the community and the private sector. Another study shows that the main obstacles lie in weak coordination between agencies and minimal budget support, even though the policy direction is normatively correct can strnghten importance of building an integrated policy support system to prevent fragmentation of implementation [2], [14], [15].

From the institutional theory perspective, [16], [17] stated that institutions play an important role in shaping incentives and actor behavior. Therefore, operational capacity is also influenced by the institutional structure that regulates the pattern of work relationships and authority in local government organizations. In this case, the role of local leadership is also crucial as emphasized, that bureaucratic leaders must have strategic abilities to build an organizational culture that supports innovation and collaboration[16], [18].

Overall, the literature suggests that operational capacity is a key factor in bridging the gap between well-designed policies and effective implementation. This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by placing special emphasis on how operational capacity is developed and implemented in the context of regions with superior potential but facing structural constraints. Thus, this study not only enriches theoretical studies on

policy capacity but also offers practical implications for improving regional development governance in Indonesia.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrated analysis of courtesy and civic virtue as vital Organizational Citizenship Behavior dimensions within bureaucratic human resource management development in regional Indonesian government, revealing how these interpersonal values interact with organizational structures to influence public service effectiveness in Kotamobagu's unique socio-cultural context.

2. Methods

This research employed a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study strategy to investigate operational capacity on policy capacity in developing regional potential in South Bolaang Mongondow Regency. The qualitative method was selected for its ability to provide rich, contextual understanding of complex phenomena through detailed examination of real-world situations. The research design emphasized exploring the interplay between policy implementation and operational challenges in the development of regional potential across agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and livestock sectors. Data collection utilized multiple sources and techniques to ensure methodological triangulation. Primary data was gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants comprising regional apparatus organization (OPD) leaders who have direct responsibilities in managing and optimizing regional potential development. These interviews followed semi-structured protocols focused on identifying implementation challenges, coordination mechanisms, and resource allocation issues. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with representatives from technical departments including the Agriculture Office, Fisheries Office, and Tourism Office to capture crosssectoral perspectives and implementation experiences. The FGDs facilitated dialogue on coordination issues, shared challenges, and potential solutions among stakeholders. Observational data was collected through field visits to project sites across various subdistricts, allowing first-hand assessment of implementation effectiveness and infrastructure conditions. Secondary data analysis included examination of regional policy documents, development plans (RPJMD and RPJPD), sectoral reports, budget allocations, and previous studies related to regional potential development. Data analysis followed a systematic approach beginning with thorough data collection, followed by data reduction through coding and thematic categorization using constant comparative techniques. The identified themes were organized around the three dimensions of policy capacity: analytical, operational, and political. Interpretative analysis was applied to understand the relationships between these dimensions and their collective impact on regional development outcomes. The final stage involved drawing conclusions through pattern recognition and analytical generalization to identify key factors influencing operational capacity in the regional context. To ensure research validity and reliability, multiple verification techniques were employed including triangulation of data sources, member checking with key informants, and peer review of findings. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process, with informed consent obtained from all participants and confidentiality protocols applied to sensitive information.

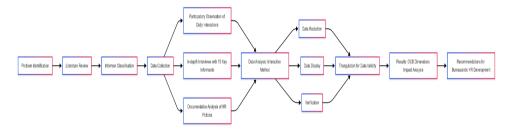


Figure 1: Flowchart of Research Method.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Result

a. Potential Excellence and Contribution to the Regional Economy

South Bolaang Mongondow Regency has a wealth of superior potential spread across various strategic sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, livestock, and tourism. These four sectors are not only the backbone of the local economy, but also contribute directly to the region's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). Data from 2024 shows that the largest contribution comes from the agricultural sector, which reached IDR 538.91 billion, followed by fisheries at IDR 481.93 billion, livestock at IDR 58.27 billion, and tourism, which although still in the development stage, has contributed PAD of IDR 4.34 million (Table 1 and Fig 1).

The Bolsel community relies on agriculture and fisheries for its livelihood. An informant from the Agriculture Service said:

"Most of the Bolsel population still farms. Eight commodities such as rice, corn, cloves, and nutmeg are their main sources of income."

Sector Contribution Value (Million Rupiah)

Agriculture 538,905.56

Fishery 481,931.68

Farm 58,275.46

Tourism (PAD) 4,344.40

TABLE 1: Contribution of Superior Potential to Bolsel's GRDP (2024).

Source: Interview Document & Bolsel RPJMD 2021-2026

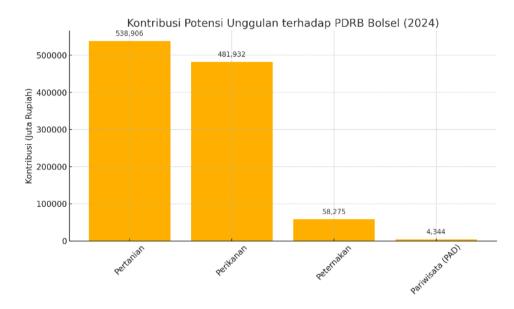


Figure 2: Prime Potential Contribution to PDRB Bolsel.

However, the development of these sectors has not been fully optimized. For example, the tourism sector is still limited to basic promotion and has not been integrated with local MSMEs. In fact, in terms of natural resources, beaches, mountains, and local cultural wealth are very potential to support the development of the creative economy. A similar thing was also conveyed by a local MSME actor:

"If local products can be sold in tourist attractions, we small business actors will also move up a class."

Overall, the superior potential of the Bolsel region holds great economic power, but has not been fully driven synergistically and sustainably. Utilization of technology, integration between sectors, and strengthening human resource capacity are the keys to accelerating these sectors.

b. Structural Problems in Utilizing Superior Potential

Although the superior potential of South Bolaang Mongondow Regency is widely recognized and spread evenly across almost all sub-districts, its implementation faces

quite serious structural obstacles. These obstacles include limited basic infrastructure, unpreparedness of human resources, the absence of holistic regulations, and budget limitations that recur every fiscal year.

In the agricultural sector, for example, the rate of contribution to GRDP shows a fluctuating trend. The causes include low farmer productivity, limited access to agricultural technology and information, and minimal institutional support. An official at the Department of Agriculture said:

"Our farmers' productivity is low not because they don't want to work, but because technology and markets don't support it. Farmers' institutions are not yet strong, and data is still limited."

Similar problems occur in the fisheries and livestock sectors. The unavailability of cold storage, minimal training for fishermen, and limited facilities and infrastructure for standard cages for livestock are systemic obstacles. In the fisheries sector, the potential of marine products has not been processed optimally because the processing industry is almost non-existent. One fisherman said:

"We can only sell raw fish, because there is no processing facility. Sometimes the price drops, and we lose money."

Sector	Main Problems
Agriculture	Low productivity, weak institutions, incomplete data
Fishery	No processing, minimal training, inadequate facilities
Farm	Non-standard cages, lack of animal health workers
Tourist	Weak promotion, no synergy with MSMEs and local actors

TABLE 2: Structural Problems in Each Potential Leading Sector.

On the other hand, existing sectoral regulations are not yet sufficiently integrated. The Farmer and Fisherman Protection Regulation already exists, but has not yet reached the value chain and market schemes. In addition, regulatory constraints also arise from overlapping authorities between OPDs and differences in priority focus. This shows the weakness of horizontal coordination within the regional bureaucracy.

These structural problems are exacerbated by the imbalance in budget allocation. Although the RPJMD mentions leading sectors as priorities, their realization still depends on the availability of fluctuating annual budgets. A member of Bappelitbangda said:

"Our planning is directed towards developing potential, but its implementation is often hampered by budget and human resources."

This condition demands a restructuring of the approach to regional potential development—from being sector-based to being more integrative and based on institutional capacity.

c. Political Capacity and Leadership in Encouraging the Development of Superior Potential

Political support from regional leaders is an important foundation in developing the region's superior potential. In South Bolaang Mongondow Regency, political capacity appears quite strong and stable. This commitment is manifested through consistent policies across leadership periods, the issuance of strategic regulations, and the preparation of medium and long-term planning documents.

Specifically, Regional Regulation (Perda) Number 18 of 2021 concerning Protection of Sustainable Food Crop Land is the main indicator of political support for the agricultural sector. Followed by Perda Number 15 of 2021 which protects and empowers farmers, fishermen, and fisheries business actors. This commitment is strengthened in the 2021–2026 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and the 2025–2045 Regional Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPD) which explicitly make the agriculture, fisheries, livestock, and tourism sectors priority sectors. A quote from a Bolsel legislator stated:

"We have agreed that this leading sector is not only an economic matter, but also a regional identity. So we in the DPRD always push for regulations that support it."

However, the implementation of this political support does not always run smoothly. Several challenges such as land conversion, budgetary interests between the executive and legislative branches, and weak supervision of the implementation of regulations, are still obstacles. A source from a technical OPD said:

"Land conversion often occurs because cross-sector coordination is not yet solid. Even though the regional regulation is clear."

Table 3 shows how the relationship between political policies, priority sectors, and regional planning documents:

This cross-policy consistency is also reflected in the collaborative commitment with other stakeholders. Musrenbang, OPD Forum, and Rakor routinely become a forum for dialogue between the executive-legislative and the community.

However, it should be noted that political support alone is not enough without strong bureaucratic execution capabilities and solid cross-sector coordination. Thus, political capacity needs to be combined with a more precise and adaptive implementation approach to real conditions on the ground.

Political Components	Relevant Strategic Documents			Related Sectors	
PLP2B Regional Regulation	Regional 18/2021	Regulation	No.	Agricultu	ıre
Regional Regulation on Protection of Farmers & Fishermen	Regional 15/2021	Regulation	No.	Agricultu Fisheries	
RPJMD 2021–2026	Intermediate Document	e P	lanning	All sectors	leading
RPJPD 2025–2045	Long Term Policy Direction		All sectors	leading	

TABLE 3: Political Capacity Matrix and Regional Development Direction.

d. Analytical Capacity: The Power of Data and Studies in Supporting Potential Leading Policies

Developing regional potential requires a strong analytical foundation. In South Bolaang Mongondow Regency, the policy formulation process has shown progress in integrating data and scientific studies, although its implementation still faces various obstacles. This analytical capacity is supported by the presence of Bappelitbangda as a coordination center for planning and policy analysis.

Identification of superior potentials such as agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, and tourism is carried out through a combination of participatory approaches (Musrenbang), sectoral data from technical agencies, and academic studies compiled together with research institutions and universities. Documents such as the 2021–2026 RPJMD and the 2024 Superior Potential Study are important footholds in determining the direction of regional development policies. However, the analytical capacity is still not optimal. One informant from Bappelitbangda explained:

"We have started using data in planning, but often still rely on data from agencies that are not up to date. Scientific studies are also rarely updated due to budget and HR constraints."

This shows that the existence of data is not the only problem. The quality, frequency of updates, and capacity of human resources in managing and analyzing data are also serious challenges. Especially in sectors such as supporting infrastructure, land conservation, and MSME productivity, the available data is still sectoral and has not been integrated into an integrated information system. Table 4 shows the state of local government analytical capacity:

As an illustration, one local academic stated:

"We were once asked to help with the study for the RPJMD, but it was ad hoc. Ideally, there should be regular cooperation for data development and policy evaluation."

Capacity Aspect	Existing Status	Expansion Notes	
Sectoral Data	There are, but they are incomplete and often out of date.	d Need to strengther integration	
Academic Studies	Already used in RPJMD and Perda	Not updated regularly	
College Involvement	Yes (specifically for RPJMD and RPJPD)	Still depends on the budget	
Policy Impact Evaluation	Not done systematically	Need for regular evaluation design	

TABLE 4: Dimensions of Analytical Capacity of Bolsel Local Government.

This condition shows that analytical capacity is still reactive, not proactive. In the future, it is necessary to build a regional information system based on open and integrative data, as well as a regional research forum that allows for routine collaboration between the government and academic institutions. Without a strong analytical foundation, policies for developing superior potential will be prone to sectoral bias and its effectiveness will be difficult to measure.

e. Operational Capacity: Effectiveness of Policy Implementation in the Field

Operational capacity is a crucial element in ensuring that the policy of developing superior potential is truly implemented effectively in the field. In South Bolaang Mongondow Regency, the implementation of the policy shows a fairly organized bureaucratic structure, but is faced with a number of challenges, especially in terms of coordination, human resources, and supporting infrastructure.

The policy implementation structure starts from the Regent as the policy direction determinant, continued by Bappelitbangda as the technical coordinator, and executed by technical OPDs such as the Agriculture, Fisheries, and Tourism Offices. At the subdistrict and village levels, implementation depends on regional apparatus and direct community involvement. This model has been running with a top-down pattern but accompanied by a participatory approach through the Musrenbang forum and field counseling.

However, in practice, the operationalization of policies is often hampered by differences in focus between OPDs. An informant from the Fisheries Service said:

"Sometimes we have designed the program well, but in the field other OPDs have their own priorities. There is no unified action."

Technical training for sector actors such as farmers, fishermen, and tourism actors has been routinely carried out by the technical service. This includes training in modern agricultural tools, fish farming techniques, marine conservation, to training in tour guides

 ${\it TABLE~5: Operational~Capacity~Challenges~of~Bolsel~Regional~Government.}\\$

Aspect	Main Challenges
OPD Coordination	Differences in priorities, no integrated coordination system yet
Implementing HR	Limited numbers and technical competence
Infrastructure	Irrigation, cold storage and barn facilities are inadequate
Budget	Fluctuations, not always in line with strategic plans

and management of tourist villages. However, this training has not been followed by a systematic evaluation of sustainability and follow-up. One of the training participants from Molibagu Village stated:

"We were taught efficient planting and fertilizing methods, but the tools were not yet available. After the training, there was no more assistance."

Monitoring and evaluation have indeed been carried out by Bappelitbangda, but have not used outcome-based performance indicators. The assessment system is more administrative and does not fully reflect the effectiveness of implementation in the field.

Jalur Implementasi Kebijakan Potensi Unggulan

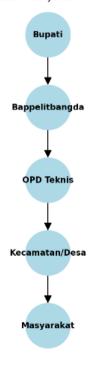


Figure 3: Potential Leading Policy Implementation Path.

3.2. Discussion

Developing regional potential is an important pillar in a sustainable regional development strategy. Research findings in South Bolaang Mongondow Regency show how policy capacity is a central instrument in accelerating the management of regional potential. By referring to the framework offered by Wu et al. (2015)—namely analytical, operational, and political capacity—this study reveals the strengths and limitations of regional institutions in developing the agriculture, fisheries, livestock, and tourism sectors.

From the analytical capacity aspect, it appears that the policy formulation process has shown progress with the involvement of Bappelitbangda and support from documents such as RPJMD, regional potential studies, and sectoral data from technical OPDs. However, challenges still arise in the quality and completeness of data, especially in sectors that require technical performance indicators such as agricultural productivity and supply chain capacity. The lack of impact evaluation and the lack of regular research collaboration with universities show that analytical capacity in Bolsel tends to be reactive and not yet fully institutionalized. This is in accordance with the theory of Wu et al. (2015) which emphasizes that analytical capacity must include reliability in collecting data, the ability to interpret field conditions, and flexibility in adjusting policies to changing contexts [19].

On the operational capacity side, field findings show that the bureaucratic structure and policy implementation pathways are quite organized, with an implementation model starting from the Regent, coordinated by Bappelitbangda, continued by technical OPDs, and down to the community as the main implementer. Technical training, equipment assistance, and regular interventions to the community have also been carried out[5]. However, the less than optimal synergy between OPDs, limited basic infrastructure (such as cold storage and irrigation channels), and budget fluctuations indicate weak administrative coherence. From a theoretical perspective, this describes operational disconnect, namely a condition when formal mechanisms are available but their implementation is not integrated. In fact, Wu et al. stated that operational capacity requires institutional capabilities to coordinate, execute, and evaluate policies adaptively.

Furthermore, the regional political capacity appears to be quite strong formally, as shown by the commitment of the Regent and DPRD in establishing various Regional Regulations (such as Protection of Food Crop Land and Empowerment of Farmers-Fishermen), as well as consistency in the RPJMD and RPJPD documents. This indicates

political continuity and policy direction across stable leadership periods. However, political dynamics at the implementation level are still often colored by competing interests, especially in budget preparation, land conversion, and the lack of community involvement in the early stages of planning. Wu et al. emphasized that good political capacity is not only related to the commitment of political elites to the policy agenda, but also the involvement of non-government actors and the ability to manage policy conflicts [20], [21].

The interconnection between the three capacities shows that the success of developing superior potential is greatly influenced by the integration (coherence) between planning, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation. For example, the existence of a good RPJMD will be a dead document if it is not supported by adequate analytical capacity to diagnose problems, or operational capacity that is responsive to community needs. In the case of Bolsel, although there are progressive policies and a complete implementing structure, there is still a gap between the planning on paper and the reality on the ground. This can be seen from the lack of downstream policy feedback, such as continuous community involvement after implementation, or the less than optimal outcome-based monitoring system.

This gap then explains why some superior potentials such as the tourism sector have not been able to make a significant contribution to the regional GRDP, despite having natural and cultural advantages. Likewise, the processing industry sector and local MSMEs have not been consolidated in the economic ecosystem based on superior potentials. From a policy learning perspective, this is an important lesson that policies based on local potentials cannot be relied on only through structural and regulatory approaches, but also require policy agility—the ability to adjust policy design to the dynamics of social, technological, and resources in the region.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that the development of superior regional potential in South Bolaang Mongondow Regency is greatly influenced by the policy capacity of the local government. Potentials such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock, and tourism have significant contributions to the regional GRDP and are priority sectors for development. However, structural challenges such as limited infrastructure, weak coordination between OPDs, and inadequate data quality are still the main obstacles. In terms of political capacity, there is a consistent commitment from regional leaders in establishing strategic

policies and regulations that support the development of leading sectors. However, in practice, there is a tug-of-war of interests and inequality in implementation that shows that accommodation between policy actors is not yet optimal. Analytical capacity has begun to develop through planning documents and academic studies, but has not been fully integrated into the evidence-based policy decision-making cycle. Meanwhile, operational capacity tends to be technocratic, but is not yet sufficiently adaptive to the socio-economic conditions of local communities.

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