

## Research Article

# Stakeholder Participation in Multilevel Governance of Maritime Transportation Development through Special Autonomy Funds in Southwest Papua Province

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## Abstract.

The development of sea transportation through special autonomy funds is very important to reduce the development gap in the eastern region of Indonesia. In order for the development of sea transportation to be successful effectively, support and participation of various stakeholders are needed in the process. This study aims to explore stakeholder participation in multiLevel governance in the development of sea transportation through special autonomy funds in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency, Southwest Papua Province. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data collection includes observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research informants include officials from the central government, the West Papua Provincial Government, the South Sorong and Maybrat Regency Governments, as well as representatives from the local community and the private sector. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that stakeholder participation is relatively low and needs to be increased in the process of developing marine transportation based on multilevel governance, especially from the community and private sector. So far, the government as a policymaker has not involved the community and private sector in decision-making, so that the government's role is too dominant. In addition, it was found that the government is less transparent and accountable in terms of the process and stages of marine transportation development toward the community and private sector so that supervision of both parties in the process of developing marine transportation carried out by the government is very limited, the community and private sector should be involved in the entire decision-making process and can access information regarding marine transportation development.

**Keywords:** stakeholders participation, multilevel governance, maritime transportation development, special autonomy fund

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## 1. Introduction

Maritime transportation is an integral part of the national transportation system that plays a strategic role in supporting connectivity between regions, especially in an archipelagic country like Indonesia. According to the National Transportation Master Plan (RITN) and the National Port Master Plan (RIPN) prepared by the Ministry of Transportation, maritime transportation functions as the backbone of national logistics distribution, the driving force of the inter-regional economy, and a means of population mobility, especially in remote and border areas.

The government through Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 concerning the 2020–2024 RPJMN emphasizes the importance of developing sea transportation in order to realize efficient, equitable, and sustainable national connectivity. One of the leading programs in this context is the Sea Toll, which aims to reduce price disparities and strengthen logistics distribution between regions, especially to Eastern Indonesia.

The development of marine transportation involves various aspects, including the construction and rehabilitation of port infrastructure, procurement of pioneer ships, improvement of marine transportation services, and strengthening of regulations and governance. In addition, this development must consider the geographical characteristics of the region, local economic potential, and local community participation in order to create an inclusive and sustainable transportation system.

In the context of a special autonomous region such as Southwest Papua, the development of sea transportation is not only a technical and economic need, but also part of an effort to equalize development and improve the welfare of indigenous peoples. The Special Autonomy Fund (OTSUS) is one of the main instruments that can be utilized to accelerate the development of the sea transportation sector as part of the affirmative strategy for Papua's development.

In the context of the Province of Southwest Papua, especially in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency, the development of sea transportation through the Special Autonomy Fund (OTSUS) is one of the strategic focuses to strengthen inter-regional connectivity and encourage equitable development. However, conditions in the field show a combination of progress that has been achieved and various challenges that still need to be faced.

In South Sorong Regency, the Special Autonomy Fund has been used concretely for the development of marine transportation infrastructure. The local government has

succeeded in building seven docks and operating three ferry ships serving remote areas. This initiative not only improves accessibility between regions in the regency but also contributes to empowering local communities. The entire crew of the ships operated are native Papuans who have obtained maritime certificates, reflecting a serious effort to increase the capacity of local human resources.

In addition, the West Papua Provincial Government has also shown its commitment to improving sea connectivity by planning to build a new pier in the South Sorong area. Support from the local community, as demonstrated by the village head Wardik who is willing to provide land without obstacles, shows enthusiasm and great hope for the development of sea infrastructure as a means of accelerating regional economic development. However, conditions in Maybrat Regency show quite significant challenges. As an area that is mostly inland, the development of sea transportation has not been optimal. Access to the port is still very limited, and some areas do not even have basic infrastructure such as piers or ship facilities. This has hampered logistics distribution and limited community mobility, especially in districts that are difficult to reach.

However, conditions in Maybrat Regency show quite significant challenges. As a region that is mostly inland, the development of sea transportation has not been optimal. Access to ports is still very limited, and some areas do not even have basic infrastructure such as docks or ship facilities. This has hampered logistics distribution and limited community mobility, especially in districts that are difficult to reach.

On the other hand, the tourism sector in the South Sorong area and its surroundings has great potential to encourage the development of marine transportation. However, this potential has not been fully utilized due to the limited infrastructure of small ports, suboptimal ship services, and natural challenges such as unpredictable weather conditions. By looking at these conditions, it is clear that although the Special Autonomy Fund has had a positive impact on the development of marine transportation, especially in South Sorong, more integrated planning, equitable distribution of infrastructure development, and strengthening of institutional capacity and human resources in both districts are still needed so that the goals of connectivity and the welfare of the Papuan people can be achieved.

Despite the development of docks and ports through the Special Autonomy Fund, the available infrastructure is still not evenly distributed and adequate. In Maybrat Regency, for example, many areas do not yet have proper port facilities, so that sea transportation activities cannot run optimally. Existing docks often do not meet technical and shipping

safety standards. Most areas in Maybrat Regency and some parts of South Sorong are still difficult to reach, either by land or sea. Access to coastal areas or small islands is often disrupted by the lack of integrated transportation routes. This worsens isolation and complicates the distribution of logistics and public services. Although there has been training and certification for ship crews from local communities, in general the capacity of human resources in the management and operation of sea transportation is still limited. Many areas do not yet have technical or managerial personnel who are able to manage ports, ships, or logistics professionally and sustainably.

One of the crucial problems is the weak coordination between district, provincial, and central governments in the planning and implementation of marine transportation development. This often results in overlapping policies, inaccurate development targets, and inefficient budget use. Programs funded by OTSUS sometimes run without synchronization with the regional RPJMD or national strategic priorities. Many marine transportation development programs in both districts are highly dependent on OTSUS Funds. This dependence poses a risk of unsustainability if at any time the funds are reduced or diverted. In addition, the available funds are often insufficient to cover all development needs, including long-term operations. Southwest Papua generally has difficult topography and often extreme weather, which affects the smoothness of marine transportation. Large waves, long rainy seasons, and limited navigation facilities are serious challenges in ensuring shipping safety, especially for pioneer ships serving remote areas. A number of infrastructures built with OTSUS Funds receive less attention in terms of maintenance. The docks that have been built are not always in good condition due to minimal maintenance budgets and weak supervision of post-implementation projects. This causes the infrastructure to deteriorate quickly and not function optimally in the long term.

The complexity of marine transportation development requires a comprehensive approach, namely multi-level governance (MLG), which refers to a governance model in which the decision-making process and policy implementation involve various levels of national, provincial, district/city government and non-government actors, such as the community, the private sector, and traditional institutions. Gollata and Newig define MLG as “the complex and overlapping interaction between actors operating at different spatial and administrative levels, both public and private, in the formulation and implementation of policy” [1]. In the context of Southwest Papua, the development of marine transportation funded by the Special Autonomy Fund is a policy that is not only in the domain of the local government, but also involves coordination across

levels of government and actors across sectors. The central government determines the policy framework and fund allocation, the provincial and district governments become the main implementers, while local actors, including traditional leaders and service users, have important positions in development planning and supervision. Based on this explanation, this study aims to explore stakeholder participation in Multi-Level Governance in Marine Transportation Development Through Special Autonomy Funds in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency, Southwest Papua Province.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore in depth the phenomenon of marine transportation development through the Special Autonomy Fund (OTSUS) in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency, Southwest Papua Province. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is considered the most relevant in understanding the complex social, economic, and policy contexts as well as local dynamics that influence the development of marine transportation infrastructure in the study area.

According to Moleong, qualitative research is intended to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants, with an emphasis on meaning, context, and experience [2]. Thus, this research does not focus on generalization, but on deepening and understanding the processes and actors involved in the management of the OTSUS Fund and its impact on the development of marine transportation. The type of research used is a case study, which aims to specifically examine how policies and implementation of marine transportation development through the OTSUS Fund are applied in two different districts. Case studies are considered effective in providing a holistic picture of the social and bureaucratic dynamics that occur [3].

Data collection techniques are carried out through three main methods, namely: In-depth interviews with key informants, such as local Transportation Agency officials, port managers, community leaders, and representatives of the community using sea transportation services. Direct observation of the physical condition of the port, docks, and operational activities of ships in the study area. Documentation studies, namely analysis of regional policy documents, reports on the use of OTSUS Funds, and sea transportation development plans at both the district and provincial levels.

Informant determination was done by purposive sampling, by selecting individuals who have direct knowledge and experience related to the research topic [4]. Triangulation techniques were used to increase data validity, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain an accurate and objective picture [5]. The data obtained will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which aims to identify patterns, main issues, and relationships between phenomena from the qualitative data collected [6]. The analysis process is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions as stated by Miles and Huberman [7].

### 3. Results and Discussion

This study shows that the level of stakeholder participation, especially the community and private sector or entrepreneurs in the development of marine transportation funded by the Special Autonomy Fund (OTSUS) in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency still faces various challenges. There is a development planning deliberation forum (Musrenbang) at the village and district levels, community participation in the forum tends to be symbolic and not yet substantive. Many people attend, but do not understand the budgeting and planning process so that their voices are not optimally accommodated in policy [8]. In addition, there is no special participatory forum that focuses on the marine transportation sector, which causes this issue to often be marginalized in regional development priorities. In the development of sea transportation through the Special Autonomy Fund in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency, community participation shows complex dynamics. Although formally the community has space to be involved through various planning forums such as Musrenbang (Development Planning Deliberation), this involvement is generally only administrative and has not touched on substantive aspects in decision making.

Villagers or district residents are invited to attend annual planning forums, but they often become passive listeners. Many of them do not have sufficient understanding of maritime transportation sector policies or how OTSUS funds are managed. As a result, community proposals or needs for maritime transportation development are rarely included in higher strategic plans at the district or provincial level. The results of the study found that in Inanwatan District, South Sorong Regency, the community expressed the need for a small pier that could be used for mobility between villages. However, this proposal was not accommodated because it was not included in the larger regional priorities, and fiscal limitations were also the main reason for its neglect.

A similar thing happened in Maybrat, where several inland districts are highly dependent on sea and river access, but the development of transportation facilities has still not received serious attention in regional planning. In addition, the top-down communication pattern from the central and provincial governments also makes the community feel that they have no room to influence policy. They are more often informed than invited to discuss. In other words, they are not equal actors in policy making. This is certainly contrary to the principles of good governance and the spirit of special autonomy which should encourage strengthening community capacity.

Institutionally, there are a number of mechanisms intended to bridge the aspirations of the community and the private sector in the development of marine transportation. Among them are Musrenbang at every level of government (village, district, regency), public consultation in the early stages of the project, and development socialization activities. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms in the marine transportation sector is highly dependent on two things: (1) the ability of the community and business actors to understand technical issues related to port development, shipping routes, and transportation regulations, and (2) the openness and political will of the local government to listen to and accommodate such input. Field findings show that existing mechanisms are often procedural in nature—implemented merely to fulfill administrative requirements without seeking more deliberative participation. In some cases, such as the construction of a pier in Kokoda District, public consultation meetings only took place once and there was no reporting back on the results of the decisions to the community present.

From the private sector side, collaboration with the government is still sporadic. Several private sea transportation service operators in South Sorong Regency have indeed been involved in project implementation, but the partnership is not yet institutional and tends to be pragmatic. In Maybrat Regency, the role of the private sector is almost invisible because basic infrastructure such as roads and docks are not yet adequately available to support their participation in transportation management [9]. Further information from private actors, especially small sea transportation operators, their voices are almost never heard in the preparation of development plans. Business actors often feel that government policies do not support their needs, because infrastructure projects are more often given to external contractors who do not understand the local context in Papua. The absence of business actors in this planning process has hampered the opportunity for public-private partnerships (PPPs) that should be able to strengthen the sea transportation system. This condition shows the imbalance in power relations

between the government, society, and the private sector, which hinders the creation of collaborative governance as emphasized in the multi-level governance (MLG) approach.

In addition to Musrenbang and public consultations, several informal forums such as customary meetings or village deliberations are often places for residents to discuss transportation needs and other development issues. Unfortunately, the results of these informal forums are rarely documented and are almost never systematically consolidated into the formal planning system. Activities organized by NGOs and churches in Southwest Papua or even the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) are actually potential channels to strengthen the voice of the community, especially vulnerable groups such as women, people with disabilities, and youth. In Maybrat Regency, for example, the church plays an important role in identifying transportation problems for congregations living on the coast and inland. However, this channel is still disconnected from the local government because there is no integration mechanism between community forums and the formal planning system. Meanwhile, no special thematic forums were found to discuss marine transportation issues in a sustainable manner. This indicates that the transportation sector has not been seen as a strategic issue that requires attention from across actors and across levels of government. The lack of cross-sector and cross-level forums is what then weakens the implementation of the MLG principles as stated by Gollata and Newig, namely the need for deliberative mechanisms between actors at various levels of government [1]. From the MLG perspective, policy effectiveness is largely determined by the intensity and quality of interaction between the government, society, and non-state actors in the policy planning and implementation process. When participatory channels are not available or are ineffective, the decisions taken tend not to reflect the real needs of the community. multi-level governance (MLG) also emphasizes the importance of deliberative participation in public policy, namely participation that goes beyond physical presence and includes the ability of actors to influence decisions through a process of dialogue and joint consideration [1].

In the research findings on the development of marine transportation through the Special Autonomy Fund in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency, community and private participation shows a complex reality and is not yet fully optimal. Normatively, there are mechanisms that have been designed to involve the community in the planning and decision-making process. For example, the Musrenbang (Development Planning Deliberation) forum is the main space at the village, district, and regency levels for the community to convey development aspirations, including in the transportation sector. However, in practice, community participation in these forums tends to be



procedural in nature, their presence is only a form of administrative legitimacy, not as part of substantive deliberation. The aspirations conveyed by the community are often not well documented or integrated into regional development plans. This reflects the weakness of the deliberative participation mechanism as developed in the framework of the multi-level governance (MLG) theory, especially as explained by Gollata and Newig (2017), which emphasizes the importance of involving actors across levels and sectors in the policy-making process. One of the roots of this weak participation is the limited access to information among the community. Many residents in coastal and inland areas, especially in Maybrat, do not know that the construction of the sea transportation facilities they use is funded by the OTSUS Fund. Information about the budget, activity plans, and implementing parties is rarely announced to the public openly. Even in project socialization activities, the content presented tends to be technocratic and difficult for ordinary citizens to understand, so that their participation is passive and limited to receiving information.

On the other hand, the involvement of the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) in managing maritime transportation is also not structured. The private sector, such as boat operators and local logistics services, have direct experience in operating maritime transportation, but their voices are almost never involved in the project planning process. In fact, their experience and perspectives can be an important contribution to designing a maritime transportation system that is adaptive to local geographic and social conditions. Local companies also often feel marginalized because large projects are more often given to contractors from outside the region who do not understand the local context. This shows a broken chain between development and local needs and potential, which should be the basis for participatory planning.

Community organizations such as NGOs or churches and the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) actually have great potential in bridging community interests with public policy, but so far have not been given strategic space. Several local community organizations have attempted to advocate for transparency in the Special Autonomy Fund budget and encourage accountability in infrastructure projects, but their involvement is more incidental than institutional. On the other hand, religious institutions such as churches that have strong social influence, especially in Papua, have also not been empowered as partners in designing maritime transportation development policies, despite having extensive social networks and moral authority.

When it comes to transparency and accountability, the research results show that the public does not have sufficient understanding of how the Special Autonomy Fund is

used for the maritime transportation sector. Information on budget allocation and project implementation is not conveyed openly and systematically. Reporting to the public is almost never done, either through local media, information boards, or citizen forums. The absence of public reporting has given rise to public distrust of the government and encouraged negative speculation about the potential misuse of funds.

Participatory monitoring mechanisms are also not running. There is no independent institution or community monitoring forum that has the authority and capacity to control the implementation of marine transportation projects. In some cases, residents do not know who the project contractor is, how much the contract value is, and how far the implementation progress is. This shows that vertical accountability (from the government to the community) has not been adequately established, while horizontal accountability through community control is not facilitated by policies that support information transparency.

One forum that should be a bridge between policy and citizen interests is public consultation. However, findings in the field show that public consultation is often only carried out as a formality. Invitations are not widely distributed, the implementation time does not take into account the busyness of citizens, and the material presented is not in a language that can be understood by all groups. As a result, public input is very limited and has no impact on policy. The government prioritizes a top-down approach, on the grounds of efficiency and acceleration of development, but sacrifices the dimensions of inclusivity and sustainability.

The main challenge in facilitating this participation is the low technical and administrative capacity at the community level. Residents, especially in coastal villages and remote areas, have not received adequate training or education on development planning, project management, or public budget monitoring. They also do not have strong community-based organizations that function as aggregators of aspirations. On the other hand, local governments also do not have a strong commitment to empowering communities to become active partners in the management of the Special Autonomy Fund. The dominance of technocratic approaches and the politicization of projects are the main obstacles to the birth of genuine participation.

In the multi-level governance framework, there should be connectivity between national, provincial, and local policies that allow all levels of government and all types of actors to contribute to the formulation and implementation of public policies. In this context, the participation of the community, the private sector, and civil society

organizations is not only seen as a complement, but as a key element of democratic and responsive governance. Unfortunately, the management of the Special Autonomy Fund for sea transportation in Southwest Papua has not fully reflected these principles. Relations between actors are still dominated by the government, while the community and the private sector are only complementary.

## 4. Conclusion

This study shows that the development of sea transportation through the Special Autonomy Fund (OTSUS) in South Sorong Regency and Maybrat Regency still faces various challenges, especially in the aspect of stakeholder participation. Although there are formal forums such as Musrenbang and socialization activities, the involvement of the community, private sector, NGOs or the civil Papuan People's Assembly is still limited, symbolic, and has not touched on the substantive process in planning and decision-making. Community aspirations are often not adequately accommodated in development plans, and the private sector is only involved at the implementation level, not in the strategic planning stage.

The absence of a deliberative participatory mechanism, minimal access to public information, and weak technical capacity of the community exacerbate the imbalance in relations between the state and citizens in the management of the Special Autonomy Fund for the maritime transportation sector. In addition, the lack of cross-sector and cross-level forums has also resulted in the absence of integrative and collaborative coordination between actors in the development ecosystem. Policy effectiveness is greatly influenced by the level of involvement of actors from various levels of government and sectors. Therefore, stakeholder participation needs to be increased through improving public communication mechanisms, strengthening the institutional capacity of community organizations such as the Papuan People's Assembly, and establishing an inclusive and deliberative policy forum. Where this aims to ensure that the development of maritime transportation based on the Special Autonomy Fund truly answers the needs of the community.

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