

## CHALLENGES AND REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES IN GUIDING COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY IN INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Regional legislatures play a crucial role in ensuring that development policies align with the needs of the community. However, within Indonesia's decentralized governance system, various challenges persist in the legislative process, including weak coordination with the executive branch, low public participation, and limited capacity among legislators to formulate evidence-based policies. This study aims to identify the main challenges faced by legislative bodies in overseeing community-needs-based development and to formulate strategies that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of regional legislation. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method in several regions across Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with legislative members, academics, and civil society organizations, and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The findings indicate that executive dominance in policy formulation, limited capacity among legislators, and a lack of transparency in the legislative process are the main factors hindering the effectiveness of the legislative role. Recommended strategies include enhancing legislators' capacity through evidence-based training, strengthening public participation mechanisms through digital platforms, and implementing policy reforms to increase legislative independence in overseeing regional development. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that the success of community-needs-based development depends on the extent to which the legislative body can perform its role transparently, accountably, and participatorily. The results of this research contribute to the literature on local governance and offer practical recommendations for policymakers to improve the effectiveness of regional legislation. Further research is recommended to expand the geographical scope of the study and to explore more deeply the impact of regulations on the implementation of community-needs-based development.*

**Keywords:** *Regional Legislature, Governance, Public Participation, Community Needs-Based Development, Legislative Strategies*

### INTRODUCTION

In the context of regional development, the legislative branch plays an important role in overseeing policies based on community needs (Madue, 2012). However, the reality in Indonesia shows that various challenges still hinder the effectiveness of the legislative role in regional development. Socio-economic inequalities, policies that do not favor the

public interest, and weak oversight of policy implementation are among the factors that lead to suboptimal regional development (McCarthy, Steenbergen, & Warren, 2017).

This phenomenon becomes more complex due to political dynamics at the regional level, which often affect legislative decision-making (Shin & Lee, 2017). Legislators are faced with a dilemma between political interests and public aspirations. Studies indicate that in many regions in Indonesia, policies tend to reflect the interests of certain groups rather than the broader community (Lukman, 2020; Albareda & Fraussen, 2023). Furthermore, challenges still persist in integrating principles of public participation into the regional legislative process.

One pressing issue is the lack of effective public participation mechanisms in policymaking. Although Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government emphasizes the importance of public participation, its implementation remains limited (Al'Afghani, Kohlitz, & Willetts, 2019). Low community involvement in the legislative process leads to policies that often fail to reflect local needs and tend to be top-down in nature (Jumanne, 2025; Guragain, 2024).

On the other hand, decentralization has provided opportunities for regional governments to be more independent in formulating policies. However, it has also created new challenges, particularly in the coordination between central and regional governments (Chan & Shi, 2022; Reid, 2012). Research shows that inconsistencies between central and regional regulations often lead to legal uncertainty, which affects the sustainability of development based on community needs (Wetterberg et al., 2016; Sewu & Basani, 2024).

Previous studies have mostly focused on development policy from economic and political perspectives, but few have explored legislative strategies in facing these challenges. Existing studies highlight factors such as corruption, bureaucratic complexity, and limited legislative capacity in formulating evidence-based policies (Fajarini & Okdinawati, 2022). Therefore, more in-depth research is needed to understand how legislative strategies can be strengthened to ensure that development policies genuinely reflect public needs (Maharjan & Lal, n.d.; Petunia & Selepe, 2020).

This research aims to identify the major challenges faced by the legislative branch in overseeing development based on community needs and to formulate strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of regional legislation. This study focuses on case studies in several regions in Indonesia, taking into account social, economic, and political factors that influence the legislative process.

Academically, this research contributes to the literature on regional governance, particularly in the areas of legislation and need-based development. Using a qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into political and social dynamics within regional legislative processes.

In practice, the findings of this research may serve as a reference for stakeholders, including regional governments, legislators, and civil society, in formulating more effective and inclusive legislative strategies. Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of public administration scholarship but also has practical implications for encouraging development policies that prioritize public welfare. Through this research, it is expected that a more responsive legislative model can be developed, along with more transparent and accountable oversight mechanisms. In this way, regional legislation can truly become an effective instrument in supporting sustainable and equitable development in Indonesia.

This research aims to identify, analyze, and formulate legislative strategies in overseeing development based on community needs in Indonesia. In the context of

decentralization, regional legislatures play a strategic role in designing policies that are responsive to local needs (Mustafaev, 2023; Tselios & Rodríguez-Pose, 2022). However, they continue to face various challenges such as weak public participation, the dominance of political interests, and imbalances in the relationship between the legislative and executive branches (Adhilia et al., 2025). Therefore, this study explores the factors that hinder legislative effectiveness in the policy-making and development oversight processes, and develops evidence-based recommendations to enhance accountability, transparency, and public participation in policymaking. In doing so, the study is expected to contribute to strengthening regional governance and providing practical solutions for legislators and stakeholders to create more inclusive and sustainable policies.

In studying the challenges and strategies of legislatures in overseeing development based on community needs, several major theories can be used as a conceptual framework. Governance theory provides a foundation for understanding how relationships among government actors—including the legislature, executive, and civil society—shape policy effectiveness. According to Antlöv (2019), good governance involves transparency, accountability, and active public participation in decision-making. However, in practice, decentralization in Indonesia often encounters coordination challenges between central and regional governments, which affect the effectiveness of need-based development policies.

Additionally, public participation theory emphasizes the importance of community involvement in the legislative process to ensure that policies reflect local needs. Effective public participation in policymaking can enhance policy legitimacy and strengthen accountability within regional governments (Tobing-David et al., 2024). However, limited access to information, elite political dominance, and low community capacity often hinder meaningful participation. Therefore, effective legislative strategies must incorporate more inclusive participation mechanisms based on community empowerment.

Finally, public policy theory offers perspectives on how public policies are formulated, implemented, and evaluated. Policy models such as the advocacy coalition framework and the multiple streams framework help explain the dynamics of political forces shaping the legislative role in overseeing regional development policies (Haryanto, 2022). By integrating these three theories, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of legislative challenges and strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of development based on community needs in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges and legislative strategies in overseeing development based on community needs in Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for broader exploration of the social and political phenomena that influence legislative policy, as well as a more contextual understanding of the factors that play a role in the legislative process at the regional level (Kartowijono et al., 2023).

The case study method is used because this research focuses on legislative analysis in several specific regions in Indonesia, enabling the researcher to thoroughly explore the dynamics of relationships between the government, the legislature, and the community in the formulation and implementation of development policies. Case studies provide richer insights into ongoing legislative practices and the obstacles faced in developing policies that reflect community needs (Wijaya & Ishihara, 2018).

In addition, this method allows for data collection from various sources, including in-depth interviews with legislative members, policy documents, and direct observations of the legislative process.

This type of research is relevant in addressing the research questions because it provides space for an in-depth analysis of the complexity of the legislative role in regional development. By understanding legislative challenges and formulating more effective strategies based on empirical evidence, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the field of governance and offer practical solutions for policy-making at the legislative level. The findings of this research may also serve as a reference for academics, policymakers, and civil society in enhancing legislative transparency and accountability in support of sustainable and inclusive development (Wulandari & Budiono, 2019).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal that the role of the legislative body in overseeing development based on community needs in Indonesia continues to face various structural and political challenges. One of the major obstacles is the weak coordination between the legislature and the executive, which results in ineffective policy formulation and implementation. Previous studies by Adhilia et al. (2025) show that in many cases, policies designed by the legislature encounter administrative and bureaucratic barriers that hinder the implementation of development programs (Fernández-i-Marín et al., 2023; Afrilinda et al., 2022).

From the perspective of governance theory, these findings confirm Antlöv's (2019) argument that the success of decentralization depends heavily on the effectiveness of coordination among government institutions. This study found that although the legislature holds a formal role in overseeing regional development policies, executive dominance often undermines the independence of the legislature in carrying out its oversight functions (Verma, 2022). This contributes to a lack of transparency in decision-making, leading to policies that do not always reflect community needs (Kopal, 2022; Szoke-Burke et al., 2021).

Furthermore, this study also found that low community participation in the legislative process remains a key factor hindering the effectiveness of need-based development. Based on public participation theory, Tobing-David et al. (2024) emphasize that policies crafted without active public involvement tend to be less effective in addressing existing social problems. This research reveals that although various public consultation forums exist, community involvement is often procedural and does not significantly influence the regional legislative process (Pattalongi et al., 2024).

From a public policy perspective, the findings align with the advocacy coalition framework developed by Sabatier (1999), which posits that certain interest groups often wield more influence in policymaking than the general public. This study found that in several regions, political pressure from specific groups, such as political parties and dominant economic actors, plays a greater role in determining policy directions than the actual needs of the community (Kalk & Sorger, 2023; Chalmers et al., 2016; Bawn et al., 2012). This results in development policies that have low relevance to the socio-economic conditions of local communities.

However, the study also identified several legislative strategies that can improve the effectiveness of legislation in supporting need-based development. One key

strategy is enhancing the capacity of legislative members through evidence-based policy training. This finding is consistent with Haryanto (2022), who states that training and mentoring for legislative members can improve the quality of policies produced and strengthen legislators' capacity in monitoring the executive.

In addition, the study found that collaboration between the legislature and civil society organizations (CSOs) can serve as an effective strategy for promoting transparency and accountability in regional legislation. Lukman (2020) highlights that CSO involvement in the legislative process can help bridge community interests with policymakers, resulting in more inclusive and community-oriented policies.

From an implementation standpoint, the findings indicate that technology-based approaches, such as the use of digital platforms for public consultations, can enhance community involvement in the legislative process. This supports the findings of Wulandari and Budiono (2019), who demonstrate that digital technology in governance can increase transparency and strengthen public participation in decision-making.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study focuses only on a number of selected regions in Indonesia, meaning the findings may not fully represent legislative dynamics across the entire country. Second, limitations in accessing regional legislative documents also posed challenges in conducting a more comprehensive analysis. Future research can expand the geographic scope of the study and employ big data analysis to identify legislative patterns at the national level.

The implications of these findings suggest that reforms within the regional legislative system are needed to strengthen the legislative role in need-based development. One of the key recommendations is improving transparency in the legislative process, either through regulatory reforms or the adoption of digital technologies that allow the public to provide more active input on regional policymaking.

In terms of academic contribution, this study enriches the literature on regional governance, particularly regarding the legislative role in need-based development. By integrating governance theory, public participation theory, and public policy theory, this research offers a more comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding legislative challenges and strategies in Indonesia.

In practice, the findings may serve as a reference for policymakers in designing more inclusive and effective legislative strategies. By implementing evidence-based approaches and strengthening synergy among the legislature, the executive, and civil society, the legislative system at the regional level can become more responsive to community needs and contribute to sustainable development.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes that despite the numerous structural and political challenges faced by the legislative body in overseeing need-based development, the adoption of appropriate strategies, such as enhanced public participation, capacity building for legislators, and evidence-based policy reforms, can enable the legislature to play a more significant role in promoting equitable and inclusive development in Indonesia.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study reveal that regional legislatures in Indonesia continue to face various challenges in overseeing development based on community needs, including weak coordination with the executive, low public participation, and limited legislative capacity in formulating evidence-based policies. These findings align with

the research objective of identifying factors that hinder the effectiveness of regional legislation and formulating strategies to enhance accountability and inclusiveness in the legislative process. The study also demonstrates that strategies such as capacity building for legislators through evidence-based training, collaboration with civil society organizations, and the use of digital technologies to increase transparency and public participation can strengthen the legislative role in regional development. Thus, this research contributes conceptual insights and practical recommendations for improving regional governance that is more participatory and responsive to community needs.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that regional legislatures enhance transparency and public participation in the legislative process by utilizing digital technologies and strengthening collaboration with civil society organizations to ensure that policies are more inclusive and need-based. Additionally, capacity building for legislators through evidence-based training is essential so that they can develop more effective and responsive policies. From a policy perspective, reforms in the regional legislative system are needed to clarify the boundaries of authority between the executive and legislative branches, thereby preventing executive dominance in policy formulation. For future research, it is suggested that studies be conducted with broader regional coverage and employ big data analysis to more comprehensively examine legislative patterns and identify more specific factors that determine legislative effectiveness in need-based development.

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