Local Governance in Accelerating SDGs Achievement in Riau, Indonesia

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Abstract

Encouraging more effective governance is needed to accelerate the 2030 SDGs agenda both on a global, national, and local scale. The purpose of writing this article is to analyze and evaluate local governance in accelerating the achievement of SDGs on a local scale at the provincial government level, especially in Riau, Indonesia. The method uses a qualitative approach by analyzing various documents related to SDGs on a global, national, and local scale, especially in Riau province, with in-depth research through interviews and literature studies. The study results show that local governance has not been effective in accelerating the achievement of SDGs in Riau. The Riau provincial government is quite committed to the SDGs agenda, but its capacity and policy initiatives are still minimal and limited. The preparation and implementation of regional action plans for the SDGs have not been optimally integrated and coordinated, especially regarding inclusivity and involvement of non-governmental actors.

Keywords: SDGs, Governance, Local Government

Abstrak

Mendorong tata kelola pemerintahan yang lebih efektif diperlukan untuk mempercepat agenda SDGs 2030 baik dalam skala global, nasional, maupun lokal. Tujuan penulisan artikel ini adalah menganalisis dan mengevaluasi tata kelola pemerintahan daerah dalam mempercepat pencapaian SDGs skala lokal di tingkat pemerintah provinsi, khususnya di Riau, Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan menganalisis berbagai dokumen terkait SDGs dalam skala global, nasional, dan lokal, khususnya di provinsi Riau, dengan penelitian mendalam melalui wawancara dan studi pustaka. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa tata kelola pemerintahan daerah belum efektif dalam mempercepat pencapaian SDGs di Riau. Pemerintah provinsi Riau cukup berkomitmen terhadap agenda SDGs, namun kapasitas dan inisiatif kebijakannya masih minim dan terbatas. Penyusunan dan implementasi rencana aksi daerah untuk SDGs belum terintegrasi dan terkoordinasi secara optimal, terutama dalam hal inklusivitas dan keterlibatan aktor nonpemerintah

Kata Kunci: SDGs, Tata Kelola, Pemerintahan Daerah.

INTRODUCTION

Entering the 4th year of the Decade of Action (2020-2030) for the 2030 SDGs agenda initiated by the UN on September 25, 2015, in New York, there remains a glimmer of hope. However, progress towards the targets has been alarmingly slow. According to the report from the Independent Group of Scientists who compiled the Global SDGs Report 2023, an assessment of around 140 targets for which trend data is available shows that about half of these targets are off track, either moderately or severely, and more than 30 per cent show no movement or are regressing below the 2015 baseline. The implementation of the SDGs has not yet led to a significant global transformation, underscoring the need for global governance reforms that are more accommodating (Biermann et al., 2023). Ultimately, this serves as an alarm, calling for renewed commitment, solidarity, funding, and more concrete actions from all parties to fulfil the 2030 promise (United Nations, 2023).

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As a country also implementing the SDGs, Indonesia has become the most progressive upper-middle-income country in terms of SDGs achievement (Humas, 2023). Indonesia ranked 75th in SDGs implementation in 2023, a drastic improvement from 102nd place in 2019 (Bappenas, 2023). This improvement reflects, at the very least, the Indonesian government's commitment to achieving the SDGs by 2030. Glass et al. (2023) mention that the role of the government as an actor in achieving sustainable development goals is central to supporting and building inclusive and sustainable multi-stakeholder collaboration, which is key to the implementation of the SDGs. The role and involvement of non-governmental actors cannot be overlooked, but only when the government's stance and practices toward sustainable development are identified can the pattern of multi-stakeholder involvement in the 2030 SDGs agenda be visualized (Horn & Grugel 2018).

In addition to demonstrating a commitment to upholding global agreements, it must be acknowledged that the global challenges addressed through the SDGs agenda are indeed relevant to Indonesia's current development challenges (Bapenas, 2017). The 17 global goals were designed as a blueprint to achieve a better future for all. Presidential Regulation No. 59 of 2017 on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), dated July 4, 2017, serves as the initial foundation for pushing the fulfilment of the 2030 SDGs targets. The Indonesian government's response to adaptation and achievement strategies for SDGs continues to be rolled out and promoted through various platforms. Local governments have received special attention as a platform in efforts to achieve the 2030 SDGs. Each provincial-level local government must create a Regional Action Plan (RAD) for SDGs as a derivative of the national action plan to achieve the SDGs. To date, 32 out of 38 provinces in Indonesia have established RAD through Governor's Regulations as a form of commitment and implementation of the SDGs at the local level (Bappenas, 2023).

Local governments play a key role in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs (Reddy, 2016., Ansell et al., 2022., Kandpal & Okitasari, 2023). Therefore, localization in the planning and prioritization of the SDGs at the local government level needs to be continuously encouraged (Mangukiya & Sklarew, 2023). As a sub-national government entity closest to the central government, provincial governments can serve as epicentres to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development goals in their respective regions. The principle of deconcentration positions provincial governments as central government representatives to ensure that national interests in realizing the 2030 SDGs agenda are effectively localized, alongside their status as autonomous regions. This strategic role requires effort and seriousness through transforming governance institutions involving various parties. Breuer et al (2023) stated that no empirical evidence exists that a single institutional model can efficiently overcome the challenges of achieving the SDGs. They further emphasize that governance to achieve sustainable development goals requires four key determinants: high-level political leadership, horizontal and vertical integration, and societal inclusiveness (Breuer et al., 2023).

Local governments are better equipped to identify local needs and priorities and develop community-centred policies because of their proximity to the community (Hickmann, 2021, Bilsky et al., 2021, United Nations, 2024). There are not many studies on local governance efforts in accelerating sustainable development goals, as have been conducted by Bilsky et al. (2021), Sarkar et al. (2022), Ansell et al. (2022) and others. In this article, the author illustrates how local governance plays a role in accelerating the achievement of the 2030 development goals in the regions. The study focuses on governance at the provincial level of Indonesia's government. According to Government Regulation No. 33/2018, provincial governments led by governors may perform duties as central government representatives (GWPP). The provincial government of Riau became the first provincial government in Indonesia to successfully formulate a Regional Action Plan (RAD) for achieving regional development

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goals in 2018, established through Governor's Regulation No. 33/2018, in line with the initial policy mandate for SDGs implementation in Indonesia, Presidential Regulation No. 59/2017. Integrating the SDGs into regional planning and policies is an important step toward realizing the 2030 SDGs promise at the local level.

Riau's pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflects a commendable commitment, yet it also reveals notable governance inefficiencies that hinder progress. One example lies in the management of sustainable palm oil production, a key economic driver in the region. Despite its potential to align with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), a lack of coordination between local governments, smallholder farmers, and corporations has resulted in fragmented implementation. Empirical data from recent field studies indicate that only 40% of smallholder farmers have access to certified sustainable practices, largely due to inadequate training and financial support, These challenges underscore the critical need for integrated policy frameworks and capacity-building initiatives to enhance governance effectiveness and accelerate SDG achievement in Riau.

Another critical governance inefficiency is the inconsistency in implementing regional policies designed to support the SDGs. While Riau has adopted local development plans that align with national SDG targets, the lack of monitoring mechanisms undermines their effectiveness. Programs aimed at improving access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) often fail to reach marginalized communities due to limited inter-agency collaboration and unclear budget allocations. Recent data reveals that only 55% of the targeted rural households have benefited from these initiatives, with delays stemming from bureaucratic red tape and misaligned priorities between provincial and district-level authorities. This highlights a pressing need for streamlined governance practices and transparent monitoring systems to ensure equitable service delivery.

Governance inefficiencies in Riau are further exacerbated by limited public participation and accountability in decision-making processes. While public consultation is formally included in the regional planning framework, the involvement of community stakeholders often remains superficial. For example, during the formulation of environmental conservation policies linked to SDG 13 (Climate Action), local communities reported that their feedback on forest preservation was neither adequately recorded nor integrated into final policy documents. Interviews with civil society representatives reveal a growing trust deficit between policymakers and citizens, fueled by a lack of transparency in project outcomes and budget utilization. Addressing these issues requires fostering a participatory governance model that emphasizes inclusivity, transparency, and mutual accountability.

Institutional capacity and resource limitations also contribute significantly to governance inefficiencies in achieving the SDGs. Many government agencies in Riau face a shortage of skilled personnel and financial resources, which restricts their ability to implement large-scale development programs effectively. For instance, efforts to promote renewable energy adoption (SDG 7) have been constrained by inadequate funding for infrastructure development and training programs. Data from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources indicate that renewable energy accounts for less than 10% of Riau's energy mix, despite ambitious targets. Strengthening institutional capacity through targeted investments in training, technology, and inter-agency coordination is crucial to overcoming these obstacles.

Riau's local government must adopt a more integrated and adaptive governance approach to address these challenges, and this includes establishing multi-stakeholder platforms to align regional policies with SDG objectives, enhancing data collection systems to monitor progress, and prioritizing resource allocation toward high-impact projects. Fostering partnerships with private sectors and international organizations can provide technical expertise and funding to bridge capacity gaps. By

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addressing these governance inefficiencies, Riau can significantly enhance its trajectory toward achieving the SDGs and serve as a model for other regions in Indonesia.

The aim of this article is to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of local governance in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the provincial government level, with a specific focus on Riau, Indonesia. This research seeks to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the governance framework, uncovering critical factors that either support or hinder progress toward the SDGs, resource allocation, and community participation, the study provides a comprehensive assessment of how local governance mechanisms operate in Riau by examining policy implementation, inter-agency coordination.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology used in this study employs a qualitative approach. This approach allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon and focus of the study more substantively and contextually to answer the research questions. Data was collected through documentation of various policy materials and reports related to the SDGs, particularly in Riau Province, literature studies on the SDGs, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders involved in implementing the SDGs in Riau. These stakeholders included the Riau Provincial Bappeda Litbang (Regional Development Planning and Research Agency), the Head of the SDGs Coordination Team for Riau Province, and several actors from other non-governmental communities such as academics, the private sector, and civil society organizations. Qualitative data analysis was conducted interactively (Miles et al., 2014) by reducing the collected data and aiming to select and construct a coherent narrative. Subsequently, the data presentation stage was carried out to explore the interrelations and connections between data and information. Finally, the data verification stage was conducted using triangulation techniques involving repeated cross-checking and comparing the collected data, leading to conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integration and Harmonization of Regional Policies in SDGs Implementation

The central government has encouraged local governments to implement and localize the SDGs 2030 agenda according to local potential and needs. The experience of implementing the MDGs from 2000 to 2015, which brought significant positive changes globally and for Indonesia, has made the global SDGs 2030 agenda widely accepted and supported by various countries (Sutopo et al., 2014). The issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 59/2017 marked the beginning of regional governments in Indonesia being encouraged to support the SDGs by directing various policies that accommodate the goals of the SDGs 2030 in their areas.

In relation to the SDGs, provincial governments in Indonesia, based on Law No. 23/2014, have the authority to govern their regions based on the principles of decentralization and deconcentration. The deconcentration principle designates the governor as the central government's representative, responsible for managing part of the central government's affairs delegated to the provinces. On the other hand, the principle of decentralization gives provincial governments the authority to manage their own governmental affairs and the interests of local communities as autonomous regions. This strategic position enables provincial governments to act as a bridge to the central government while also initiating the

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localization and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda in policy-making and implementation within their territories.

Local governments often face challenges and obstacles that can hinder their ability to implement the SDGs. A lack of capacity, resources, funding, and insufficient decentralization and empowerment remain weaknesses in local governance (Sarkar et al., 2022). Additionally, managing diverse actors, imperfect information flows, and a lack of trust among stakeholders are also complex challenges for local governments (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2019). Therefore, local governments need support from higher levels of government and international organizations to build their capacity and access necessary resources (Bisogno et al., 2023,Hickmann, 2021).

The support of international organizations has been one of the key aspects driving the adoption and implementation of SDGs in Riau Province. As a result, Riau Province became a pioneer in Indonesia by completing the Regional Action Plan (RAD) for the SDGs in 2018, and it has even become a model for other regions. The United Nations, through UNDP, which focuses on supporting the development of developing countries, ensured that this global agenda reached the local government level, including Riau Province. Through the *Tanoto Foundation* an Indonesian philanthropic organization, UNDP provided approximately USD 220,000 over two years starting in 2016 to support Riau Province's government in implementing the SDGs in the region. The issuance of Governor Regulation No. 33/18 on the Regional Action Plan (RAD) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2017-2019, dated June 5, 2018, was a tangible result of the support from non-government stakeholders. This regulation marked an important step in the implementation of the SDGs in Riau, highlighting the province's commitment to realizing the SDGs agenda at that time.

Since the issuance of Presidential Regulation (Perpres) 59/2017, the central government, through various derivative policy products, has also continuously encouraged regions to adopt the SDGs agenda in every policy, particularly in development planning documents. For example, Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation (Permendagri) 86/2017 regulates the mechanism of regional development planning, including encouraging regions to consider environmentally conscious and sustainable principles, which are integral to the formulation of regional development plans. The manifestation of these two principles, among others, is the production of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (KLHS) document, which contains SDG indicators. The formulation and implementation of KLHS eventually promote the integration of SDG implementation with regional development planning documents. Regarding the integration of SDGs into regional development planning documents, the Riau Province RAD narrative for 2017-2019 mentions that the Riau Province RPJMD 2014-2019 has identified 241 SDG 2030 indicators, with the result that 31 indicators (12.86%) have been adopted (matched), 62 indicators (25.73%) are close (proxy), and 148 indicators (61.41%) are not present in the RPJMD document and need further development.

Following the end of the 2017-2019 Riau Province RAD SDGs, which was formulated using a tagging method according to the ongoing RPJMD document that also concluded, ideally, in line with Perpres 59/2017, the regional RAD SDGs should be completed before the new RPJMD period begins, as the RAD SDGs document serves as input for the RPJMD and RKPD documents (Sofianto, 2019). However, with the conclusion of the 2014-2019 Riau Province RPJMD, the formulation of the RAD TPB/SDGs experienced a significant delay, meaning it was not formally included in the 2019-2024 Riau RPJMD document. In this case, the Riau Province 2019-2024 TPB/SDGs coordination team was only formed in 2020 through Governor's Decree Number 1002/VI/2020. The formulation of the 2022-2024 Riau Province RAD TPB/SDGs was resumed after the issuance of a new Presidential Regulation regarding TPB/SDGs implementation, Number 111/2022. This indicates that the mainstreaming of the SDGs has not yet received serious attention at the local level, where, despite being designed as an inclusive and participatory

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global framework, political realities often lead to situations where the government has a greater influence in determining the direction and outcomes of these initiatives.

Integrated policies will facilitate the implementation of the SDGs at all levels of government if done properly. Vertical and horizontal policy harmonization certainly requires strong effort and political will from policymakers at both the central and regional levels. This is crucial, especially in facing the broad challenges of the SDGs. In Riau Province, capacity and understanding constraints in the implementation of SDGs remain significant obstacles for local actors. However, regional government actors have demonstrated a deep awareness of this and have opened participatory space for other stakeholders.

Strengthening Communication and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

A participatory environment in the implementation of SDGs is needed not only in the preparation of development plans, but multi-stakeholder commitment and collaboration are required at every stage, including monitoring and evaluation. By building inclusive and interactive participation mechanisms and spaces, public enthusiasm will emerge to achieve development success (Hofer et al., 2024). Multi-stakeholder platforms and dialogue processes are essential for fostering partnerships in achieving the SDGs (Haywood et al., 2019, Weiand et al., 2021). In Riau, SDG governance is carried out through an institutionalized multi-stakeholder platform established by the government. The formation of the Riau TPB/SDGs coordination team has involved various non-governmental stakeholder partners. Riau Governor's Decrees No: Kpts. 187/II/2017 and Kpts. 1002 / VI / 2020 are evidence that consecutively show the composition and involvement of non-governmental actors such as philanthropy, academia, and the private sector, which are claimed to be actively and inclusively engaged. In the narrative of the Riau TPB RAD 2022-2024, the roles of these actors are described as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Roles of Each Actor in the Implementation of SDGs in Riau

Platform	Role
Government/Regional Government	Develop policies and regulations, planning and budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and communication of results.
Regional House of Representatives	Oversee the budget, implementation, and supervision of TPB/SDGs.
Civil Society Organizations and Media	Socialize and promote TPB/SDGs, raise public awareness, facilitate programs and their implementation, and participate in monitoring and evaluation.
Philanthropists and Private Sector	Advocate among business actors and the business sector, facilitate and implement programs, build community capacity, and provide financial support.
Academics and Experts	The core function of higher education lies in the Tri Dharma of universities: education, research, and community service, which can support SDG implementation.

Source: RAD TPB Riau, 2022-2024

However, stakeholder mapping in the implementation of SDGs in Riau is still carried out on a limited scale, which shows a significant room for improvement. The importance of involving various parties in this process cannot be ignored, as each stakeholder has a crucial role in achieving sustainable goals. By expanding the scope of stakeholder mapping and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships in the

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implementation of SDGs, it can enhance the capacity of regional governments in utilizing limited resources (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2019).

Schleifer et al. (2022) argue for the need to link private authority with public policy instruments to enhance institutional synergy and regulatory effectiveness in achieving sustainable development goals. In practice, common barriers to effective stakeholder engagement include fragmented governance frameworks, power imbalances, and a lack of meaningful engagement (Weiand et al., 2021,Gusmão Caiado et al., 2018). Similar governance issues also occur in the acceleration of SDGs in Riau Province. Fragmented governance among government actors makes inclusivity difficult to establish. A lack of trust between actors, understanding, and minimal coordination among stakeholders reinforce the ongoing disparities. Governance and non-governmental actor involvement in SDG implementation are not well-represented, and this can be identified, for example, in the Riau Province 2022-2024 RAD TPB/SDGs document, where matrices 3 and 4, which contain the action plans of non-governmental actors, are entirely missing and do not clearly explain the process of drafting and involving non-governmental actors.

Unlike the coordination between non-government actors, coordination among local government actors tends to be easier to carry out. This is mainly because of the hierarchical structure and clear decision-making mechanisms, allowing the provincial government to take a central role in directing and aligning the efforts of district/city governments. The provincial government has the authority to push and facilitate district/city areas in drafting SDG action plan matrices, facilitate the flow of information and resources, and monitor and evaluate progress.

Identifying and merging regions with similar issues has become one of the strategies for accelerating SDGs in Riau. For example, the highest poverty levels occurring in Pelalawan Regency, Meranti Regency, and Indragiri Hilir Regency have made them the initial target areas for poverty eradication programs at the start of SDG implementation. The strategy of grouping regions with similar SDG performance can help identify strengths and weaknesses, encourage targeted sustainability actions and collaborations (Wu et al., 2022).

The regional government has carried out communication efforts with the public and building partnerships with various parties, particularly through the Regional Planning, Development, Research and Development Agency (Bappedalitbang) of Riau Province. One significant initiative is the Riau Youth Network, which was launched in 2019 and has been quite active in spreading messages related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. Although several companies and local communities have attempted to disseminate SDG messages, these efforts remain small-scale and not well-coordinated. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen partnerships among various actors on a larger scale, in line with the spirit of the SDGs as a collective movement. Government and non-government actors must truly understand the challenges at hand and step up their efforts in improving the quality of cooperation to accelerate the achievement of SDGs in Riau.

Encouraging Data Strengthening and Improvement

Data is crucial in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The lack of accurate and up-to-date data, especially regarding the conditions of vulnerable groups, is one of the main challenges in SDG implementation. Stigma and discrimination often hinder inclusivity, highlighting the need for better data to address these issues (Ab et al., 2020). The development and improvement of data quality is urgent and fundamental in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating sustainable development policies. Valid and up-to-date data are key to identifying priority areas, allocating resources efficiently, and tracking progress towards the set targets. Transformation in data management and e-governance initiatives can

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accelerate localization and achievement of the SDGs (ElMassah & Mohieldin, 2020). Using digital technology and innovative strategies can enhance transparency, efficiency, and public participation, all of which are vital for the effectiveness of SDG implementation (Alcaide-Muñoz et al., 2022, Sydorchuk et al., 2024).

Data management is currently a general concern for the government to ensure the improvement of the quality and quantity of integrated data. On a national scale, the launch of the sdgs.bappenas.go.id website and the update of the SDGs Dashboard version 3.0, which is a website platform for visualizing and analyzing national-level SDG achievements data, by Bappenas at the end of 2022 with the support of UNICEF, marks significant progress in data strengthening and utilization.

Information technology at the local level enables more efficient collective action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The collaborative use of the web provides wider access to data and information to stakeholders in need. The best practice Dashboard has also been developed to collect best practices in the SDGs and share data and information on SDG documents in Indonesia (see Table 2).

Table 2. Utilization of the Official SDGs Dashboard Website in Indonesia

Actor	Benefits
Government/Local Government	(a) Monitoring and evaluating the progress of SDG achievement; (b) Identifying indicators that need accelerated efforts; (c) Identifying regions and groups that require special attention; and (d) Serving as a reference for policy-making and setting program/activity priorities.
Business Actors and Philanthropy	(a) Mapping programs/activities that support the SDGs; (b) Identifying priorities for program and funding collaboration; and (c) Advocacy for other business actors.
Civil Society Organizations	(a) A medium for advocacy and communication to increase public understanding of the SDGs; (b) An instrument for monitoring the implementation of SDGs at the national and local levels; and (c) A reference for program/activity planning.
Universities/Academics	A preliminary reference in preparing in-depth policy papers/policy briefs for policy recommendations and for developing indicator data.

Sources: Bappenas, 2023

The existing information platform has been a significant step forward, but further improvement and development are still required to address the limitations of current data and information. These limitations pose challenges in implementing and tracking the progress of SDGs both nationally and locally. Therefore, it is important to conduct periodic systematic reviews, accompanied by quantitative assessments, to monitor achievements and identify critical issues in development. Studies by Huan et al., (2021) and Allen et al., (2018) emphasize the importance of this process in ensuring that the steps taken in the implementation of SDGs are on the right track and can significantly impact sustainable development.

On the other hand, as a source of data reference, the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) plays a crucial role in supporting the achievement of SDGs at the global, national, and local levels. BPS is responsible for providing statistical data for some SDG indicators and developing statistical activities to support the provision of SDG indicator data that is not yet available while also encouraging stakeholders to participate in providing data and information that supports the availability of SDG indicator data (BPS Riau, 2023). A total of 289 indicators require data availability, with 67 indicators prepared by BPS, 175 indicators under

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the responsibility of ministries/agencies, and 47 indicators jointly managed by BPS and the ministries/agencies (Bappenas, 2023).

Strengthening data availability is one of the key efforts to support the achievement of the SDGs. The data availability status for assessing SDG indicators in Riau Province can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Data Availability of SDG Indicators in Riau Province

SDG Pillar Description	Number of Indicators with Available Data	Indicators without Available Data	Total Indicators
Social Development Pillar (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)	53 (60.92%)	34 (39.08%)	87
Economic Development Pillar (Goals 7, 8, 9, 10, and 17)	29 (32.58%)	60 (67.42%)	89
Environmental Pillar (Goals 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15)	11 (14.29%)	66 (85.71%)	77
Law and Governance Pillar (Goal 16)	20 (55.56%)	16 (44.44%)	36
Total	113	176	289

Source: Bapeddalitbang Riau Province, 2024, processed data

Table 3 shows that the availability of data in assessing the achievement of SDG indicators in Riau Province is still very limited, with less than half (±39%) of the data available. This issue is also present on a global and national scale. The lack of data hinders stakeholders' ability to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. Without accurate and up-to-date data, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of implemented interventions and plan better strategies moving forward. Cooperation between governmental and non-governmental institutions needs to be enhanced to ensure a smooth and transparent flow of information. Moreover, information technology can be an innovative solution to overcome data availability issues. Given the limited data availability, the assessment of SDG achievements with 113 available indicators in Riau Province is shown in Diagram 1.
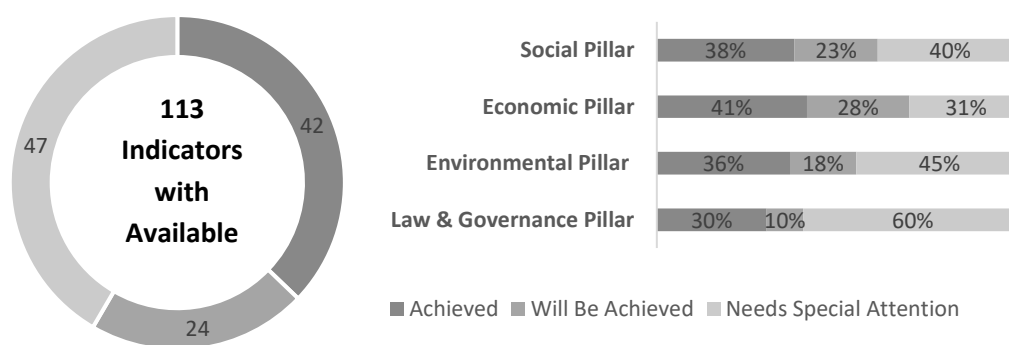
Diagram 1. Percentage of SDG Achievements in Riau Province Based on Available Data

Source: Bapedalitbang Riau Province, 2024, processed data

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The available data shows that most indicators fall into the "needs special attention" category, totalling 47 indicators (42%). Only 42 indicators (37%) have reached their targets. With this situation, the Riau provincial government and relevant stakeholders still face significant challenges in achieving the indicators for which data is available. Furthermore, efforts to provide and strengthen data need to be encouraged through more structured and measurable partnerships. These steps align with initiatives already started by the central government at both the national and global levels, aimed at improving the quality of data collection and analysis of SDG indicator performance, thus providing better insights for decision-making and strategic planning in the future.

Political Support and Innovative Financing

Innovative funding for the implementation of SDGs in Indonesia has made significant progress, one example being the launch of the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF). This step demonstrates a serious effort to integrate and coordinate funding sources for SDGs at the national level, alleviating the burden on the State Budget (APBN). Indonesia has also integrated financial aspects into the sustainability paradigm, including the issuance of the first SDGs Bond in Asia, which was recognized as the best bond in 2021 (Budiantoro, 2024). Initiatives like the SDG Financing Hub and SDG bonds are some examples of financing instruments introduced by the central government, reflecting the government's dedication to achieving global goals (Bappenas, 2023). This framework is also expected to directly influence SDG financing mechanisms at the regional level directly, and the coordination between local governments, philanthropic entities, and non-governmental actors, though still limited, shows potential for expanded collaboration to support SDG achievement.

Political will from local governments and the involvement of SDG actors are crucial factors in achieving SDG goals. The Riau Provincial Government has recognized that without strengthening cooperation between various parties, including non-governmental actors, the achievement of the SDGs will not be realized. In this context, the Research and Development Agency of Riau Province initiates, communicates, and coordinates collaboration and synergy for SDG implementation in the region. However, an organized collaborative funding mechanism for SDGs has yet to be established at the local level. Awareness and understanding of the funding format in SDG governance in Riau remain limited. This is understandable, given that the SDG funding format is still being developed on a global and national scale and requires time and meaningful involvement from all parties. This problem aligns with various studies on local-level SDG implementation that require support from national governments and global backing (Bisogno et al., 2023, Hickmann, 2021) especially from a funding perspective.

The SDG achievement reporting format at the regional level can only accommodate local government financing interventions integrated into the annual Regional Work Plan (RKP). The reporting model merely involves tagging activities that align with SDG indicators. This approach will not effectively accommodate the interests of the SDGs. Massive funding planning that involves non-governmental actors needs serious attention from the Riau Provincial Government. The large potential of various philanthropic organizations and the private sector in Riau Province can support the SDGs if coordinated and managed optimally. SDG funding is not solely a financial issue; sharing roles and other potential resources from various actors can be maximized by creating clear schemes and measurable goals; such schemes cannot be established without the support of strong local political leadership aligned with the collective spirit of accelerating SDG achievement in Riau.

The private sector in Riau although contributing through corporate social responsibility (CSR), tends to focus on short-term projects without adequate coordination with local governments. Civil society

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organizations also play an important role in advocating for environmental and gender equality issues but often face bureaucratic barriers that slow down their collaboration with the government. To accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, a more inclusive coordination mechanism is needed, such as a multi-stakeholder dialogue forum that can ensure that the needs and voices of various community groups are accommodated in policy and program implementation. The local government in Riau has also attempted to involve the community through development planning meetings (Musrenbang) as a platform to absorb local aspirations. The effectiveness of Musrenbang in achieving the SDGs is often limited to formalities, with minimal follow-up to input provided by the community. This is exacerbated by the lack of representation of vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and indigenous peoples, in the decision-making process. In addition, private sector involvement in supporting the SDGs is often focused on specific sectors, such as energy and the environment, without a holistic approach that includes broader social and economic development.

Several companies in the plantation sector have launched forest conservation and ecosystem restoration programs as part of their environmental responsibilities. These programs often run separately from government initiatives, creating overlaps and a lack of optimal synergy. Community organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities play a significant role in raising awareness and advocacy related to the SDGs, such as through mangrove conservation campaigns or women's empowerment training, they often face limited resources and bureaucratic obstacles, making it difficult to partner strategically with the government.

The Riau regional government has launched several initiatives to support the achievement of the SDGs, although the results still show gaps. One significant initiative is the mangrove forest rehabilitation program to support SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Data from the Riau Environment and Forestry Service noted that by 2023, around 5,000 hectares of mangroves had been rehabilitated in the coastal areas of Riau, especially in Bengkalis Regency and the Meranti Islands. This program involves collaboration between the local government, community organizations such as the Lestari Forest Foundation, and the private sector, including oil and gas companies that contribute through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. The effectiveness of the program faces major challenges. A case study in Sungai Apit Village showed that although local communities were involved in the mangrove rehabilitation process, lack of access to technical training and supporting resources hampered the program's sustainability.

Another initiative that supports SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) is the clean water provision program for rural areas in the Pelalawan Regency. According to data from the Riau Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the coverage of clean water access in rural areas increased from 45% in 2019 to 62% in 2023. This increase was primarily supported by collaboration between local governments and international organizations such as UNICEF. Challenges remain, especially in ensuring the availability of clean water during the dry season, which affects areas with limited water infrastructure. These two case studies show that despite significant efforts to support the SDGs in Riau, cross-sector collaboration, technical training for communities, and resolution of conflicts of interest need to be improved to ensure sustainable and inclusive outcomes; the Riau government can be more effective in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs at the local level by strengthening coordination and resource allocation.

More systematic efforts are needed to build cross-sector partnerships to address these challenges. The government can strengthen the capacity of community organizations through training and more sustainable funding. Policy incentives that encourage companies to contribute to specific SDG targets can facilitate collaboration with the private sector. This inclusive approach will not only increase program

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effectiveness but also ensure that the achievement of the SDGs in Riau reflects the needs and aspirations of all levels of society.

CONCLUSION

The study results show that local governance in accelerating SDGs in Riau has not been effectively implemented. The Riau provincial government has shown considerable commitment to the SDG agenda but with limited capacity and policy initiatives. Drafting and implementing regional action plans for SDGs has not yet reached optimal integration and coordination, particularly involving non-governmental actors. Strengthening inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships must be continuously encouraged to support providing and improving data quality, innovative financing, and the localization of SDGs as a collective movement to accelerate its achievement in Riau.

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