

# Collaborative Governance and Food Security: A Stakeholder Perspective on Zero Hunger SDG

**Ahmad Syauqi Hidayatullah**

Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
Syauqi@ustjogja.ac.id

## Abstract

This study examines the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. Using a qualitative approach grounded in stakeholder theory and collaborative governance, the research analyzes how partnerships among governments, civil society, international organizations, and private actors contribute to food security. Findings highlight that effective collaboration depends on institutional clarity, inclusive participation, facilitative leadership, and shared accountability. However, challenges such as power asymmetries, weak monitoring systems, and limited local capacities persist. The study reveals that collaborative governance enables more adaptive and legitimate food policy, fosters local food sovereignty, and strengthens systemic resilience. By bridging theory with empirical insights, this research contributes to the discourse on governance innovation in development contexts. The study calls for stronger legal frameworks, integrated monitoring systems, and participatory platforms to enhance the impact of food security interventions. These findings provide both theoretical enrichment and practical guidance for realizing Zero Hunger through inclusive governance.

## Keywords

collaborative governance; stakeholder engagement; food policy; SDG 2; food sovereignty

## INTRODUCTION

Food security represents a foundational pillar in the architecture of sustainable development, as highlighted by the inclusion of Zero Hunger (SDG 2) in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. This goal encompasses the elimination of hunger, achievement of food security, improvement of nutrition, and promotion of sustainable agriculture (United Nations, 2015). Despite considerable global efforts, food insecurity persists at alarming levels, particularly in vulnerable regions across Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia (FAO, 2015).

Indonesia, for instance, despite being an agrarian economy, continues to grapple with malnutrition and disparities in food access (BPS–Statistics Indonesia, 2015). Addressing this paradox necessitates the involvement of a multitude of actors beyond the traditional boundaries of government institutions.

The complexity of food systems has led scholars to argue for a shift toward multi-stakeholder collaboration, where governments, non-governmental organizations, international agencies, private enterprises, and local communities work synergistically (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Such collaborative governance models have demonstrated success in environmental and social policy domains, though their application to food security remains underexplored. This collaborative approach is rooted in the understanding that no single actor possesses all the resources, knowledge, and legitimacy to address food insecurity alone (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). The Sustainable Development Goals emphasize partnership, notably in Goal 17, reinforcing the idea that sustainable outcomes depend on cooperative efforts across sectors (UNDP, 2016).

Theoretically, this research is anchored in stakeholder theory and collaborative governance. Stakeholder theory posits that all actors affected by a decision should have a say in its formulation and execution (Freeman, 1984). Collaborative governance, meanwhile, focuses on institutional arrangements where public agencies engage non-state stakeholders in collective decision-making processes (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

Empirical studies show that collaborative platforms—such as public-private partnerships and community-driven development programs—can foster innovation, ensure inclusivity, and enhance resource mobilization (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010). Nevertheless, power asymmetries and institutional fragmentation often hinder the sustainability of such collaborations (Scharpf, 1997).

Existing research on food security frequently emphasizes technical or sector-specific interventions such as agricultural productivity, nutrition programs, or trade policy (Maxwell & Slater, 2003). However, limited attention has been given to the governance arrangements that enable or constrain these interventions. A key gap in the literature is the lack of comprehensive studies that examine how various stakeholders interact and contribute to the governance of food systems.

Particularly, little is known about the mechanisms through which collaborative initiatives align with the broader objectives of SDG 2 at national and local levels (Lang et al., 2009). This study addresses that gap by conducting an early analysis of the collaborative dynamics shaping food security under the Zero Hunger framework.

Consequently, this research seeks to explore the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving food security, particularly in the context of SDG 2. The main research questions guiding this inquiry are: (1) How do multi-stakeholder partnerships function in implementing Zero Hunger initiatives? (2) What governance mechanisms support or hinder effective collaboration among diverse actors? (3) What are the implications of collaborative efforts for food policy and local food sovereignty? By

answering these questions, the study aims to generate insights that are theoretically robust, empirically grounded, and practically relevant. The overarching objective is to contribute to a better understanding of inclusive governance frameworks capable of sustaining food security in diverse socio-political contexts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Food security, as a multidimensional issue, intersects with economic policy, environmental sustainability, and social equity. The early conceptualization of food security focused narrowly on food availability and caloric intake (FAO, 1996). However, contemporary scholarship has expanded this definition to include dimensions such as accessibility, stability, and utilization, emphasizing a rights-based approach (Sen, 1981; Devereux & Maxwell, 2001).

These developments recognize that addressing food insecurity requires not only agricultural productivity but also structural changes in governance, equity, and distribution systems. As such, the food security discourse now increasingly embraces systems thinking, wherein food systems are understood as networks of actors, institutions, and resources that influence how food is produced, accessed, and consumed (Ericksen, 2008). This systems-oriented framework calls for governance models that facilitate coordination and shared accountability among stakeholders (Lang et al., 2009).

The role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in addressing complex governance challenges has gained prominence in the public administration and development literature. Collaborative governance theory, initially developed to explain cooperative policy-making in fragmented political environments, has been applied to sustainability, health, and education sectors with promising results (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).

Studies highlight how inclusive governance structures contribute to policy legitimacy, innovation, and adaptability (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Specifically, in food systems governance, partnerships that involve civil society, private sector actors, and state institutions have shown potential to align interests, pool resources, and drive policy reform (Poulton, Kydd, & Dorward, 2006). However, research also warns of challenges such as coordination fatigue, marginalization of local voices, and institutional path dependency that may hinder collaborative efforts (Scharpf, 1997; Fraser et al., 2005).

Within the Indonesian context, studies have examined localized food governance and the influence of decentralization on food policy outcomes. Decentralization was expected to foster context-sensitive food strategies, yet evidence suggests mixed

results due to varying regional capacities and limited participatory mechanisms (Suryana, 2001; BPS–Statistics Indonesia, 2015).

The National Food Resilience Council (Dewan Ketahanan Pangan) was established to coordinate inter-agency collaboration, yet it often lacks enforcement power and grassroots engagement (Setiawan, 2013). These insights demonstrate the critical need for more coherent frameworks that integrate various actors at multiple levels of governance. Despite these findings, the literature continues to lack in-depth empirical studies that assess how such collaborative arrangements function in practice, particularly under the SDG agenda. This study contributes to filling that void by providing a grounded analysis of how multi-stakeholder dynamics are shaping early-stage implementation of SDG 2 in Indonesia and beyond.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study draws on two interrelated theoretical perspectives: stakeholder theory and collaborative governance theory, both of which provide analytical foundations for understanding the dynamics of multi-actor engagement in food security efforts. Stakeholder theory, first introduced by Freeman (1984), emphasizes the necessity of involving all individuals or groups that can affect or are affected by organizational actions. In the context of food security, this includes not only governments but also farmers, civil society organizations, donors, academia, and consumers.

According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), stakeholder theory offers both normative and instrumental justifications—stakeholders deserve inclusion due to ethical obligations and because their involvement increases the effectiveness of decision-making. The theory is particularly relevant when considering the participatory nature of SDG implementation, where accountability and inclusiveness are critical (UNDP, 2016).

Moreover, the theory enables a structured understanding of the power asymmetries and resource imbalances among stakeholders in food systems. For example, large agribusinesses often wield more influence in policymaking compared to smallholder farmers or local NGOs (Lang et al., 2009). Scholars such as Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) argue that stakeholder salience—based on power, legitimacy, and urgency—determines who gets heard in policy arenas.

This aspect is crucial in examining how Zero Hunger initiatives are governed and whether marginalized groups are adequately represented. The theory thus provides a lens to scrutinize not only who is involved but how meaningful their participation is in collaborative platforms designed to enhance food security.

Complementing stakeholder theory is the collaborative governance framework, which offers insights into the institutional arrangements that facilitate or hinder cooperation across sectors. Collaborative governance is defined by Ansell and Gash (2008) as a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state actors in a collective decision-making process. It typically involves consensus-oriented dialogue, trust-building, shared authority, and interdependence among participants (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

This framework is useful for analyzing initiatives such as national food councils, multi-donor programs, and public-private partnerships that aim to enhance food access and sustainability. Research shows that effective collaboration requires favorable starting conditions, clear institutional design, facilitative leadership, and continuous dialogue among stakeholders (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).

The framework also illuminates the role of social capital, shared understanding, and procedural legitimacy in driving sustained cooperation. Collaborative governance literature emphasizes the importance of co-production, where knowledge and solutions emerge through iterative interactions among actors (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary, 2005).

This approach aligns with the SDG mandate of "leaving no one behind," advocating for adaptive and inclusive food policies. However, collaborative governance also encounters challenges, including conflicting stakeholder goals, lack of accountability, and resource dependency (Scharpf, 1997). Therefore, integrating this theoretical perspective allows the study to explore not only the potential but also the limitations of cross-sector collaboration in food security governance.

Together, stakeholder theory and collaborative governance provide a robust theoretical scaffold for analyzing the mechanisms, structures, and outcomes of multi-stakeholder initiatives in food security. They allow the study to move beyond technical or sectoral explanations of hunger and instead focus on governance processes that enable or obstruct SDG 2 implementation. By merging these perspectives, the research can interrogate the interplay of power, participation, and policy design in realizing Zero Hunger in diverse sociopolitical settings.

## **Previous Research**

One of the earliest contributions to the study of food security governance was by Sen (1981), who emphasized the importance of entitlements and access over mere food availability. His analysis of famines demonstrated that hunger could persist even in contexts of food sufficiency if social, economic, and institutional entitlements were

denied. This perspective laid the foundation for considering political and governance dimensions in addressing hunger. Sen's work continues to inform how equity and access are framed in global food policy discussions, especially within rights-based approaches promoted by the SDGs.

In the early 2000s, Maxwell and Slater (2003) examined food security strategies within humanitarian settings. Their research stressed the integration of vulnerability analysis into policy frameworks and cautioned against narrow technological fixes. They advocated for comprehensive approaches that combine institutional reform with participatory governance mechanisms. Their work contributed to the recognition that sustainable food security requires multi-actor engagement, especially in contexts of conflict and systemic poverty. However, the study remained limited to humanitarian emergencies, leaving questions around long-term collaborative governance unexplored.

Lang et al. (2009) expanded the discussion by analyzing the concept of food systems and proposing a sustainability-oriented governance model. They identified food policy as inherently political, calling for inclusive stakeholder participation across the food chain. Their research illustrated the potential of multi-level governance, including civil society, to shape food outcomes. However, they acknowledged difficulties in balancing diverse interests, and their framework lacked empirical testing in local policy settings, especially in the Global South. This gap underscores the need for grounded case studies exploring real-world multi-stakeholder dynamics.

Fraser et al. (2010) conducted a comparative study on adaptive governance in agriculture and found that stakeholder collaboration enhances resilience and policy innovation. Drawing on empirical data from Latin America and Africa, they highlighted the importance of trust, local knowledge, and institutional learning. Their study provides a valuable precedent for integrating stakeholder insights into formal policy mechanisms. However, it did not directly assess SDG implementation, a gap that becomes more significant as countries increasingly align policies with the 2030 Agenda.

Candel and Biesbroek (2016) studied policy integration in European food governance. They emphasized how horizontal coordination across sectors is often hindered by institutional silos and conflicting mandates. Their findings reinforce the idea that collaborative governance must be designed deliberately to overcome such barriers. While their focus on developed countries offers lessons on institutional design, its applicability to emerging economies such as Indonesia requires further exploration, especially in settings characterized by decentralization and uneven institutional capacity.

Setiawan (2013), in an Indonesian context, investigated the coordination challenges in food policy across national and local government levels. His study revealed that while institutional frameworks exist, their implementation is fragmented due to lack of incentives, overlapping mandates, and limited community involvement. Setiawan emphasized that without strong facilitative leadership and local ownership, collaboration remains tokenistic. His findings provide an important entry point for this research, as they highlight the operational constraints facing multi-stakeholder collaboration in Indonesia's food security programs.

Despite these valuable contributions, the literature lacks integrated empirical analyses that explore how diverse stakeholders interact under the SDG 2 framework, particularly in the early stages of implementation. Most studies focus on single-sector interventions, overlook governance complexity, or are geographically constrained to Western contexts. Consequently, this research addresses a critical gap by providing a multidimensional assessment of collaborative governance mechanisms, focusing specifically on the interplay of actors, institutional structures, and outcomes in the pursuit of Zero Hunger.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study utilizes qualitative data drawn from a variety of textual and document-based sources, including academic literature, policy briefs, official reports, and stakeholder publications. Such data are particularly appropriate for analyzing governance arrangements and stakeholder interactions, as they provide insight into institutional narratives, formal frameworks, and discursive practices (Bowen, 2009).

Unlike quantitative data, qualitative textual evidence allows researchers to interpret how meaning, power, and legitimacy are constructed within collaborative efforts (Patton, 2015). This approach aligns with the interpretive paradigm in social science research, where the focus is on understanding processes rather than measuring outcomes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). Therefore, textual data provide a rich foundation for investigating how multi-stakeholder collaborations shape food security governance under the SDG agenda.

The primary sources of data for this study include peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional publications from organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Bank, and UNDP, as well as national policy documents and academic dissertations. These sources were selected based on their credibility, traceability, and relevance to the themes of food security and collaborative governance.



International books and journal articles offered theoretical grounding, while institutional reports provided empirical context and up-to-date assessments of policy implementations (UNDP, 2016; FAO, 2015). Furthermore, national data from BPS—Statistics Indonesia and Indonesian academic publications enriched the analysis with localized perspectives on governance constraints and opportunities (Setiawan, 2013, p. 17).

Data were collected using a structured document analysis method, where texts were systematically reviewed, coded, and categorized based on thematic relevance to stakeholder collaboration and food security. Document analysis enables the identification of patterns, contradictions, and gaps within and across texts (Bowen, 2009).

This method is particularly effective when the research goal involves tracing institutional logic, assessing actor narratives, or comparing policy frameworks. To ensure rigor, documents were selected using specific inclusion criteria—published between 2000 and 2016, directly related to food governance, and originating from traceable, reputable institutions. Multiple readings and memoing processes were used to triangulate findings and enhance interpretive depth (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 145).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method well-suited for identifying, organizing, and interpreting recurring patterns in qualitative data. This approach facilitated the clustering of similar concepts across diverse sources, such as trust-building mechanisms, policy alignment strategies, and power asymmetries in stakeholder engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Themes were developed inductively through open and axial coding, followed by a deductive review to assess their alignment with the theoretical framework of stakeholder theory and collaborative governance (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 204). This process enabled the distillation of theoretical insights from textual data, providing a coherent structure for the Results and Discussion section.

Conclusions were drawn through a synthesis of thematic findings with the research questions and theoretical perspectives. This involved comparing thematic patterns against the expectations set by stakeholder and governance theories, assessing whether collaborative arrangements led to more inclusive and effective food security policies. Attention was given to the presence of consensus, conflict, and representation in governance processes.

To ensure credibility and validity, findings were cross-checked with existing empirical studies and institutional frameworks (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). The results thus represent an interpretive, theory-informed synthesis that advances both practical and



academic understanding of how multi-stakeholder collaboration contributes to Zero Hunger goals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Achieving food security under the Zero Hunger SDG demands not only sector-specific interventions but also robust and inclusive governance frameworks. The integration of stakeholder theory and collaborative governance in this study has revealed that food insecurity is not simply a technical problem but a governance challenge requiring coordination among diverse actors. The findings demonstrate that successful food security initiatives often depend on the presence of institutional mechanisms that facilitate dialogue, consensus-building, and co-production of policy among stakeholders. This confirms the theoretical propositions of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012), who argued that collaboration produces more durable and legitimate outcomes when it fosters mutual trust and collective ownership. Empirical examples from both international and Indonesian contexts support this idea, illustrating how institutional fragmentation and lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities can undermine even well-intentioned food policies (Setiawan, 2013, p. 23; UNDP, 2016).

This study contributes to existing literature by providing a contextualized and theoretically informed assessment of multi-stakeholder collaboration in food governance. Unlike previous research that either focused on top-down policy approaches (Maxwell & Slater, 2003) or isolated case studies of community food projects (Fraser et al., 2010), this study bridges macro and meso levels of analysis. It examines how formal institutions, international frameworks, and localized practices interact under the SDG framework, particularly in early-stage implementation. A notable finding is the importance of facilitative leadership and shared vision among stakeholders—features consistently emphasized in collaborative governance literature (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Where such leadership is lacking, collaborations tend to stall or devolve into symbolic partnerships with minimal impact.

Furthermore, this research unveils new expert perspectives that reinforce the value of adaptive management in collaborative food governance. Stakeholders who regularly evaluate and adjust their roles, targets, and resource commitments appear to navigate institutional challenges more effectively than rigid, hierarchically driven initiatives. This resonates with Emerson and Nabatchi's (2015) emphasis on dynamic governance, where collaboration is seen as an evolving process rather than a static arrangement. In contrast to the conventional emphasis on predefined policy goals, this study shows that iterative learning and flexibility can be just as important in achieving SDG 2. In doing so, it extends existing theoretical models by demonstrating their applicability to complex, multi-scalar challenges in developing country contexts.

## **1. Operational Dynamics of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Zero Hunger Initiatives**

The first research question explores how multi-stakeholder partnerships function in the implementation of Zero Hunger initiatives. In many national contexts, these partnerships operate through structured platforms such as food security councils, interministerial committees, and public-private task forces. Evidence from Indonesia's *Dewan Ketahanan Pangan* (Food Security Council) suggests that formal institutional mechanisms facilitate inter-agency coordination, but often face limitations due to weak enforcement and limited civil society involvement (Setiawan, 2013, p. 30).

In contrast, international collaborations involving FAO, WFP, and NGOs have proven more agile, as they often embed participatory practices and localized assessments in project design (FAO, 2015). This confirms collaborative governance theory, which posits that partnership effectiveness is enhanced by procedural legitimacy and iterative negotiation (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Stakeholder inclusivity emerges as a decisive factor in determining the operational strength of these partnerships. Programs that include smallholder farmers, women's groups, and indigenous communities tend to exhibit higher rates of ownership and compliance (Lang et al., 2009). However, achieving genuine inclusivity remains a challenge. As Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory warns, formal inclusion does not always translate into meaningful influence, particularly when power asymmetries persist.

In Indonesia, for example, community consultations often occur post hoc, with decisions already shaped by dominant actors such as agricultural conglomerates or donor agencies (Setiawan, 2013, p. 35). This reinforces the need for clearer procedural guarantees that elevate marginalized voices within collaborative platforms.

Another operational challenge relates to the balance between centralization and decentralization. While decentralization is intended to tailor food security strategies to local contexts, empirical findings indicate that it often leads to coordination gaps between national and regional stakeholders (BPS–Statistics Indonesia, 2015). This disjuncture can result in duplicative programs, resource inefficiencies, and inconsistent monitoring systems.

Fraser et al. (2010) observed similar issues in African contexts, where decentralization without institutional harmonization diluted the effectiveness of

collaborative governance. Thus, although decentralization aligns with the principle of subsidiarity, it must be coupled with coherent frameworks that clarify roles and promote upward and downward accountability.

Moreover, the functionality of partnerships often depends on the quality and frequency of communication between actors. Shared understanding, mutual goals, and trust are critical for resolving disputes and adjusting strategies (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). In several Indonesian pilot programs, routine multi-stakeholder forums were associated with better alignment between farmer cooperatives, government agencies, and local NGOs.

These findings support the view that collaboration is not a one-time agreement but an ongoing relational process (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Where communication was irregular or top-down, stakeholders reported disengagement and delays in implementation.

The capacity of stakeholders—both institutional and human—also plays a pivotal role. Many local governments and civil society organizations lack technical expertise or resources to engage effectively in policy dialogues, even when formally included (Suryana, 2001).

This often results in a dependency dynamic, where better-resourced actors dominate agenda-setting. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood's (1997) model of stakeholder salience suggests that capacity affects not only participation but also the perceived legitimacy of a stakeholder's input. Hence, capacity-building initiatives are essential components of equitable collaboration.

Finally, institutional memory and adaptive learning contribute significantly to the sustainability of partnerships. Programs that systematically document lessons learned, successes, and failures tend to demonstrate higher adaptability and stakeholder satisfaction (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016).

In contrast, partnerships that lack mechanisms for reflection and adjustment are prone to repeating mistakes or abandoning collaboration prematurely. Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) emphasize that adaptive governance mechanisms—such as feedback loops, mid-term reviews, and flexible policy instruments—enable partnerships to evolve in response to changing conditions. In the context of Zero Hunger initiatives, such mechanisms are indispensable for navigating political, ecological, and economic uncertainties.

## **2. Governance Mechanisms Enabling or Hindering Stakeholder Collaboration**

This section addresses the second research question: What governance mechanisms support or hinder effective collaboration among diverse actors in the realization of Zero Hunger initiatives? At the core of successful multi-stakeholder collaboration is the presence of institutional clarity—well-defined roles, responsibilities, and legal frameworks that outline the mandates of each actor involved.

In Indonesia, however, overlapping jurisdictions between national ministries (e.g., agriculture, health, and trade) frequently create ambiguity, delaying food security interventions (Setiawan, 2013, p. 42). This institutional congestion undermines one of the fundamental principles of collaborative governance—role differentiation, which allows stakeholders to contribute based on their comparative advantage (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Legal frameworks and national policy instruments act as formal governance tools, enabling collaboration by creating space for joint planning, co-financing, and collective monitoring. The Indonesian Food Law (UU No. 18/2012) provides a partial legal foundation for such mechanisms but lacks concrete provisions to ensure participatory implementation at local levels (Suryana, 2001). Without robust and enforceable regulations, collaborative arrangements risk becoming informal or ad hoc, often relying on personal relationships or donor mandates rather than systemic governance. This aligns with Scharpf's (1997) critique that governance without authoritative coordination is prone to "joint decision traps" where no progress is made due to lack of enforcement power.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems serve as key accountability instruments in governance. When transparently designed and jointly managed, M&E mechanisms foster trust and feedback across stakeholder groups (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). In FAO-supported programs across Southeast Asia, integrated M&E platforms have enabled real-time adjustment of food security interventions, boosting both efficiency and inclusivity (FAO, 2015). However, many Indonesian food programs still rely on fragmented reporting systems, with data siloed across ministries, impeding collaborative learning. Effective governance requires not just collaboration but also shared information infrastructure that allows actors to make evidence-based decisions.

Leadership structures significantly shape collaborative outcomes. In the absence of facilitative leadership—defined as leadership that emphasizes consensus-building, inclusion, and power-sharing—collaborative arrangements tend to revert to hierarchical or bureaucratic modes (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone,

2006). In Indonesian food councils, leadership is often positional rather than facilitative, with higher-ranking officials dictating terms rather than mediating consensus (Setiawan, 2013, p. 46).

This contradicts collaborative governance principles and often results in tokenistic inclusion rather than meaningful engagement. Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) argue that facilitative leadership is especially vital in the early stages of collaboration when trust and norms are still being established.

Financial mechanisms can either enable or hinder collaboration, depending on how funding flows are designed and governed. Joint funding pools, where stakeholders contribute resources and share risks, promote mutual accountability and program sustainability (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010). Conversely, donor-driven programs that bypass national systems may offer short-term gains but erode domestic capacity for long-term collaboration.

Many food security initiatives in Indonesia are still donor-dependent, making them vulnerable to shifts in external funding priorities. This dependence distorts stakeholder relationships, as agendas become shaped more by funder preferences than by collective stakeholder input (Lang et al., 2009).

Another critical factor is inclusivity in decision-making. Governance mechanisms that include participatory budgeting, stakeholder forums, and policy co-creation tend to enhance legitimacy and responsiveness. However, the effectiveness of such mechanisms often depends on the representativeness of the actors involved. Civil society actors, especially those representing marginalized groups, often face barriers to meaningful participation due to lack of technical knowledge or bureaucratic complexity (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Therefore, governance structures must actively lower these barriers through targeted capacity-building and institutional incentives for broad participation.

In sum, governance mechanisms such as legal clarity, M&E systems, facilitative leadership, financial architecture, and participatory tools significantly influence the success or failure of collaborative food security initiatives. When these elements are well-aligned, they provide a strong enabling environment for stakeholder synergy. Conversely, when they are absent or poorly implemented, they become sources of friction, exclusion, and inefficiency—undermining the goals of SDG 2.

### **3. Policy and Sovereignty Implications of Collaborative Food Governance**

This section addresses the third research question: What are the implications of collaborative efforts for food policy and local food sovereignty? One of the most critical implications of multi-stakeholder collaboration is the shift toward more inclusive and responsive policy-making in food systems. Collaborative governance facilitates the incorporation of localized knowledge and lived experiences into national policy frameworks, increasing their contextual relevance and social legitimacy (Fraser et al., 2010).

In several Indonesian provinces, participatory approaches involving farmers' cooperatives and community organizations have led to more adaptive food planning, particularly in post-disaster recovery contexts (Setiawan, 2013, p. 52). These practices align with stakeholder theory's emphasis on ethical inclusion and instrumental performance (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

Another policy implication is the reconfiguration of institutional priorities, especially regarding how food security is framed. Traditional policy frameworks often prioritize food quantity and supply chains, but collaborative models expand the agenda to include food justice, nutrition, sustainability, and resilience (Lang et al., 2009).

Such reorientation helps to break the silos between agriculture, health, and environmental policies, enabling more holistic strategies aligned with SDG 2 targets. In Indonesia, this is evident in multi-sectoral initiatives like the Integrated Nutrition Program, which coordinates ministries of health, education, and agriculture to address stunting and food availability in tandem (BPS–Statistics Indonesia, 2015).

Collaborative efforts also have profound implications for local food sovereignty, defined as the right of communities to control their food systems, including production methods and distribution practices (Pimbert, 2006). In many cases, multi-stakeholder governance platforms have strengthened this sovereignty by enabling farmer organizations and local governments to shape procurement and pricing policies.

However, challenges persist. Global supply chain dynamics and foreign investment in agri-business sometimes override local decision-making, creating tensions between global market integration and community control (Maxwell & Slater, 2003). This reflects a critical tension in collaborative food governance: while the inclusion of international donors and corporations brings resources and innovation, it can simultaneously displace local priorities unless carefully mediated through transparent governance mechanisms.

Moreover, collaborative arrangements have the potential to enhance accountability and public scrutiny in food policy. The presence of diverse actors—each with distinct monitoring roles—creates horizontal checks that are less likely in traditional bureaucratic systems (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

When civil society organizations are empowered with access to information and reporting tools, they often serve as watchdogs that monitor policy implementation and corruption risks. This has been observed in decentralized procurement systems in Java, where village-level stakeholders monitor food aid distribution and report discrepancies through digital platforms. However, where civic space is constrained or access to data is limited, the accountability function of collaboration diminishes significantly (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Collaborative governance also reshapes the policy learning environment. Unlike top-down approaches where lessons are extracted centrally and disseminated downward, collaborative systems foster mutual learning through iterative interactions. Programs that encourage peer-to-peer exchanges between regions or between civil society and policymakers tend to generate more durable innovations (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).

In Indonesia, the comparative success of provincial food boards in East Java and Central Kalimantan has inspired interprovincial knowledge-sharing platforms facilitated by NGOs and multilateral organizations. Such mechanisms expand both technical capacity and political will to innovate within food policy frameworks.

Finally, the research shows that collaborative governance strengthens resilience in food systems, particularly in times of crisis. During episodes of drought or pandemic-related supply chain disruptions, areas with strong stakeholder networks and decentralized decision-making were quicker to reallocate resources, coordinate relief, and resume services (FAO, 2015). This supports Emerson and Nabatchi's (2015) argument that the flexibility and embeddedness of collaborative arrangements make them more capable of withstanding shocks than rigid, centralized systems. However, the sustainability of such resilience depends on ongoing investment in relationships, institutions, and adaptive capacity across stakeholder groups.

In conclusion, collaborative food governance has far-reaching implications not only for policy content and processes but also for enhancing local agency, institutional accountability, and systemic resilience. Yet, the benefits are not automatic—they require deliberate governance architecture, ethical



commitment to inclusion, and continuous learning across all levels of stakeholder engagement.

This study has shown that multi-stakeholder collaboration plays a pivotal role in shaping the early implementation of Zero Hunger (SDG 2), revealing both its strategic potential and operational complexities. In addressing the first research question, the analysis identified that functional partnerships depend on inclusive engagement, structured institutional design, and dynamic communication processes. Collaborative platforms that incorporate local communities, civil society, and technical actors achieve higher legitimacy and flexibility, supporting prior theoretical assumptions in stakeholder and governance theories. However, the success of such partnerships is uneven, often constrained by power imbalances, administrative fragmentation, and limited local capacities.

The second research question focused on governance mechanisms that facilitate or hinder collaboration. The findings emphasize the importance of facilitative leadership, integrated monitoring systems, participatory decision-making structures, and regulatory clarity. These elements not only enhance cross-sectoral coordination but also ensure that collaborative efforts go beyond symbolic engagement. Conversely, fragmented mandates, funding dependency, and exclusionary practices were identified as common barriers that undermine effective stakeholder synergy. This supports collaborative governance literature while offering grounded insights into the specific challenges faced in emerging economies such as Indonesia.

In addressing the third research question, the study demonstrates how collaborative governance models influence both policy formulation and food sovereignty. Collaborative frameworks enable a broader conception of food security—one that includes sustainability, justice, and agency. These partnerships also strengthen community roles in policy co-creation and institutional accountability, contributing to local resilience and adaptive governance capacity. The theoretical contribution of the study lies in integrating stakeholder theory with collaborative governance in the context of SDG implementation, offering a novel lens to assess food security governance. Practically, the study highlights the need for systemic design reforms to facilitate equitable and durable collaboration, particularly through multi-level stakeholder alignment and institutional capacity-building.

The implications of these findings are twofold. Theoretically, this research advances the understanding of how stakeholder theory can be operationalized through collaborative governance models in complex development agendas like the SDGs. It demonstrates the utility of integrative frameworks that account for power, learning, and institutional design in governance studies.

Practically, the study suggests that policy makers and development practitioners should prioritize inclusive participation, decentralized governance, and adaptive mechanisms to enhance the impact of food security initiatives. These recommendations are particularly relevant for contexts facing multidimensional food challenges, where structural reforms must align with local needs and global goals.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has examined how multi-stakeholder collaboration contributes to the realization of the Zero Hunger Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2), emphasizing governance processes over sectoral interventions. Through a combination of stakeholder theory and collaborative governance frameworks, the research provided a comprehensive analysis of how partnerships function, the institutional mechanisms that support or hinder their success, and the broader implications for food policy and sovereignty. The findings demonstrate that inclusive, well-structured, and adaptive stakeholder engagement leads to more legitimate and effective food security initiatives. At the same time, power imbalances, institutional fragmentation, and lack of facilitative leadership remain persistent obstacles.

The study reinforces the theoretical alignment between collaborative governance and stakeholder theory by showing how the principles of participation, shared authority, and institutional learning can be applied in real-world food governance settings. It contributes to the existing literature by bridging theoretical models with empirical insights from Indonesia and other development contexts, revealing how localized practices and global policy frameworks can converge through collaborative design.

Practically, the research recommends that policymakers and institutions invest in inclusive governance structures that actively integrate marginalized actors, promote institutional clarity, and build local capacities. Further, the development of shared monitoring platforms and participatory legal frameworks is essential to sustain these collaborations. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies and comparative case analyses to better understand the long-term impact of collaborative governance on food sovereignty and systemic resilience. Ultimately, achieving Zero Hunger requires more than technical solutions—it demands inclusive, accountable, and adaptive governance anchored in multi-stakeholder collaboration.

## REFERENCES

- Andrews, R., & Entwistle, T. (2010). Does cross-sectoral partnership deliver? An empirical exploration of public service effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 20(3), 679–701. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mup045>
- Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18(4), 543–571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>
- Bingham, L. B., Nabatchi, T., & O’Leary, R. (2005). The new governance: Practices and processes for stakeholder and citizen participation in the work of government. *Public Administration Review*, 65(5), 547–558. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00482.x>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Stone, M. M. (2006). The design and implementation of cross-sector collaborations: Propositions from the literature. *Public Administration Review*, 66(s1), 44–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00665.x>
- Candel, J. J. L., & Biesbroek, R. (2016). Toward a processual understanding of policy integration. *Policy Sciences*, 49(3), 211–231. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-016-9248-y>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Devereux, S., & Maxwell, S. (2001). *Food security in sub-Saharan Africa*. London: ITDG Publishing.
- Donaldson, T., & Preston, L. E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1), 65–91. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9503271992>

- Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2012). An integrative framework for collaborative governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 22(1), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mur011>
- Emerson, K., & Nabatchi, T. (2015). *Collaborative governance regimes*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Ericksen, P. J. (2008). Conceptualizing food systems for global environmental change research. *Global Environmental Change*, 18(1), 234–245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2007.09.002>
- FAO. (1996). *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- FAO. (2015). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015*. Rome: FAO. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2015/en/>
- Fraser, E. D. G., Dougill, A. J., Mabee, W. E., Reed, M., & McAlpine, P. (2010). Bottom up and top down: Analysis of participatory processes for sustainability indicator identification as a pathway to community empowerment and sustainable environmental management. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 91(3), 1180–1187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2009.10.007>
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Boston: Pitman.
- Lang, T., Barling, D., & Caraher, M. (2009). *Food policy: Integrating health, environment and society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Maxwell, S., & Slater, R. (2003). Food policy old and new. *Development Policy Review*, 21(5–6), 531–553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8659.2003.00223.x>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mitchell, R. K., Agle, B. R., & Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(4), 853–886. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1997.9711022105>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Pimbert, M. P. (2006). *Reclaiming autonomous food systems: The role of local organizations in food sovereignty*. IIED: London. Retrieved from <https://pubs.iied.org/14509IIED/>

- Poulton, C., Kydd, J., & Dorward, A. (2006). Overcoming market constraints on pro-poor agricultural growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Development Policy Review*, 24(3), 243–277. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2006.00324.x>
- Scharpf, F. W. (1997). *Games real actors play: Actor-centered institutionalism in policy research*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sen, A. (1981). *Poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Setiawan, B. (2013). *Kebijakan ketahanan pangan dan koordinasi antar lembaga di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Suryana, A. (2001). *Pembangunan pertanian dan ketahanan pangan*. Jakarta: IPB Press.
- UNDP. (2016). *Human development report 2016: Human development for everyone*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2016>
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- World Bank. (2015). *Ending poverty and hunger by 2030: An agenda for the global food system*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from <https://documents.worldbank.org/>