

Collaborative Governance in Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Village Development

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Abstract

Sustainable village development requires governance frameworks that mobilize diverse stakeholders across state, market, civil society, and community spheres. This study investigates collaborative governance in multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable village development in Indonesia, focusing on how coordination mechanisms, power relations, and institutional arrangements shape development outcomes. Employing a qualitative design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, FGDs, observation, and document analysis across three villages in West Java Province. Findings reveal that effective collaborative governance is characterized by inclusive deliberation, transparent resource management, and adaptive inter-organizational coordination. However, elite capture, information asymmetry, fragmented institutional mandates, and uneven stakeholder participation continue to impede transformative partnerships. Drawing on collaborative governance theory, symbiosis theory, and institutional commons theory, this study proposes a Governance Integration Model (GIM) that operationalizes participation, transparency, accountability, collaboration, and sustainability.

Keywords: collaborative governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships, sustainable village development, indonesia, public policy.

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1. Introduction

The governance of rural and village-level development has increasingly been recognized as a critical determinant of national sustainable development trajectories, particularly in rapidly decentralizing polities such as Indonesia. Since the enactment of Village Law No. 6 of 2014, Indonesian villages have been endowed with significant administrative authority and substantial financial resources through the Village Fund (Dana Desa) mechanism, creating unprecedented opportunities and equally formidable governance challenges for sustainable local development (Santoso et al., 2024; Purwanto & Setiawan, 2023).

Collaborative governance has emerged as a central paradigm in public administration and development studies, premised on the argument that complex societal problems transcend the capacity of any single actor state, market, or civil society to resolve unilaterally (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). The theoretical appeal of this approach lies in its potential to harness distributed knowledge, diversify resource bases, and enhance the legitimacy of development decisions through participatory inclusion.

International evidence supports the contention that sustainable rural development is fundamentally a governance problem requiring the alignment of institutional incentives, social norms, and power relations across multiple stakeholder domains (Westover, 2025; Berger et al., 2025). The work of Ostrom (1990) on governing the commons demonstrated that communities are capable of self-organizing effective governance systems when appropriate institutional conditions are in place.

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In Indonesia, the empirical record of multi-stakeholder partnerships in village development presents a mixed picture. While numerous villages have successfully leveraged collaborative arrangements to improve infrastructure and social services (Pandyaswargo et al., 2026; Widodo & Kusumawardhana, 2024), many others continue to struggle with institutional fragmentation, corruption, and exclusion of marginalized groups (Abdurakhman, 2025).

Despite the proliferation of multi-stakeholder partnership programs in Indonesian village development, there remains a significant gap in empirical understanding of how collaborative governance mechanisms operate in practice. The literature has insufficiently addressed how structural factors including elite capture, gender exclusion, and information asymmetry intersect with formal governance arrangements to shape the inclusivity and sustainability of multi-stakeholder partnerships (Sururi & Nugraha, 2022).

This study aims to: (a) map the multi-stakeholder governance architecture in village development in West Java, Indonesia; (b) analyse collaborative dynamics among diverse stakeholder actors; (c) identify structural barriers and institutional enablers; and (d) develop a Governance Integration Model (GIM) applicable to sustainable village development contexts.

This research contributes theoretically by advancing collaborative governance scholarship within the specific institutional context of Indonesian village governance, extending established frameworks (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012) to Global South development settings. Practically, it generates actionable knowledge for policymakers, village administrators, NGO practitioners, and international development organizations seeking to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Collaborative Governance: Theoretical Foundations

Collaborative governance is defined as a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544). Emerson et al. (2012) extend this framework through collaborative governance regimes (CGRs) encompassing three nested dimensions: the system context, the collaborative governance regime itself, and the collaborative dynamics that generate outcomes.

The application of collaborative governance theory to rural development contexts has grown substantially (Sururi & Nugraha, 2022; Sulistiyono & Rachmawati, 2023). Scholars note it is particularly pertinent in settings characterized by complex interdependencies and resource scarcity conditions emblematic of village development challenges in developing countries (Pandyaswargo et al., 2026; Ahmadi & HaghightBin, 2026).

2.2. Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Development

Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) have become a cornerstone of international development practice, enshrined in SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). MSPs are premised on complementarity: government provides regulatory authority; private sector contributes investment; civil society brings social capital; and academic institutions supply knowledge and innovation (Westover, 2025; Nair et al., 2025). Critical success factors include shared vision, clear role delineation, robust communication, equitable benefit distribution, and adaptive management (Berger et al., 2025; Liu, 2026).

2.3. Sustainable Village Development in Indonesia

The 2014 Village Law granted Indonesian villages significant autonomy, with the Village Fund mechanism allocating approximately IDR 71 trillion annually across 75,000 villages by 2024 (Purwanto & Setiawan, 2023; Widodo & Kusumawardhana, 2024). Sustainable village development encompasses economic, social, environmental, and institutional dimensions requiring an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach that collaborative governance frameworks prescribe (Santoso et al., 2024; Yudoyono, 2023).

2.4. Theoretical Framework

This study integrates three theoretical lenses: (1) Collaborative Governance Theory (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012) as the primary analytical framework; (2) Symbiosis Theory (Liu, 2026) for understanding mutualistic, commensalistic, or parasitic inter-organizational relationships; and (3) Institutional Commons Theory (Ostrom, 1990), which explains how collective-choice arrangements, locally credible rules, monitoring mechanisms, and graduated accountability can strengthen inclusive village governance.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, consistent with its interpretive epistemological orientation and the complexity of governance phenomena under investigation. The study employs a multi-site case study approach, enabling comparative analysis across different village governance contexts while preserving sensitivity to local specificities (Ruhanen et al., 2010; Nair et al., 2025).

3.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in three purposively selected villages in West Java Province, Indonesia, between January 2025 and January 2026. The three case villages, Village A (Cirebon District, coastal/urban fringe), Village B (Tasikmalaya District, rural highland), and Village C (Sukabumi District, remote agricultural), were selected to maximize variation across geographic remoteness, economic development level, and stakeholder partnership intensity. Figure 1 presents the distribution of research locations.

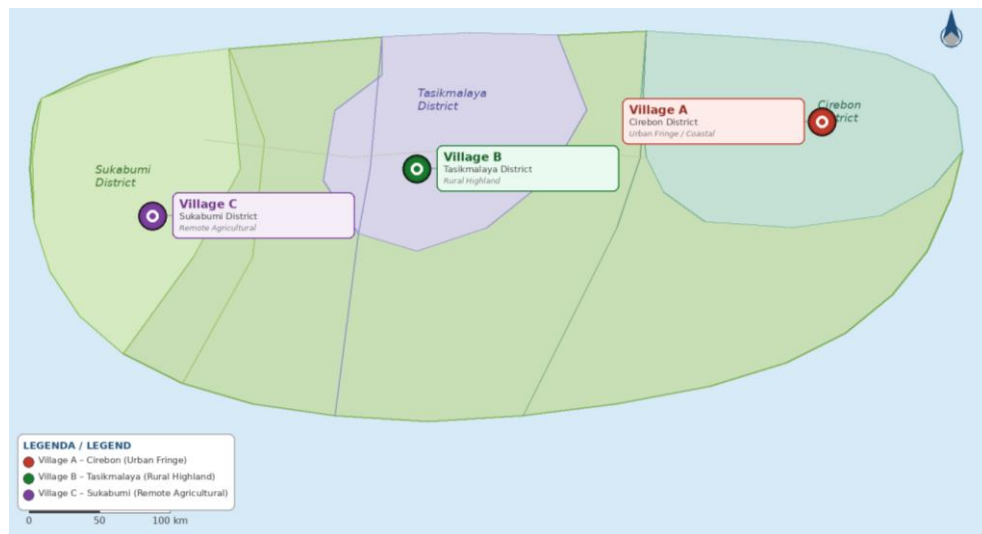


Figure 1. Distribution of Research Locations – Three Case Villages in West Java, Indonesia

3.3. Participants and Sampling

Informants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation of all key stakeholder categories. A total of 36 informants participated across the three case villages, with three FGDs conducted in each village. Table 1 presents the profiles of key informants.

3.4. Data Collection Methods

Three primary methods were employed: (1) In-depth interviews (IDIs) using semi-structured guides, each lasting 60-90 minutes, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim; (2) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 6-10 community participants per session; and (3) Document analysis encompassing village development plans (RPJMDes), budget

realizations (APBDes), Village Fund reports, and partnership agreements. Observation of Musyawarah Desa meetings provided additional direct insights.

Table 1. Key Informant Profiles

Code	Category	Position	Experience	Method
INF-01	State Actor	Village Head (Kepala Desa)	12 years	In-depth Interview
INF-02	State Actor	Village Secretary	8 years	In-depth Interview
INF-03	State Actor	District Planning Officer (Bappeda)	15 years	In-depth Interview
INF-04	Community Actor	BPD Chair	6 years	In-depth Interview
INF-05	Non-State Actor	NGO Program Coordinator	10 years	In-depth Interview
INF-06	Non-State Actor	CSO Field Facilitator	7 years	FGD
INF-07	Market Actor	BUMDES Manager	5 years	In-depth Interview
INF-08	Knowledge Actor	University Researcher	14 years	In-depth Interview
INF-09	Community Actor	Farmer Group Leader	20 years	FGD
INF-10	Community Actor	Women's Group Representative	9 years	FGD
INF-11	Community Actor	Youth Group Representative	4 years	FGD
INF-12	State Actor	Sub-district Head (Camat)	11 years	In-depth Interview

3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using six-phase thematic analysis. NVivo 14 software supported the coding process. Triangulation across interview, FGD, observation, and documentary data enhanced validity and credibility. Member-checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with key informants.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent. Confidentiality was assured through informant codes. The research protocol was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Politeknik Siber Cerdika Internasional, compliant with Indonesian data protection regulations.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Overview of Stakeholder Architecture

Analysis of governance documents and interview data reveals a complex multi-stakeholder architecture comprising state, community, non-state, market, and knowledge actors. Table 2 summarizes principal stakeholder categories, their roles, and governance mechanisms.

Formal governance authority is concentrated in state actors, while substantive governance capacity is increasingly distributed across non-state actors particularly NGOs and CSOs. This structural condition creates conditions for collaborative partnerships but also generates tensions around authority, accountability, and resource control (Hermawan, 2025).

4.2. Collaborative Dynamics: Patterns of Engagement

Four primary patterns of multi-stakeholder engagement were identified: (1) deliberative co-governance (Village A), where a structured village development forum enabled genuine negotiation; (2) instrumental partnership (Village B), where NGOs and private actors acted as implementers rather than co-participants; (3) conflictual fragmentation (Village C), reflecting competing interests that undermined coordination; and (4) adaptive learning governance, a transitional dynamic across all villages.

“The forum meets quarterly and we genuinely negotiate development priorities. Sometimes the village head does not get what he wants, but that is governance working as it should.” (INF-05, NGO Program Coordinator).

4.3. Barriers to Effective Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Seven clusters of barriers constrain multi-stakeholder partnership effectiveness. Table 3 presents a systematic analysis alongside facilitating factors.

Table 2. Multi-Stakeholder Governance Architecture in Village Development

No.	Stakeholder Actor	Category	Role in Village Development	Governance Mechanism
1	Village Government	State Actor	Planning & budgeting, Village Fund allocation	Village Law No. 6/2014
2	District Government	State Actor	Oversight, technical assistance, capacity building	Hierarchical regulation
3	DPRD (Legislature)	State Actor	Policy approval, budget oversight	Legislative control
4	Village Board (BPD)	Community Actor	Policy deliberation, governance check	Deliberative democracy
5	CSOs	Non-State Actor	Advocacy, monitoring, community mobilization	Network governance
6	NGOs / LSM	Non-State Actor	Capacity building, technical support	Partnership agreements
7	Private Sector	Market Actor	CSR programs, investment, value chain	Contractual partnership
8	Academic Institutions	Knowledge Actor	Research, innovation, evidence-based policy	Collaborative research
9	BUMDES	Hybrid Actor	Economic enterprise, revenue generation	Village economic governance
10	Religious Leaders	Community Actor	Social cohesion, norm enforcement, mediation	Cultural authority

Table 3. Barriers and Enablers in Multi-Stakeholder Village Governance

No.	Dimension	Key Barriers	Key Enablers / Facilitating Factors
1	Legal / Institutional	Overlapping regulations, lack of clear mandates	Village Law No. 6/2014, national legal framework
2	Economic	Limited Village Fund, dependency on central transfers	BUMDES, private investment partnerships
3	Social / Cultural	Patriarchal norms, low participation of women & youth	Musyawarah Desa, civil society advocacy
4	Technical / Knowledge	Low capacity of village officials, data deficiency	Academic partnerships, capacity-building programs
5	Political	Elite capture, rent-seeking behavior	Transparency, e-government, civil oversight
6	Environmental	Natural resource degradation, climate vulnerability	Multi-stakeholder environmental planning
7	Communication	Language barriers, information asymmetry	Community radio, participatory communication

4.4. Governance Indicators and Performance Measurement

Table 4 presents governance indicators grounded in the five principles of the Governance Integration Model (GIM), with measurement formulae for each.

Village A achieved the highest governance performance score (GPS = 74.2/100), reflecting its mature multi-stakeholder deliberative structure (TR = 87%). Village B scored moderately (GPS = 61.5/100), constrained by low participation (PA = 48%). Village C recorded the lowest score (GPS = 53.8/100) due to contested stakeholder relationships and weak accountability mechanisms.

Table 4. Governance Integration Model: Principles, Indicators, and Measurement Formulae

Principle	Indicator	Formula / Measure	Weight (%)
Participation	Stakeholder Attendance in Musyawarah Desa	$PA = (\text{Attendees} / \text{Total Eligible}) \times 100\%$	25
Transparency	Village Fund Disclosure Rate	$TR = (\text{Disclosed Items} / \text{Total Items}) \times 100\%$	20
Accountability	Program Realization Rate	$AR = (\text{Realized Programs} / \text{Planned Programs}) \times 100\%$	25
Collaboration	Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Index	$CPI = \text{Sum}(\text{Partner Contributions}) / \text{Total Projects}$	15
Sustainability	Village SDG Achievement Index	$SDGI = \text{Sum}(\text{Weighted SDG Indicators}) / \text{Total SDGs}$	15

Note: Individual indicator rates, such as the transparency rate (TR) and stakeholder attendance rate (PA), are calculated independently within their respective formulas and may reach up to 100% before being multiplied by the assigned model weight to generate the final global Governance Performance Score (GPS).

4.5. The Governance Integration Model (GIM)

Based on integrated analysis of empirical findings and theoretical frameworks, this study proposes the Governance Integration Model (GIM) structured around five interlocking principles: Participation, Transparency, Accountability, Collaboration, and Sustainability. Figure 2 presents the GIM schematically.

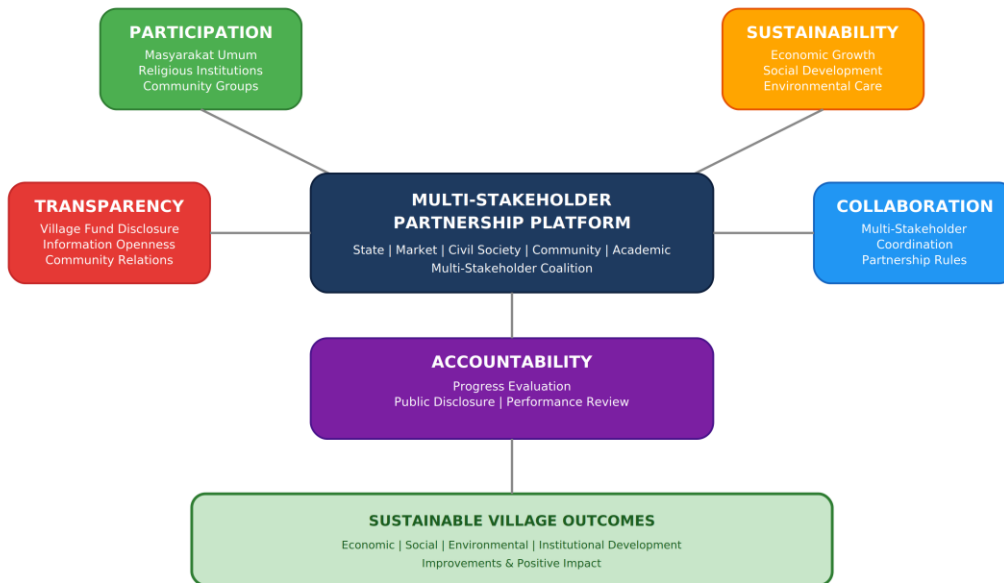


Figure 2. Governance Integration Model (GIM) – Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Village Development

The GIM posits that sustainable village development outcomes emerge from the dynamic interaction of five governance principles operating within a multi-stakeholder partnership platform. Participation ensures all stakeholder voices are meaningfully incorporated. Transparency provides the informational foundation for accountability. Collaboration generates cross-sector synergies. Sustainability integrates environmental, social, and institutional dimensions.

4.6. Comparative Stakeholder Participation Analysis

Figure 3 presents comparative stakeholder participation rates across the three case villages, based on village governance meeting attendance records and stakeholder activity reports compiled during the January 2025-January 2026 fieldwork period.

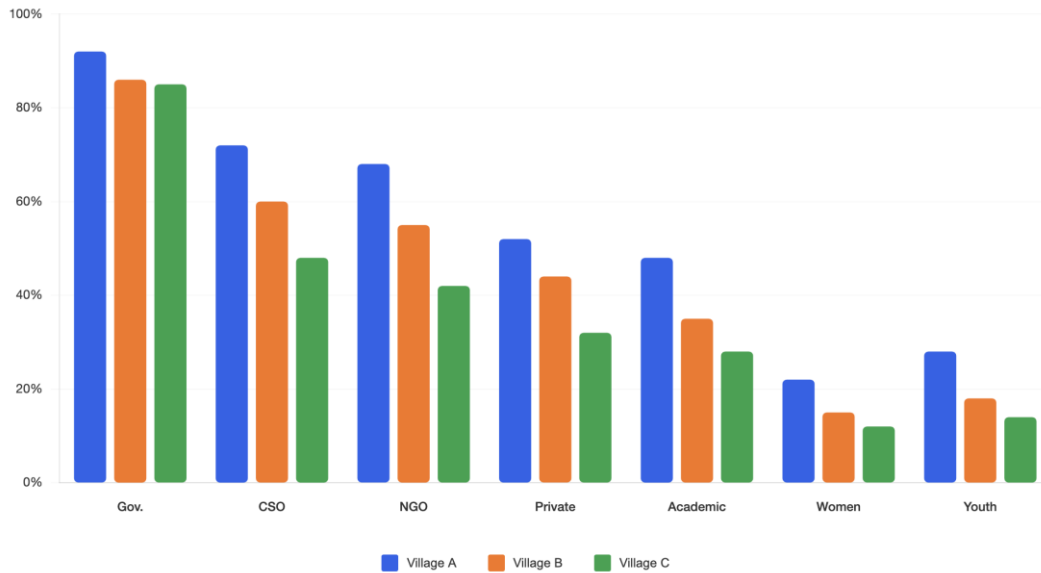


Figure 3. Comparative Stakeholder Participation Rates (%) Across Three Case Villages, West Java (January 2025-January 2026)

Government actors recorded the highest formal participation across all villages, ranging from 85% in Village C to 92% in Village A. CSOs and NGOs constituted a second participation tier: CSO attendance ranged from 48% to 72%, while NGO attendance ranged from 42% to 68%. Private sector and academic actors occupied a middle-low tier, with participation ranging from 32% to 52% and 28% to 48%, respectively. Women's and youth groups remained the least represented categories, with women's participation ranging from 12% to 22% and youth participation from 14% to 28%. This pattern indicates that non-state actors are present in the partnership architecture, but their participation is uneven and often weaker than the formal presence of government actors. The relative strength of CSO and NGO participation, especially in Village A, supports the finding that civil society facilitation can broaden deliberation, while lower participation in Village C reflects the conflictual fragmentation described in Section 4.2.

5. Discussion

5.1. Collaborative Governance in Practice

The findings confirm and extend theoretical propositions from the collaborative governance literature (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). The three case villages demonstrate that collaborative governance is not a uniform phenomenon but a contextually variable governance regime shaped by institutional arrangements, historical relationships, local power structures, and external enabling conditions.

5.2. Elite Capture and the Limits of Formal Inclusion

Elite capture, identified as the dominant structural barrier across all case villages, represents a governance failure that formal institutional design alone cannot resolve. The findings show that access to *Musyawarah Desa* and partnership forums becomes meaningful only when weaker stakeholders can influence agenda setting, obtain timely budget information, and challenge decisions that privilege dominant actors. In Village B, collaboration tended to become instrumental because NGOs and private actors were positioned mainly as implementers rather than co-deliberators. In Village C, fragmented relationships enabled informal bargaining over program priorities and reduced scrutiny of BUMDES and partnership activities. These patterns indicate that formal inclusion does not automatically produce

substantive inclusion when local power asymmetries remain unaddressed. Addressing elite capture therefore requires locally enforceable accountability mechanisms, including leadership rotation, clear representation rules, public disclosure of budgets and partnership agreements, independent audits, complaint channels, and stronger monitoring roles for BPD, CSOs, and NGOs (Ostrom, 1990; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

5.3. Gender Inclusion as a Governance Imperative

Women represented less than 18% of Musyawarah Desa participants on average, despite comprising approximately 52% of the adult population. Consistent with inclusive development scholarship (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2004), gender exclusion is not merely an equity concern but a governance effectiveness problem: excluded women's perspectives lead to programs failing to address majority population needs.

5.4. Implications of the Governance Integration Model

The GIM provides a governance assessment and design tool for ex ante program design and ex post evaluation. The Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Index ($CPI = \text{Sum of Partner Contributions} / \text{Total Projects}$) and Village SDG Achievement Index ($SDGI = \text{Sum of Weighted SDG Indicators} / \text{Total SDGs}$) offer tractable metrics for village governments, NGOs, and monitoring agencies (Yudoyono, 2023; Ogunbode & Awolola, 2026).

5.5. Symbiosis Theory and Partnership Dynamics

Applying symbiosis theory (Liu, 2026), Village A's stakeholder relationships approximated mutualistic symbiosis, as each partner contributed distinctive resources and derived distinctive benefits, generating positive-sum dynamics. Village C's government-agribusiness relationship exhibited parasitic characteristics, with the enterprise extracting value while contributing limited community benefits. Effective governance design must attend to underlying exchange dynamics to shift partnerships from parasitic toward mutualistic configurations.

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

This study investigated collaborative governance dynamics in multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable village development in West Java, Indonesia. Findings reveal that collaborative governance is contextually variable, power-laden, and institutionally embedded, requiring the alignment of institutional design, power relations, deliberative practices, and cultural norms. The GIM offers a conceptual and operational framework integrating five core principles through measurable indicators. Governance performance is strongly associated with deliberative space quality, accountability mechanism robustness, active CSO and NGO facilitation, and direct responses to structural barriers including elite capture and gender exclusion.

6.2. Policy Recommendations

Based on the study findings and analysis, the following policy recommendations are advanced:

- a. Establish Multi-Stakeholder Village Development Forums (MVDF) with formal representation mandates for state actors, BPD, CSOs, NGOs, private sector actors, academic institutions, women's groups, and youth groups, including minimum 30% gender quotas for all governance deliberation processes.
- b. Implement digital transparency platforms for Village Fund planning and realization disclosure to reduce information asymmetry and enable meaningful community accountability.
- c. Adopt the Governance Integration Model (GIM) as a monitoring and evaluation framework for village development programs, enabling systematic assessment of governance quality alongside development outcomes.
- d. Strengthen capacity-building programs for village officials, community leaders, CSO representatives, NGO facilitators, women's groups, and youth groups focused on collaborative governance principles, conflict mediation, participatory monitoring, and evidence-based village planning.

- e. Develop institutional frameworks for BUMDES governance embedding multi-stakeholder oversight, equitable benefit-sharing, and environmental sustainability standards to prevent elite capture.
- f. Institutionalize inter-village learning within West Java and comparable Indonesian rural regions by pairing villages with stronger CSO/NGO facilitation and transparent budget practices with villages facing fragmented participation, so practical lessons from the three case villages can inform locally grounded improvement.
- g. Commission ongoing research to assess long-term effectiveness of collaborative governance arrangements, with attention to sustainability of multi-stakeholder partnerships beyond funding cycles.

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