

Sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program in Empowering Coastal Communities (Case Study of Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency)

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Abstract

The People's Salt Business Program (PUGAR) is a government initiative aimed at improving the welfare of coastal communities through strengthening production capacity, enhancing access to capital, and promoting the development of community-based salt enterprises. However, studies examining the sustainability of the program from the perspective of coastal community empowerment remain limited, particularly at the local level. This study aims to analyze the sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program in empowering coastal communities in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative research design employing a case study approach was adopted. Research informants were selected purposively and included representatives from the Bima Regency Marine and Fisheries Office, village government officials, fisheries extension officers, community salt business groups, community leaders, and business partners. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and subsequently analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source, technique, and time triangulation. The findings indicate that the sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program has made a positive contribution to coastal community empowerment. This is reflected in improved access to business capital, increased salt production, and expanded marketing opportunities for locally produced salt. Furthermore, the program has strengthened the institutional capacity of community salt business groups through continuous guidance and mentoring, while also fostering business partnerships that support sustainable production and market development. Nevertheless, challenges remain in marketing and market accessibility, requiring ongoing support from government institutions and relevant stakeholders. Overall, the sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program has proven effective in enhancing the economic capacity, institutional resilience, and self-reliance of coastal communities in Talabiu Village.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Improving public welfare is the primary goal of governance in Indonesia, both at the central and regional levels (Saputra et al., 2026:29). To achieve this goal, coastal community development is a crucial agenda, as Indonesia is an archipelagic nation with approximately 70% of its territory covered by ocean (Hendra et al., 2023:73). This geographic location affords Indonesia significant marine and coastal resource potential to support economic development and improve public welfare.

One of the strategic potentials of Indonesia's coastal areas is the salt sector. With its vast maritime territory, Indonesia should be able to produce large quantities of salt to meet domestic needs (Komaria, Indartuti, & Wahyudi, 2025:146). Data shows that Indonesia has a salt land area of approximately 43,052.10 hectares, but only about 25,702.06 hectares or 59.7% can be utilized for salt production (Karimela, Palawe, & Gansalangi, 2025:141). This large potential provides motivation for coastal communities to develop salt businesses as a source of livelihood and local economic production (Adnyani et al., 2024:269).

The strategic role of the salt sector is also reflected in the continued increase in national production. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries recorded that national salt production in 2023 reached 2.5 million tons, or 147 percent of the target of 1.7 million tons. The largest production came from the smallholder salt sector, reaching 2.2 million tons, while the remainder came from national private salt companies. This achievement demonstrates the significant contribution of smallholder salt businesses to supporting national salt resilience and self-sufficiency.

West Nusa Tenggara Province is one of the national salt production centers that supports the government's salt industrialization and self-sufficiency program (Rizkan et al., 2024:1120). Empowering the community to utilize the potential of milkfish and local salt through processing products such as milkfish floss, milkfish crackers, and salt packaging innovations has been proven to have a positive impact on improving the economy of the Talabiu Village community (Akbar et al., 2025:1887).

Despite its significant potential, the community salt industry still faces various obstacles. Marketing community salt to the industrial sector requires various requirements, particularly regarding the quality of the salt produced (Chaerunas, Ramadoan, & Firman, 2019:58). Furthermore, rural communities still lack the skills to utilize appropriate technology to improve salt quality and productivity. This lack of knowledge regarding salt quality standards results in low product prices (Hasriyanti et al., 2024:47-31). Furthermore, most salt farmers have not received optimal technical assistance and institutional support (Dewabrata et al., 2025:120).

This situation demonstrates the importance of empowering coastal communities. Coastal community empowerment is essentially a process of creating opportunities for communities to identify needs, plan, and implement development activities, thereby fostering sustainable independence within the community (Widiastuti & Handayani, 2014:187). In the context of community salt production, empowerment aims not only to increase production output but also to enhance the community's ability to utilize science and technology, create added value for products, and strengthen local economic independence (Afandi et al., 2025:3).

As a form of government intervention to support the development of the smallholder salt sector, the government implemented the Smallholder Salt Business Empowerment Program (PUGAR). This program is designed to increase production capacity, salt quality, and access to production facilities and provide technical assistance to salt farmers. Research by Nugraha, Yuliana, and Hakim (2026:40) shows that the PUGAR Program has had an initial impact in the form of increased access to production facilities and technical assistance for salt farmers.

Several previous studies have shown that the PUGAR Program has made a positive contribution to increasing production and the welfare of salt farmers. Previous research has generally focused on program implementation, effectiveness, increased production, salt quality, and the economic impact on the community. However, studies specifically analyzing the sustainability of the People's Salt Enterprise Program from the perspective of empowering coastal communities are still relatively limited. Previous research has focused

more on the program's outputs, while studies on the sustainability of the program's benefits through strengthening community capacity, local institutions, and partnerships have received little attention.

Furthermore, based on a literature search, research specifically examining the sustainability of the People's Salt Enterprise Program at the local level, particularly in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency, is still very limited. This is despite Talabiu Village being a coastal area with significant potential for people's salt enterprises and having been the site of various local resource-based empowerment programs.

Based on this description, there is a research gap (*research gap*) between various studies that emphasize the implementation and economic impact of the PUGAR Program and the need for studies on the program's sustainability in supporting coastal community empowerment. Therefore, this study is important to analyze the extent to which the sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program is able to strengthen the empowerment of coastal communities in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Types and Approaches of Research

This research employed a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to deeply understand the sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program (PUGAR) in empowering coastal communities through institutional strengthening and partnerships in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency. Qualitative research allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and actions of the actors involved in the empowerment program (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The case study approach was used because the research focuses on a specific case, namely the sustainability of the People's Salt Business Program (PUGAR) in Talabiu Village. According to Yin (2018), a case study is a research strategy used to deeply understand contemporary phenomena within a real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly visible. Therefore, this approach is considered relevant to examine the dynamics of the sustainability of coastal community empowerment programs influenced by institutional factors, partnerships, and the socio-economic conditions of the local community.

B. Determination of Research Informants

The research informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2023). This technique was used because informants were selected based on the consideration that they have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of the People's Salt Business Program (PUGAR). The research informants include: 1) Head of the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service; 2) Fisheries Extension Officer; 3) Talabiu Village Head; 4) Head of the People's Salt Business Group; 5) Members of the People's Salt Business Group; 6). Coastal community leaders, and 7) Business partners or parties involved in marketing salt production results.

The number of informants was not determined precisely from the start, but followed the principle of sufficient information (*data saturation*), namely, data collection is stopped when the information obtained has been repeated, and no significant new information is found (Moleong, 2014).

C. Types and Sources of Research Data

Primary data was obtained directly from research informants through in-depth interviews and field observations. Primary data included information on the implementation of the PUGAR Program, the institutional conditions of community salt business groups, the forms of partnerships implemented, and factors supporting and inhibiting the program's sustainability.

Secondary data was obtained through various documents relevant to the research, including: 1) PUGAR Program Documents; 2) Reports from the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service; 3) Talabiu Village Profile; 4) Statistical data on salt production and coastal communities; 5) Relevant scientific journals, books, and previous research results; and 6) Legislation related to coastal community empowerment and community salt businesses.

D. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques in this study include:

1. Observations were conducted to obtain a direct overview of the community salt business activities, the institutional conditions of the groups, partnership patterns, and community participation in the implementation of the PUGAR Program. Observations were conducted non-participatory, recording various phenomena related to the research focus.
2. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using a pre-developed interview guide. This technique allowed researchers to obtain in-depth information about informants' experiences, views, and perceptions regarding the sustainability of the PUGAR Program (Creswell & Poth, 2016).
3. Documentation was used to supplement data from observations and interviews. The documents analyzed included program activity reports, data from community salt business groups, activity photos, village archives, and policy documents related to the PUGAR Program.

E. Data Validity Checking Techniques

The validity of the data in this study was checked using triangulation techniques. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), triangulation is one way to increase the credibility of qualitative research results.

The triangulation techniques used include:

1. Source triangulation compares information obtained from various informants, such as local government, village government, extension workers, group administrators, and members of people's salt business groups.
2. Triangulation is a technique for comparing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation.
3. Time triangulation checks data at different times to see the consistency of the information provided by the informant.

F. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes:

1. The condensation of data obtained from the field was selected, focused, simplified, and grouped according to research themes, namely program sustainability, institutional strengthening, and partnerships.
2. The presentation of condensed data is presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, tables, and charts to facilitate the interpretation process.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification. The final stage is carried out by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings from the data that has been analyzed to produce conclusions regarding the sustainability of the People's Salt Business

Program in empowering coastal communities in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research result

This study aims to analyze the extent to which the sustainability of the community salt business program is able to strengthen the empowerment of coastal communities in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency. The focus of the research is directed at three main aspects of coastal community empowerment, namely: (1) Providing business capital, increasing production, and marketing business results; (2) Strengthening institutions and business partnerships; and (3) Strengthening community capacity in managing community salt businesses.

The research data were obtained through field observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with informants consisting of the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service, the Village Government, and members of the community salt business group in Talabiu Village. The results of the study indicate that the community salt business program has had a positive impact on improving the economic capacity of coastal communities, although there are still several obstacles in the marketing and sustainability aspects of the business.

B. Discussion of Research Results

1. Sustainability of the people's salt business program through providing business capital, increasing production, and marketing the results.

Community empowerment is essentially a process of increasing community capacity to achieve economic, social, and institutional independence. In the coastal community of Talabiu Village, the community salt business program is a crucial instrument for improving community welfare through business capital support, increased productivity, and expanded market access.

a. Provision of business capital

Providing business capital is a crucial initial step in supporting the success of the community salt business program. Business capital serves as a source of funding that enables communities to develop salt production businesses, from providing production facilities to improving the quality of the output.

Based on the researchers' observations in the field, the majority of informants assessed that the business capital assistance provided by the government through the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service had a significant impact on the development of smallholder salt businesses. The capital provided helped communities overcome financial constraints, which have long been a major obstacle to salt business development.

This is reinforced by the results of an interview with Muhammad Ali, a member of the people's salt business group, who stated:

"I believe that the government's provision of business capital, like that provided to us in coastal communities, must continue to be implemented to help empower us as coastal communities. This way, coastal businesses can grow even further. Thank God, I myself have received funding for coastal community empowerment from the government. Although I have to repay the borrowed capital, this kind of assistance

has allowed my business to grow to its current size. I hope this type of assistance will continue" (Interview, April 6, 2026).

This statement shows that capital assistance is not only seen as financial assistance, but also as a form of government trust in the community to develop businesses independently and sustainably.

A similar view was also expressed by Abdullah Ahmad, a member of the people's salt business group, in an interview, stating:

"I am very grateful that the government is willing to help us by providing business capital for us coastal communities. With this assistance, I can further increase my salt production." (Interview, April 6, 2026).

Based on the interview results, it is clear that the sustainability of the community salt business program is significantly influenced by the availability of capital. Business capital assistance has been a driving factor in increasing productivity in coastal communities and increasing their motivation to develop their businesses more professionally.

b. Increasing salt business production

The sustainability of an empowerment program is determined not only by the availability of capital, but also by the program's ability to increase the community's production capacity. In the community salt business program, increased production is a key indicator for measuring the program's success in improving the welfare of coastal communities.

Based on field observations, the increase in community salt production occurred after the community received capital support and assistance from the government. The community began to expand production areas, improve production facilities, and improve the quality of the salt produced.

This is the result of an interview with Makaruddin, Talabiu Village Government Staff, who explained:

"I confirm that we consistently increase production because we strongly support the provision of community assistance funds to empower coastal communities, including smallholder salt businesses. These initiatives will significantly assist communities in developing their businesses," (Interview, April 6, 2026).

This statement shows that the increase in production is a direct result of government support through coastal community empowerment programs.

Siti Nurhuda, S.E., staff of the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service, expressed the same sentiment:

"I believe that increasing the production of smallholder salt businesses is necessary so that they can enjoy the fruits of their labor. Given the increasing economic needs, we need to increase smallholder salt production to meet all these needs." (Interview, April 6, 2026).

The interview results concluded that increased production is one indicator of the success and sustainability of the community salt business program. The higher the productivity of the community, the greater its opportunities to increase its income and family well-being.

c. Marketing of the salt business results

Marketing is a crucial factor in ensuring the sustainability of smallholder salt businesses. Increased production will not yield optimal economic benefits without an effective marketing system.

Research results show that the community salt business program has made it easier for communities to market their products. Government capital support and coaching have helped communities expand their marketing networks and increase the competitiveness of community salt products.

This is the result of an interview with Muhammad Amrin, a member of the people's salt business group, who stated:

"With the government's aid, the marketing of my business has increased compared to before. I, along with other coastal communities, hope that this type of aid distribution will continue and, if necessary, be increased to further grow our businesses." (Interview, April 6, 2026).

Furthermore, Dra. Lilis Nani explained in an interview:

"I think the provision of capital through revolving funds from the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service has been very helpful in marketing our business products, so we have no problems marketing our products" (Interview, April 6, 2026).

Based on the interview results, it was found that the sustainability of the community salt business program not only increased production but also strengthened the community's ability to market their products. Thus, the community derived greater economic benefits from the business activities it undertook.

2. Sustainability of the people's salt business program through institutional strengthening and business partnerships.

The success of coastal community empowerment is not solely determined by economic factors but also influenced by the strength of the community's institutions and partnership networks. Strong institutions will foster better business governance, while partnerships will open access to markets, capital, and technology.

- a. Strengthening business institutions

Institutional strengthening is an effort to increase the organizational capacity of people's salt business groups in managing business activities effectively and sustainably.

The results of the study show that the Bima Regency Marine and Fisheries Service actively provide institutional development to community salt business groups through training, mentoring, and group administration development activities.

This is the result of an interview with A. Rafik, S.H., staff of the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service, who stated:

"We consistently strengthen business institutions to empower coastal communities. Institutional strengthening by the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service is essential to ensure all parties support this initiative," (Interview, April 6, 2026).

This statement shows that institutional strengthening is seen as a strategic instrument in ensuring the sustainability of the people's salt business program.

The same thing was also conveyed by Mustamin, S.E., in an interview, who stated:

"For smallholder salt businesses to increase their production income, development steps are needed through strengthening business

institutions so that they can manage their businesses better" (Interview, April 6, 2026).

From the interview results, it can be understood that strong institutions will increase the group's capacity in managing businesses, accessing government assistance, and establishing cooperation with various parties.

b. Business partnership

Business partnerships are a crucial strategy for supporting the sustainability of smallholder salt businesses. Through partnerships, communities can gain access to broader markets, technology, information, and financing sources.

The research results show that the people's salt business program has opened up opportunities for coastal communities to collaborate with various parties in order to increase the economic value of the salt business they run.

This is the result of an interview with M. Saleh, a member of the people's salt business group, who stated in the interview:

"I think establishing partnerships is very important in running a business to get work partners so that I can collaborate with other entrepreneurs in marketing the products" (Interview, April 6, 2026).

This statement shows that business partnerships provide real benefits in expanding marketing access and increasing the competitiveness of people's salt businesses.

Furthermore, M. Zainal explained in an interview:

"In marketing the results of our people's salt production, we need to establish business partnerships or collaborations with other parties to make marketing people's salt easier" (Interview, April 6, 2026).

The results of the interview indicate that the sustainability of the people's salt business program has succeeded in creating a partnership network that helps the community overcome various business obstacles, especially in the aspect of marketing production results.

Based on the overall research results, it can be concluded that the sustainability of the community salt business program in Talabiu Village has been able to significantly strengthen the empowerment of coastal communities. This is demonstrated by several key indicators, namely: 1) increased community access to business capital sources; 2) an increase in community salt production as a result of capital support and mentoring; 3) Increased community ability to market production results; 4) Strengthening the institutional framework of community salt business groups; and 5) The establishment of a business partnership network that supports sustainable production and marketing.

Theoretically, this research finding aligns with the concept of community empowerment, which emphasizes increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to independently manage their resources. The community salt business program not only provides economic assistance but also creates a social learning process that encourages communities to become more productive, independent, and competitive.

Thus, it can be confirmed that the sustainability of the community salt business program in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency has made a significant contribution to strengthening coastal community empowerment. However, the local government still needs to increase support for market

access, production technology, and institutional capacity building so that the program's benefits can continue to be felt sustainably by coastal communities in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the sustainability of the people's salt business program in strengthening the empowerment of coastal communities in Talabiu Village, Woha District, Bima Regency, it can be concluded that the people's salt business program has made a real contribution to increasing the empowerment of coastal communities.

The sustainability of the community salt business program, which includes providing business capital, increasing production, and marketing products, has been successful. The capital assistance provided by the government through the Bima Regency Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service has helped communities overcome capital constraints, increase salt production capacity, and expand marketing of their products. The program's impact is evident in increased business productivity and incomes for coastal communities.

The sustainability of the community salt business program through institutional strengthening and business partnerships has also yielded positive results. Institutional strengthening through coaching, training, and mentoring has improved the ability of community salt business groups to manage their businesses in a more organized manner. Furthermore, the established business partnerships have helped communities gain broader access to marketing, business information, and collaboration opportunities that support the sustainability of the community salt business.

Overall, the sustainability of the community salt business program has successfully strengthened the empowerment of coastal communities in Talabiu Village. This is demonstrated by improved access to capital, increased community salt production, enhanced marketing capabilities, strengthened business group institutions, and the formation of partnership networks that support sustainable business development. However, several challenges remain, particularly in marketing, which require further attention to ensure the program's continued benefits.

5. SUGGESTION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the suggestions that can be given are as follows:

1. For the Regional Government and the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service of Bima Regency, it is hoped that they can continue and improve the business capital assistance program for coastal communities, as well as expand technical assistance to improve the quality and quantity of people's salt production.
2. The government needs to strengthen marketing access for people's salt production, both through developing partnership networks with business actors, salt-using industries, and utilizing digital technology as a broader and more effective marketing tool.
3. Strengthening the institutional framework of people's salt business groups needs to be carried out continuously through training in business management, group administration, entrepreneurship, and financial management so that business groups are able to develop independently and sustainably.
4. It is hoped that coastal communities and members of the people's salt business group will be able to make optimal use of the assistance and guidance provided, increase

cooperation between group members, and continue to innovate in business management to increase the competitiveness of people's salt products.

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