Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies
ISSN: 2663-7197
DOI: 10.32996/jhsss
Journal Homepage: www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/jhsss

JHSSS
AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Implementation of Policy for Transforming Unproductive Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatera Province

Sasma Hamonangan Situmorang[1]✉, Fernandes Simangunsong [2], Dedeh Maryani [3] and Etin Indrayani[4]
[1]*Doctoral Candidate, Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, Jakarta, Indonesia)*
[2]*Professor, Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, Jakarta, Indonesia*
[3]*Professor, Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, Jakarta, Indonesia*
[4]*Associate Professor, Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, Jakarta, Indonesia*
Corresponding Author: Sasma Hamonangan Situmorang, **E-mail**: sasmahamongansitumorang@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT
North Tapanuli Regency is a major food-producing area in North Sumatra Province, but it still has a considerable amount of idle land. Through North Tapanuli Regency Regulation No. 23 of 2016, the local government is striving to convert idle land into productive land. However, the implementation of this policy still faces various challenges, such as unmet needs of target groups, uneven policy implementation, and limited resources. This study aims to identify, analyze, and explain the implementation of the policy, the determinants of success and failure, efforts to address failures, and the novelty of the policy implementation for converting idle land into productive land in Tapanuli Utara Regency. This study uses Hamdi's policy implementation theory, namely productivity, linearity, and efficiency. The determining factors that influence the success and failure of policy implementation consist of policy substance, the behavior of implementing officers, work network interactions, target group participation, and resources. The research method used was qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that policy implementation has not been fully productive, linear, or efficient. The main obstacles are lengthy procedures and the application of policies that are still based on priority areas. As a new development, this study recommends the need for more detailed regulations through a Regional Regulation on the Conversion of Fallow Land into Productive Land so that implementation can be more optimal and equitable.

| KEYWORDS
Unproductive Land, Productive Land, Policy Implementation

| ARTICLE INFORMATION
ACCEPTED: 01 June 2025 **PUBLISHED:** 14 June 2025 **DOI:** 10.32996/jhsss.2025.7.6.1

1. Background

The agricultural sector holds a strategic role in Indonesia's economy, particularly in ensuring food security and labor absorption. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023 shows that approximately 29.3% (twenty-nine point three percent) of Indonesia's population works in this sector, confirming its position as the largest employment provider (BPS, 2024). However, this significant potential faces the irony of food import dependency, caused by land limitations that prevent national agricultural productivity from keeping pace with population growth and demand (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). In this context, the utilization of idle land emerges as a crucial solution. A BRIN study states that idle land utilization can become a mainstay in meeting national food needs amid the challenge of increasing population (Lambang, 2014). This policy aligns with agrarian reform in MPR RI Decree No. IX/MPR/2001, which emphasizes equitable reorganization of land control and utilization. The national potential is highly significant, with 33.4 million hectares of idle land (20.1 million ha of tidal land and 13.3 million ha of freshwater swamps), of which 9.3 million hectares are potentially suitable for agricultural cultivation (jpnn.com, 2024).

North Tapanuli Regency holds the greatest agricultural potential, given that its topography consists predominantly of highlands and hills, making it highly suitable for agricultural sector development. Moreover, North Tapanuli Regency makes substantial contributions to the production of every key staple commodity in North Sumatra Province, such as rice, corn, soybeans, peanuts, cassava, and sweet potatoes. (Agriculture Office of North Sumatra Province, 2023) Therefore, it is crucial to continuously enhance agricultural development in North Tapanuli Regency, one approach being the utilization of idle land into productive farmland. This initiative not only serves as a local solution but also carries strategic implications in supporting national food security, aligning with the direction of the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) as outlined in Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2020**.**

Table 1: Community-Owned Idle Land Area in North Tapanuli Regency

No	Districts	Idle Land (Ha)	TOTAL
1	2	3	4
1	Parmonangan	278	278
2	Adiankoting	294	294
3	Sipoholon	140	140
4	Tarutung	250	250
5	Siatas Barita	240	240
6	Pahae Julu	140	140
7	Pahae Jae	221	221
8	Purbatua	280	280
9	Simangumban	200	200
10	Pangaribuan	1,781	1,781
11	Garoga	5,600	5,600
12	Sipahutar	1,452	1,452
13	Siborongborong	1,293	1,293
14	Pagaran	212	212
15	Muara	100	100
TOTAL		12,481	12,481

Source: North Tapanuli Regency Agriculture Office, 2023

Based on Table 1, North Tapanuli Regency has 12,481 (twelve thousand four hundred eighty-one) hectares of idle land distributed across 15 (fifteen) sub-districts. Garoga Sub-district contains the largest area of idle land at 5,600 (five thousand six hundred) hectares, while Muara Sub-district has the smallest area of 100 (one hundred) hectares. In 2016, the North Tapanuli Regency Regional Government issued a policy to encourage community management of idle land through Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2016 concerning Procedures for Granting, Reduction, Relief, and Exemption of Retribution for Using Government-Owned Heavy Vehicles/Equipment. This policy resulted in the conversion of 8,694 (eight thousand six hundred ninety-four) hectares from idle to productive land over the past four years.

The agricultural sector's critical importance for North Tapanuli's community is reflected in its vision: "North Tapanuli as a Food Barn and Quality Human Resource Hub along with a Tourism Destination," as enshrined in Regional Regulation Number 03 of 2020 concerning the 2019-2024 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). To realize the "Food Barn" vision, the regional government established Regent's Decree (SK Bupati) Number 39.1 of 2021 on Free Community Land Cultivation as a Regional Innovation, enabling residents to convert idle land into productive plots with free local government assistance. However, this policy contradicts the earlier Regent Regulation 23/2016, which primarily governs procedures for reducing and waiving retribution fees for using regional government-owned heavy equipment. Subsequently, to further support idle land conversion, the government issued Regent's Instruction (Inbup) Number 18 of 2022 on Technical Guidelines for Free Community Land Cultivation (PANGDAM) Using 4-Wheel Tractors. This policy has gradually transformed agricultural land management in North Tapanuli from traditional methods to modern practices using agricultural machinery (alsintan).

Since the implementation of idle land conversion policies (primarily from 2015 to 2023), there have been 7,683 (seven thousand six hundred eighty-three) applicants, with only 6,907 (six thousand nine hundred seven) realized projects. Applications peaked in 2023 with 1,400 (one thousand four hundred) requests, of which 1,201 (one thousand two hundred one) were realized. This indicates persistent implementation challenges in converting idle land to productive use within the regency, particularly regarding incomplete coverage of all target groups (farmers/farmer groups).

Table 2: Proposal for Free Land Processing and Implementation for the Period of 2015-2023

No	Years	Amount of Proposals	Realization
1	2015	43	20
2	2016	751	643
3	2017	907	824
4	2018	924	851
5	2019	880	805
6	2020	914	805
7	2021	1.004	968
8	2022	860	789
9	2023	1.400	1.201
Total		**7.683**	**6.907**

Source: Dinas Pertanian Kabupaten Tapanuli Utara tahun 2023

Problems in the implementation of the policy to convert idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency can also be seen from the uneven distribution of its execution. Of the 15 sub-districts in North Tapanuli Regency, the policy has only been implemented in 12. This issue certainly presents a challenge for the North Tapanuli Regency Local Government, considering the policy is intended to apply to all areas within the regency. Neither the North Tapanuli Regent's Regulation No. 23 of 2016, the Regent's Decree No. 39.1 of 2021, nor the Regent's Instruction No. 18 of 2022 specifies priority locations or areas for the policy's implementation.

One of the factors contributing to the various problems in the policy's implementation is the limited availability of supporting assets. The North Tapanuli Regency Local Government owns 13 units of heavy equipment, specifically large 4-wheeled tractors. This number is not proportional to the 15 sub-districts in the regency. Of these 13 units, only 9 tractors are in good condition, 3 have minor damage, and 1 is heavily damaged. Furthermore, the number of available field implementers (heavy equipment operators) is not commensurate with the availability of agricultural machinery (alsintan). There are 16 heavy equipment operators, a number that is disproportionate to the 13 available machinery units.

Based on the phenomenon of uneven policy execution and resource limitations, it is evident that various problems persist in the implementation of converting idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency, particularly in fulfilling targets and ensuring the efficiency of personnel and assets. Therefore, this study, titled "The Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province," is designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of this issue. The research will begin by examining in detail *how* the policy has been implemented on the ground to understand its practical application. Subsequently, it will identify the key determinant factors that contribute to both the successes and failures of this initiative. Building upon that analysis, the study will then formulate and propose concrete efforts to overcome the determinant factors of failure, thereby offering a holistic view of its processes, challenges, and potential improvements.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Public Policy

Literally, public policy is an instrument used to achieve common interests and goals, not for the interests of individuals, factions, or specific groups. As explained by Rusli, public policy is a tool to achieve public goals, not the goals of individuals or groups. Furthermore, Rusli notes that although it is a "tool," the existence of public policy is very important and crucial. It is deemed important because its existence is decisive in achieving a goal, although other prerequisites or stages must still be fulfilled before reaching the desired objective. It is crucial because a policy that has been well-crafted on paper with high-quality content cannot necessarily be implemented to produce results that align with its creators' intentions (Rusdi, Budiman, 2013).

On the other hand, public policy is a series of decisions that contain moral consequences, involving a commitment to the interests of the general public and an obligation to the homeland or the territory in which it is applied (Tachjan, 2006). The key point is that policy is seen as a series of decisions with moral consequences, tied to the interests of the wider community and a responsibility towards the homeland or the region where the policy is implemented.

In line with this view, according to Hamdi, public policy is one of the outputs or results of the process of governance, alongside other results such as laws and regulations, public goods, and public services. Therefore, public policy is very closely related to the character of a nation's territory (Hamdi, 2020). The argument is that public policy is viewed as one of the outcomes of governance

that is closely linked to the character of a nation's territory, as policies are fundamentally designed based on the needs and conditions of that territory.

Broadly speaking, public policy can be described as whatever governments choose to do or not to do to regulate the behavior of society. As explained by Thomas R. Dye, "*Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do*" (Dye, 2013). This is further specified by Kraft and Furlong: "*Public policy is what public officials within government, and by extension the citizens they represent, choose to do or not to do about public problems*" (Kraft, 2018). Similar to Dye, Kraft and Furlong view policy as whatever the government does or does not do. However, there is a difference between the two views: Dye sees policy as a means to regulate public behavior, whereas Kraft and Furlong see it as a way to address public problems.

In a broader scope, public policy is seen as a deliberate effort to change social systems. As William Dunn stated in his book *Public Policy Analysis*, "public policies are deliberate attempts to change social systems" (Dunn, 2018).

Another perspective, according to Taufiqurakhman, is that public policy is a series of policy decisions made by an individual or a group of people to realize specific goals within society (Taufiqurakhman, 2014). Different from the previous views, this perspective places more emphasis on public policy as a series of decisions and actions that can be taken by individuals or groups. In other words, policy here can be made *by* the public *for* the public, differing from the previous views that emphasize public policy made by the government for the public.

Based on the understanding from these various views on public policy, it can be understood that public policy is whatever the government chooses to do or not to do to achieve goals, whether to address existing problems within society or to regulate what public behavior is permissible or not. In this research, the policy in question refers to North Tapanuli Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2016 concerning the Procedures for Granting Reductions, Relief, and Exemptions for the Retribution on the Use of Regionally-Owned Heavy Equipment/Vehicles; North Tapanuli Regent Decree Number 39.1 of 2021 concerning Community Free Land Processing in North Tapanuli Regency in 2021 as a Regional Innovation; and North Tapanuli Regent Instruction Number 18 of 2022 concerning the Technical Guidelines for Community Free Land Processing (*PANGDAM*) Using 4-Wheeled Tractors.

2.2 Implementation of Public Policy

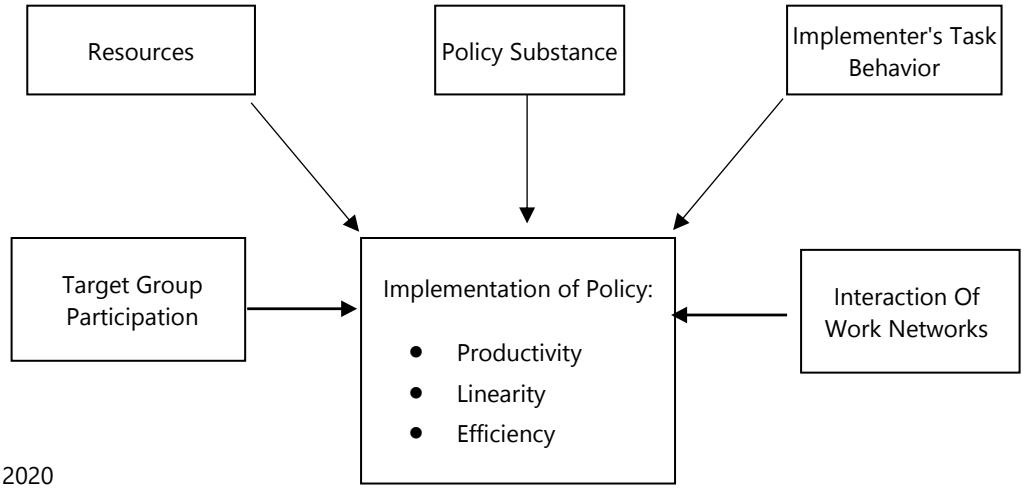
Etymologically, implementation can be defined as an activity related to the completion of a task through the use of means (tools) to obtain results. When this definition of implementation is linked with public policy, the term "public policy implementation" can be interpreted as the activity of completing or executing a public policy that has been established/approved, using means (tools) to achieve the policy's objectives (Tachjan, 2006). Tachjan then specifically explains that public policy implementation is the process of administrative activities carried out after a policy has been established/approved (Tachjan, 2006). Interpreting this view, policy implementation is defined as the administrative process undertaken after a policy is established or approved, with the aim of realizing that policy through concrete actions.

In line with this view, according to Hamdi, "the execution or implementation of a policy is concerned with the efforts to achieve the objectives for which a particular policy was established" (Hamdi, 2020). The key point is that policy implementation is an effort made to achieve the objectives set forth in a specific policy, so that the policy can run effectively and as planned.

Based on the several views above, public policy implementation can be understood as the process that occurs after a policy is established. This process involves various actors in carrying out the policy towards the target groups so that the policy can be realized. This research discusses how the Regional Government of North Tapanuli Regency implements North Tapanuli Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2016 concerning the Procedures for Granting Reductions, Relief, and Exemptions for the Retribution on the Use of Regionally-Owned Heavy Equipment/Vehicles; North Tapanuli Regent Decree Number 39.1 of 2021 concerning Community Free Land Processing in North Tapanuli Regency in 2021 as a Regional Innovation; and North Tapanuli Regent Instruction Number 18 of 2022 concerning the Technical Guidelines for Community Free Land Processing (PANGDAM) Using 4-Wheeled Tractors.

Hamdi (2020) states that the determinants of public policy implementation refer to the various factors that can influence the success of policy implementation. These determinants relate to policy substance, implementer's task behavior, interaction of work networks, target group participation, and resources (Hamdi, 2020). Furthermore, the relationship between these determinants or their dimensions can be seen in the figure below:

Figure 3: Dimensi dan Determinan Implementasi Kebijakan



Source: Hamdi, 2020

From Figure 3, it can be explained that policy implementation is intended to understand what happens after a policy is formulated, as well as the impacts that arise from the policy program. Moreover, policy implementation is not only related to administrative matters but also involves examining the environmental factors that influence its implementation process.

The success of policy implementation can be influenced by several main factors, such as the policy content, the level of information among the involved actors, support for the policy, and the distribution of roles and responsibilities. The policy content should have at least clear and detailed objectives, as well as the availability of means and priority programs. Likewise, the involved actors must have sufficient information to be able to carry out the policy properly. Furthermore, to achieve a degree of success, public policy requires adequate support, whether in the form of information, means, or funding, and a balanced distribution of potential or tasks, authority, and responsibility. An imbalance among the actors can lead to policy failure. Conversely, if the policy content is unclear or too general (multi-interpretable), a lack of information causes confusion, there is insufficient support for and execution of the policy, and the distribution of tasks, authority, and responsibility is unbalanced, it can lead to failure in implementing a policy.

The framework of thinking for this research can be described as follows: This research is guided by the policy implementation theory proposed by Hamdi, which consists of three main indicators for assessing the Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, as follows:

1. Productivity in this research refers to the number of target groups reached in relation to the implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.
2. Linearity pertains to the conformity of procedures, time, cost, place, and implementers related to the implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.
3. Efficiency provides an overview of how the resources of implementers, assets, funds, and technology are utilized in the implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.

Similarly, to examine the determinant factors of policy implementation, the theory of policy implementation determinants proposed by Hamdi is used, which consists of five determinant factors in policy implementation, namely:

1. Policy Substance Policy substance relates to the consistency of the derivation of policy content/specifications and the alignment of the policy's content with applicable regulations or laws related to the implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.
2. Implementer's Task Behavior Implementer's task behavior in this research describes the work motivation, tendency for abuse of power, and learning capability related to the implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.
3. Interaction of Work Networks Interaction of work networks explains the cooperation of the policy implementers (the North Tapanuli Regency Government) in carrying out the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.
4. Target Group Participation This determinant of policy implementation describes how the community in North Tapanuli Regency contributes according to procedures in relation to the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.

5. Resources Sufficient funds and equipment, the availability of implementers and information, and the use of appropriate technology related to the implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province.

Furthermore, to understand the efforts made to overcome the inhibiting factors in the Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, they are examined as: Internally and Externally.
The national legal basis as the normative foundation for this research is based on the mandate contained in:

1. MPR Decree No. IX/MPR-RI/2001 concerning Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management.
2. Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government.
3. Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan.

The regional legal basis as the normative foundation for this research is based on the mandate contained in:

1. North Tapanuli Regent Regulation No. 23 of 2016 concerning the Procedures for Granting Reductions, Relief, and Exemptions for the Retribution on the Use of Regionally-Owned Heavy Equipment/Vehicles.
2. North Tapanuli Regent Decree No. 39.1 of 2021 concerning Community Free Land Processing in North Tapanuli Regency in 2021 as a Regional Innovation.
3. North Tapanuli Regent Instruction No. 18 of 2022 concerning the Technical Guidelines for Community Free Land Processing (PANGDAM) Using 4-Wheeled Tractors.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method, aiming to reach conclusions that cannot be derived through conventional statistical techniques or other measurable approaches. Through this method, a deeper understanding can be gained regarding the impact of various institutions and social groups on the lives of their members, as well as other social phenomena. As is common in qualitative research, this study requires diverse data sources, categorized into two main types: informants and documents. Informants are individuals who provide data through their speech and actions, making their words and behavior the primary pillar of data collection, while other elements serve as reinforcements or complementary sources.
In conducting this research, two main types of data are collected: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to information obtained directly from its source through direct interaction with research subjects. The collection of primary data can be conducted through interviews and direct observation. This type of data may take the form of audio recordings, video recordings, or photographs, which are directly produced by the researcher. Since primary data is collected firsthand, it is new and relevant to the latest developments in the research context.
On the other hand, secondary data refers to information that is not directly obtained from its original source but rather gathered through pre-existing documents or records. This type of data includes written manuscripts, archived photographs, and statistical data compiled by other institutions. The management of secondary data requires a collection method tailored to its unique characteristics, ensuring that the data can be optimally utilized as a supporting component for analysis in this research.
The method of determining informants in this study employs a purposive sampling approach to ensure that the selected informants are relevant to the research based on their authority, experience, or expertise in Policy implementation of management unproductive land become productive in north tapanuli regency north sumatera province. Meanwhile, snowball sampling is used to expand the scope of informants by relying on recommendations from previous informants, thereby obtaining richer and more in-depth data. The combination of these two techniques enables the study to obtain valid, comprehensive, and representative information on the issues being examined.

Table 3: List of Informan

No	Name	Job Title	Information
1	Nikson Nababan	Regent of North Tapanuli	Policymaker
2	Andri Hamonangan Nababan	Member of the North Tapanuli Regency DPRD (Regional Council)	Policymaker
3	S.E.Y Pasaribu	Head of the North Tapanuli Regency Agriculture Office	Official in Charge of the Policy
4	Revansius T.P Nababan	Head of the Division of Infrastructure and Facilities, North Tapanuli Regency Agriculture Office	Policy Implementer
5	Douglas Butarbutar	Head of the Food Crops Division, North Tapanuli Regency Agriculture Office	Policy Implementer

6	Santo Iwan Situmorang	Head of the UPTD for Agricultural Machinery, North Tapanuli Regency	Policy Implementer
7	Sidik Pagar Sinondi Hutabarat	Coordinator of Tarutung Sub-district	A sub-district that has received land processing assistance
8	Renol Sitompul	Coordinator of Purbatua Sub-district	A sub-district that has not yet received land processing assistance
9	Luhut Situmeang	Chairperson of the Tarutung Sub-district Farmer Group	A target group that has received land processing assistance
10	Tigor Sihombing	Chairperson of the Purbatua Sub-district Farmer Group	A target group that has not yet received land processing assistance

This study employs a combination of primary and secondary data collection techniques to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded approach in analyzing collaborative governance in food security implementation. Primary data collection relies on in-depth interviews, allowing informants to express their insights, arguments, and perspectives freely. A structured interview guide is used as a reference, but questions are further developed during the conversation to gather deeper insights. Informants include stakeholders who play important roles in creating and implementing policies for managing fallow land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency, as well as community groups in North Tapanuli Regency as the beneficiaries of policy implementation.
In addition to interviews, the study also applies non-participant observation, ensuring that the researcher does not interfere in the observed activities. This method is chosen to maintain objectivity and preserve the natural setting of the subjects, avoiding external influences. The observations are conducted on-site, specifically in the North Tapanuli Regency, where the policies for managing fallow land into productive land are in effect, with an observation guide used to ensure consistency in data collection. Furthermore, a documentary study is utilized to collect reports, news articles, official documents, and academic literature relevant to the implementation of policies for managing fallow land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency. By combining these three methods, this research ensures data validity and reliability, providing a comprehensive perspective on governance, policy implementation, and stakeholder engagement in food security efforts.

In this qualitative study, data collection and analysis are conducted interactively, following the framework outlined by Huberman and Miles (2009). The analysis process consists of four key stages, beginning with data collection, where information is systematically gathered from the field while maintaining a clear research focus. Following this, data condensation is carried out, involving the selection, simplification, abstraction, and transformation of raw data, including field notes, interview transcripts, and documents, to enhance clarity and organization. The next stage, data display, structures and organizes information to facilitate interpretation, deduction, and decision-making, with visual representation aiding in further analysis or intervention. Finally, conclusion drawing involves identifying patterns, causal relationships, and hypotheses, ensuring that findings are well-supported by empirical evidence (Miles & Huberman, 2009).

To guarantee data validity and reliability, a rigorous verification process is applied through data representation and classification. This study employs triangulation, a technique that cross-checks findings using multiple sources and analytical methods to strengthen the credibility of the conclusions. Source triangulation is conducted by verifying data obtained from various stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies for managing fallow land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency. By incorporating multiple validation techniques, this study ensures that data integrity is maintained, reinforcing the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research findings.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency

The conversion of idle land into productive land has essentially been implemented since 2015 and continues to this day. The emergence of this policy in North Tapanuli Regency was driven by the existence of approximately 23,168 Ha of land that had not been productively utilized and which held great potential for development into productive agricultural land.
To this day, the agricultural sector remains the backbone of North Tapanuli Regency's economy, serving as a generator of added value and regional revenue, as well as a source of income and provider of employment for the majority of the population. Therefore, a regulation governing the procedures for land processing for the community was important, established through North Tapanuli Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2016 concerning the Procedures for Granting Reductions, Relief, and Exemptions for the Retribution on the Use of Regionally-Owned Heavy Equipment/Vehicles. However, over time, this regulation was no longer

adequate to address the evolving challenges and societal conditions. Subsequently, North Tapanuli Regent Decree Number 39.1 of 2021 concerning Community Free Land Processing in North Tapanuli Regency in 2021 as a Regional Innovation was issued.
In line with this policy, the North Tapanuli Regency Government, together with the Agriculture Office, then initiated the PANGDAM (Free Land Processing with Mechanization) program in North Tapanuli Regency. This was stipulated in North Tapanuli Regent Instruction Number 18 of 2022 concerning the Technical Guidelines for Community Free Land Processing (PANGDAM) Using 4-Wheeled Tractors, aiming to support the policy of converting idle land into productive land by utilizing technological developments.
To understand how the policy for converting idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency is implemented, the researcher will present the research findings, which are the answers from research informants to the questions that have been posed. The research informants consist not only of stakeholders from the North Tapanuli Regency Government but also involve community members who work as farmers.
The questions posed by the researcher are based on the policy implementation theory according to Hamdi, using the dimensions of productivity, linearity, and efficiency. Additionally, to identify the determinant factors of the success and failure of the land conversion, Hamdi's perspective is also used, which consists of the factors of policy substance, implementer's task behavior, interaction of work networks, target group participation, and resources. Finally, the research aims to understand the internal and external efforts made to overcome the determinant factors of failure.

4.1.1 Productivity of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency

According to the view of Hamdi, one of the indicators of policy implementation, which consists of a series of descriptions of the dynamics of public implementation, is productivity. Hamdi further explains that concerning productivity, an important aspect to consider is the ability to achieve predetermined standards (Hamdi, 2020). In other words, this measures the extent of the North Tapanuli Regency Government's ability to realize the policy of converting idle land into productive land.
Furthermore, regarding the number of target groups, the greater or smoother the achievement in reaching these groups, the more productive the policy implementation can be considered. This also applies to the policy of converting idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency.
From the collection and analysis of the research data, it can be concluded that the implementation of the policy for converting idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency has shown significant success by targeting the right community groups. The policy, which began in 2015, specifically targets farmers, especially those with idle land and limited access to agricultural facilities, who constitute 80% of the region's population. As a result, there has been an extraordinary increase in community participation, where many previously inactive farmers have returned to cultivating their land thanks to government support in the form of free land processing facilitation, assistance with agricultural machinery, and technical guidance. This policy has not only succeeded in increasing agricultural productivity and strengthening the local economy but has also created new job opportunities and revived the spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) at the village level. Nevertheless, its achievement is not yet optimal, because out of a total potential land area of 23,168 hectares, only about 6,907 hectares have been successfully cultivated. This indicates that there is still significant room for development and that many requests from the community have not yet been accommodated.

4.1.2 Linearity of the Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency

According to Hamdi, another indicator of policy implementation, which provides a framework for the dynamics of public implementation, is linearity. Hamdi further states that linearity pertains to the conformity of the standard fulfillment process with predetermined standard specification guidelines. The conformity referred to consists of procedure, time, cost, place, and implementer. This means that the greater the conformity in meeting these standard requirements, the more linear the policy implementation becomes.
From the collection and analysis of the research data, it can be concluded that the implementation of the policy for managing idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency has generally run in a linear and structured manner, in accordance with established standards. This conformity is evident in the aspects of systematic procedures, timeliness that aligns with the annual schedule, accountable use of funds in line with the regional budget (APBD) allocation, location determination based on verification, and the appointment of competent implementers through official decrees. However, behind this technical conformity, this research reveals fundamental weaknesses that hinder the overall effectiveness of the policy. The most significant weakness is the problem of uneven program outreach, where the policy's benefits have not been equitably distributed, and there are still three potential sub-districts that have not been reached at all. Furthermore, inconsistencies were found in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which are imperfect and do not fully reflect the practices on the ground, especially regarding the involvement of village and sub-district governments. Thus, although this policy is successful in terms of process and accountability, its impact remains limited and not yet optimal due to weaknesses in the procedural design and the failure to ensure equitable access for all communities in the regency.

4.1.3 Efficiency of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency

According to Hamdi's perspective, efficiency relates to the ability to utilize resources in policy implementation. Hamdi further explains that concerning efficiency, there are several key points that must be considered for a policy to be deemed efficient, namely: implementers, assets, funds, and technology. In other words, the more efficient the use of these resources, the more it can be stated that the policy implementation has been running efficiently.

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the policy for converting idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency can be concluded to have achieved a high level of efficiency. This efficiency is not a random result, but rather the product of a structured and systematically coordinated resource management system. An in-depth analysis shows that this efficiency is manifested in four fundamental dimensions: the utilization of implementers, the utilization of assets, the utilization of funds, and the utilization of technology.

The first dimension of efficiency is identified in the aspect of human resource utilization (implementing apparatus). This research identifies success in building inter-agency synergy, a factor that often becomes an obstacle in public policy implementation. One significant finding is the existence of two technical teams formed under different legal bases. This does not indicate bureaucratic redundancy, but rather an effective functional differentiation strategy.

The first technical team, formed through a Regent's Decree, has a cross-sectoral composition and is mandated to carry out socialization and coordination functions at the macro level. This team plays a role in ensuring policy alignment and support from various stakeholders. Meanwhile, the second technical team, formed through a Decree of the Head of the Agriculture Office, has a leaner internal structure and functions as a technical implementation unit focused on operational implementation in the field. This clear division of roles allows each official to function according to their primary tasks and expertise, resulting in a directed and efficient workflow without overlapping authority.

The operational efficiency of this policy is fundamentally supported by the integrated utilization of assets and technology. The use of modern agricultural tools and machinery (alsintan) has become a primary catalyst in the transition from labor-intensive manual agricultural methods to a more productive mechanized system. This efficiency stems not only from the availability of hardware (alsintan) but also from the existence of an integrated asset management system operated by the UPTD Alsintan (Regional Technical Implementation Unit for Agricultural Machinery).

This system includes several crucial components: (1) a needs-based allocative mechanism with data sourced from farmer group proposals and land mapping; (2) priority-based and rotational scheduling of asset use to maximize utility; and (3) preventive maintenance management that ensures a high level of operational readiness and extends the technical lifespan of the assets. This systematic approach ensures that the assets owned by the regional government provide maximum leverage for accelerating land processing and improving the time efficiency of farmers' work.

The next aspect of efficiency is manifested in fund management that adheres to the principles of accountability and outcome-orientation (outcome-oriented budgeting). The allocation of the budget, sourced from the APBD (Regional Budget) as well as assistance from the central and provincial governments, is not carried out haphazardly but is based on real needs analysis and established priority scales. These funds are strategically directed towards interventions that have a direct impact on the program's success, such as the operational costs of alsintan, facilitation of free land processing, and technical capacity building for operators. Fiscal effectiveness is measured through concrete and measurable performance indicators, such as the increase in cultivated land area and active participation of farmer groups. The positive correlation between fund allocation and program achievements confirms that the financial mechanism applied runs efficiently and effectively, where each unit of cost incurred is able to produce commensurate outputs and outcomes.

Synthetically, it can be concluded that the high level of efficiency in this policy's implementation is the result of multi-aspect synergy. This efficiency is supported by an implementer structure with clear functional differentiation, an asset and technology infrastructure managed through an integrated management system, and an accountable and impact-oriented financial mechanism. Thus, the policy for converting idle land in North Tapanuli Regency can serve as an empirical model for other regions on how to design and implement efficient public policies through careful and structured resource management.

4.2 Determinant Factors Influencing the Success and Failure of the Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency

Regarding the determinant factors that influence the success and failure of policy implementation, according to Hamdi's view, there are at least five determinant factors: 1) Policy Substance, 2) Implementer's Task Behavior, 3) Interaction of Work Networks, 4) Target Group Participation, and 5) Resources. The research findings on the determinant factors of the success and failure of converting idle land into productive land in North Tapanuli Regency show that the policy's implementation presents a complex picture where success and failure go hand in hand, determined by a series of interrelated factors. This research identifies that while the policy has a very solid conceptual and structural foundation, its implementation on the ground faces significant operational challenges and resource limitations, which ultimately creates a dualism in achieving its goals.

The primary determinant factor driving the success of this policy lies in its policy substance, which was designed meticulously and systematically. This policy is not a stand-alone initiative but a consistent derivative of the regional development vision articulated in the North Tapanuli Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), namely as a "Food Granary." Its policy specifications,

from objectives and targets to procedures, are clearly defined and supported by a strong legal foundation, such as Regent Regulations and Decrees from the Head of the Agriculture Office. Furthermore, the success of this substance is reinforced by a high degree of alignment with other policies, both vertically with central government policies (the National Medium-Term Development Plan/RPJMN and Ministry of Agriculture programs) and horizontally with the programs of related regional government agencies (OPD). This harmonization ensures that the program runs on the right track, receives political and budgetary support, and avoids regulatory overlap.

This conceptual success is supported by the effective interaction of work networks among the implementers. The research identified synergistic cooperation and functional authority relations between the Agriculture Office as the main coordinator, the UPTD Alsintan (Regional Technical Implementation Unit for Agricultural Machinery) as the operational technical implementer, the Agricultural Extension Officers (PPL) as an information bridge, and the village governments that play a role in data verification at the grassroots level. Each entity understands its role in an integrated work chain. Other supporting factors include the learning capability of the apparatus, which is considered quite good and continuously developing, as well as the appropriateness of the technology used, with modern agricultural tools and machinery (alsintan) proving to be effective and greatly assisting farmers in accelerating the land processing. For the target groups that have been reached, the acceptance of the policy's benefits is very high, proving that intrinsically, the program is capable of delivering tangible positive impacts.

However, this solid foundation is eroded by several significant inhibiting factors, which are the main source of failure in achieving ideal scale and equity. The most acute weakness is identified in the task behavior of implementers at the operational level. There is a sharp contradiction between the high motivation of officials at the planning level and the low and undisciplined work motivation among some alsintan operators. This results in schedule delays and a decline in the quality of service. More seriously, this research found a tendency for abuse of power by individuals in the field, such as the practice of illegal levies, the use of alsintan for personal interests, and non-transparent service scheduling. This behavior not only hampers the program's effectiveness but also injures the principle of justice and damages public trust.

This condition is exacerbated by a chronic scarcity of resources. The sufficiency of funds has become a primary failure factor; the available budget is considered far from ideal to accommodate all needs, especially for the procurement of new alsintan, sustainable operational costs, and the development of supporting infrastructure like farm-to-market roads and irrigation. Consequently, equipment support has also become inadequate. The limited number of alsintan is not proportional to the vast potential of idle land, which directly leads to the program's inability to reach all areas.

This series of problems culminates in two other interrelated failure factors: the poor availability of information and the low ability of the target groups to contribute. Information about the program, its procedures, and how to participate circulates only internally among government circles and is not effectively disseminated to the wider public, especially to those in areas yet to be reached by the program. As a result, farmers do not understand how they can contribute proactively. They are positioned as passive objects merely waiting for direction, not as empowered subjects of development. This explains why community participation in its truest sense has not yet materialized, and many farmer groups feel left behind.

Holistically, these research findings describe a policy that excels in its design and institutional structure but is seriously hampered by behavioral problems at the implementation level, a fundamental resource deficit, and a failure to build effective communication and public participation.

4.3 Efforts to Overcome the Factors of Failure in the Implementation of the Policy for Converting Idle Land into Productive Land in North Tapanuli Regency

Based on the research findings, the North Tapanuli Regency Government has been identified as being aware of a number of inhibiting factors in the implementation of the policy for converting idle land into productive land. In response, the government is not passive, but rather has undertaken a series of strategic efforts that can be categorized based on their focus area. These efforts reflect a comprehensive approach that targets the root of the problems, both those internal to the bureaucracy and those involving collaboration with external parties.

One of the most significant weaknesses identified is the issue with the behavior of implementers at the operational level, particularly the operators of agricultural tools and machinery (alsintan). To address this, the government has applied a two-pronged strategy that combines an internal disciplinary approach with external capacity building.

a. Internally and Directly: The government, through the Agriculture Office, has taken firm intervention to enforce discipline. This is realized through the tightening of supervision and routine monitoring of operator performance in the field. Moreover, a periodic evaluation system has been implemented as a basis for applying sanctions. The forms of sanctions vary, ranging from verbal and written reprimands, warnings, to task rotation for operators proven to be undisciplined. Indirectly, this effort is also encouraged through the creation of a more disciplined and transparent work culture, including the discourse on implementing a reward and punishment system to boost performance.
b. Externally and Directly: Realizing that sanctions alone are not sufficient, the government has established cooperation with third parties to improve operator competency. Collaboration has been carried out with vocational training institutions and the Agricultural Training Centern to organize refreshment training. This training focuses not only on the technical skills of

operating alsintan but also on coaching in work ethics and professional responsibility. Furthermore, the government encourages social oversight by actively involving village governments and farmer groups in the system for reporting and evaluating operator performance, thereby creating a transparent and accountable control mechanism from the community as service recipients.

Another inhibiting factor is the limitation of information reaching the public, which causes low proactive participation from the target groups. To overcome this, the government has launched various communication strategies.

a. Direct Socialization: The most fundamental effort is to reactivate the role of Agricultural Extension Officers (PPL) as the spearhead of information. They are assigned to conduct door-to-door socialization to farmer groups, explaining in detail the procedures for applying for assistance, the benefits of the program, and how to get actively involved.
b. Utilization of Institutional and Digital Channels: Indirectly but in a structured manner, the Development Planning Deliberation forum (Musrenbang) is utilized as a two-way medium. On one hand, the government socializes the program, and on the other, the forum serves as a platform for farmers to voice their aspirations and constraints from the grassroots level. Additionally, the government has also begun to use the Agriculture Office's social media platforms as a channel for information dissemination, although its effectiveness is admittedly still limited to providing service contact information and is not yet interactive.

Facing the main constraint of limited funds and equipment, which hinders the equitable distribution of the program, the government has taken strategic steps to mobilize resources from outside the regional budget.

a. Vertical Advocacy: Internally, the government proactively conducts communication and advocacy to the central and provincial governments. A concrete step is compiling and submitting proposals through the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) scheme aimed at the agricultural sector, with the hope of obtaining additional budget allocations for the procurement of new alsintan and other operational financing.
b. Horizontal Partnership: Externally, the government has opened channels of cooperation with third parties, including the private sector. One form of cooperation that has been established is receiving assistance in the form of alsintan along with their operators from private companies operating in the region. This step demonstrates a pragmatic approach to finding alternative solutions amidst regional fiscal limitations.

Overall, the efforts undertaken by the North Tapanuli Regency Government to overcome the factors of failure are holistic, targeting improvements in the aspects of human resources, communication flow, and resource mobilization. The combination of internal discipline enforcement, external capacity building through cooperation, as well as strategic advocacy and partnerships demonstrates a serious commitment to perfecting this policy's implementation to be more effective, equitable, and accountable.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

[1] Danur Lambang, Hadapi Krisis Pangan, Pemanfaatan Lahan Tidur Jadi Solusi, tersedia: https://lestari.kompas.com/read/2024/05/13/190000586/hadapi-krisis-pangan-pemanfaatan-lahan-tidur-jadi-solusi, Posted on December 20, 2024
[2] Ditjen Perbendaharaan Kemenkeu RI, KPPN Wantampone, 2024, Dampak Kebijakan Impor terhadap Ketahanan Pangan di Indonesia
[3] Dunn, William N, 2018, Public Policy Analysis (sixth edition), New York, Routledge
[4] Dye, Thomas R, 2013, Understanding Public Policy (Fourteenth Edition), United States, Pearson
[5] Hamdi, Muchlis, 2020, Kebijakan Publik (Proses, Anallisis, dan Partisipasi), Bogor, Ghalia Indonesia
[6] North Tapanuli Regent Instruction Number 18 of 2022 concerning the Technical Guidelines for Community Free Land Processing (PANGDAM) Using 4-Wheeled Tractors
[7] Jpnn.com, Indonesia Punya Potensi Lahan Tidur Seluas 9,3 Juta Hektare, tersedia: https://m.jpnn.com/news/indonesia-punya-potensi-lahan-tidur-seluas-93-juta-hektare, Posted on December 20, 2024
[8] Kraft, Michael E, dan Furlong, Scott R, 2018, Public Policy (Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives) Sixth Edition, United States of America, SAGE Publications
[9] North Tapanuli Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2016 concerning the Procedures for Granting Reductions, Relief, and Exemptions for the Retribution on the Use of Regionally-Owned Heavy Equipment/Vehicles.
[10] Presidential Regulation Number 18 of 2020 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan.
[11] Rusfiana, Yudi, dan Supriatna, Cahya, 2021, Memahami Birokrasi Pemerintahan Dan Perkembangan, Bandung, Alfa Beta
[12] Rusli, Budiman, 2013, Kebijakan Publik (Membangun kebijakan publik yang responsif), Bandung, Hakim Publishing
[13] Simangunsong, Fernandes, 2017, Metode Penelitian Pemerintahan, Bandung, Alfabet
[14] North Tapanuli Regent Decree Number 39.1 of 2021 concerning Community Free Land Processing in North Tapanuli Regency in 2021 as a Regional Innovation.
[15] Tachjan, 2006, Implementasi Kebijakan Publik, Bandung, AIPI

[16] Taufiqurakhman, 2014, Kebijakan Publik (Pendelegasian Tanggungjawab Negara Kepada Presiden Selaku Penyelenggara Pemerintahan), Jakarta, FISIP UMB Perss
[17] MPR Decree Number IX/MPR-RI/2001 concerning Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management.
[18] The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.
[19] Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government.