

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION POLICY

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**Abstract.** *The lack of stakeholder collaboration is considered one of the main triggers for unsustainable regional innovation. This phenomenon often occurs in archipelago countries due to limited access to information in the region. In this context, the current discourse between public administration scholars and policy practitioners emphasizes the importance of collaboration in policy innovation. This study aims to examine local government innovation policies in Indonesia, an archipelago country in Southeast Asia, with a focus on the policy formulation process which involves collaboration to produce innovative policies. This study uses a mixed methods research approach based on a sequential explanatory design consisting of two main stages. The first stage uses a quantitative method, followed by the second stage which uses a qualitative approach. The research data consisted of a combination of primary and secondary data obtained from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This data was analysed descriptively using NVivo software and supplemented with statistical analysis results. The results of this study confirm the existence of a pattern of dependence between collaborative actors, in which regional heads have a dominant role in the formulation of innovative policies. However, business actors, academics, and community leaders are rarely involved, indicating that they are highly dependent on regional leadership initiatives. As a result, the resulting innovation policies tend to be unsustainable. Therefore, this research suggests that collaboration forums become the main reference in building and creating sustainable regional innovations. This forum is expected to facilitate common aspirations and innovative arguments, as well as encourage the creation of broader innovative policies. In conclusion, the lack of stakeholder collaboration is one of the main obstacles to creating sustainable policy innovations in the regions. To overcome this challenge, collaboration forums are important to facilitate collaboration and active participation of various stakeholders. With stronger collaboration, it is hoped that sustainable innovative policies will be created, addressing regional problems, and improving people's quality of life.*

**Keywords:** *local government, innovation policy, collaboration, policy formulation*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *vietos valdžia, inovacijų politika, bendradarbiavimas, politikos formavimas*

### Introduction

Future turbulence has emanated expectations for public services that are distinctive and superior, as well as regional success at the peak of competition. This is forcing local governments to focus on sustain-

able creativity and innovation (Tammi et al., 2020). This situation is a consequence of the type of government that has experienced a significant shift. The availability of new digital communication methods has changed the engagement of people and government authorities (Yuan et al., 2022). In other words, the local government of the future will have effective policies that focus on the needs and involvement of the community and employees who are adaptable and flexible in changing and collaborating. External actors (from outside the local government) are concerned about the environment of the government and emphasize the need for supporting technology.

In this regard, local governments now operate systemically in an environment that is not a vacuum because of the aforementioned future developments and changes. This is in the competitive domain. Consequently, efficiency and effectiveness alone are not sufficient for the achievements of the current local government. In addition, local governments must actively participate in realizing this through imagination and ingenuity.

In Indonesia, there has been a change in the development of innovation among local governments. However, many innovations do not change the level of other fields forever (Noor, 2019). Likewise, the data submitted by Tan (2019) regarding the development of regional innovation in Indonesia states: "Only 55.57 percent of the 542 provincial, regency/city governments in Indonesia have entered their local government innovation data". According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs, many regions lack innovation (Mujiani, 2020). Meanwhile, there are many cases of maladministration of public services by local governments. The Indonesian Ombudsman stated the data for 2017-2021 as follows:

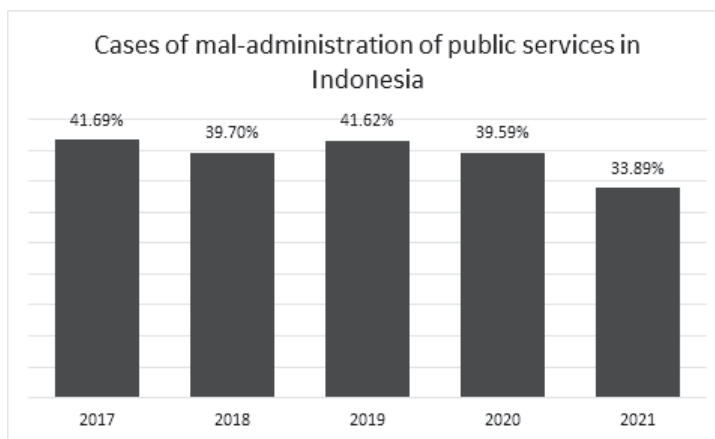


Figure 1. Proportion of mal-administration practice in local governments of Indonesia in 2017-2021

Source: Ombudsman of Republic of Indonesia (2021)

There are at least two primary reasons underpinning this phenomenon: (1) The formulation of innovation policies is carried out individually and within the scope of a stand-alone unit. Consequently, policy implementation (innovation) is uncertain. Innovation under the umbrella of regional head policies is the responsibility of individuals or groups in the local government. Actors other than local governments play an important role in local government policies. Noor (2013) shows the dominant role of political actors in innovation policy. In addition, Noor (2013) shows the dominant role of political actors in innovation policy. In addition, consideration of the role of universities or colleges has already begun (Tian, Su, & Yang, 2021); (Čudić, Alešnik, & Hazemali, 2022). It is also not much different from the roles of society and businesspeople (Van Ham, 2011). The second cause (2) is the result of a lack of fairness and discipline, as well as poor employee relations.

One answer to completing the development of sustainable innovation in local governments is collaboration in the formulation of innovation policies. Two things underlie this: (1) Juridically, it is the embodiment of the mandate of Government Regulation No. 38/2017, especially in Article 7. The article states that “regional innovation proposals can come from regional heads, local council members, state civil apparatuses, regional apparatuses, and community members. Thus, policies can be formulated through collaborations among these actors. (2) Collaborative studies on innovation policy have become a concern for academics in various contemporary studies. Marasco, et al (2018); Sorensen & Waldorff (2014).

A collaborative approach to innovation policy involves not only internal parts of the organization but also external parties in developing new ideas for the sustainability and improvement of innovation policies. The assumption is that the acceleration of innovation policies in local governments is neither independent nor individual. It moves into the realm of togetherness. Collaboration is needed to formulate and implement policies.

Unfortunately, very few studies have been conducted on this topic. An understanding of innovation policy is seen only on one side. Generally, studies have focused on technological, organizational, individual, and organizational environmental factors (Haneem & Kama, 2018); (Rosenblatt, 2011). In addition, innovation studies on local governments, as in the study conducted by Muluk, Rizki, and Muzaqi (2021, September), Pratama (2020) look at it from an influential actor in formulating innovation, namely the government. To address this gap, this study examines the roles of several actors in the collaborative innovation process and how collaboration forms between actors through the policy formulation process. The policy formulation process is the embodiment of collaboration products, namely the knowledgeability of actors, their commitment, and their dependencies. As collaborative innovation is a new concept that combines findings from recent research on collaborative governance with insights from innovation theory, the originality of this research lies in its application and exploration of the concept in one of Indonesia's regions.

Despite one of the efforts to avoid increasingly fierce competition turbulence in the future, a collaborative approach to policy formulation needs to be adopted by local governments in Indonesia. This can speed up time by examining various social phenomena in local governments. Thus, many opportunities exist to accept and implement innovation policies. Based on this, the question proposed in this study is how to build a collaboration model for local governments' innovation policies.

## Theoretical study

**Innovation Policy.** Innovation is the introduction of new solutions in response to problems, challenges, or opportunities that arise in the social and/or economic environment (Fagerberg et al., 2005). The role of innovation is to turn research novelties into new and better services and products to remain competitive in the global marketplace and improve people's quality of life. Innovation policy is the confluence of technology research with development and industrial policies. It aims to create a framework conducive to bringing ideas into the market (Gouardères, 2021). Fegerberg (2017) explained that attention to innovation policy continues to increase with the development of a new systematic understanding of innovation. However, despite being a concern, there is still much understanding of innovation policy. Clarifying this definition, the World Bank (2010) revealed that innovation is highly dependent on the overall conditions of the economy, government, education, and infrastructure. Such a framework is particularly problematic in developing countries, but experience has shown not only that proactive innovation policies are possible and effective, but also that they help create an environment for broader reforms. This study focuses on the policy formulation process. One of the most important aspects of the formulation process is the role of the actors involved. Policymaking is known to be an actor in formulating or making policies. Ramesh and Howlett (2003) suggested that several actors are involved in the policy process, such as executives and legislatures produced through elections (elected officials), appointed officials, bureaucrats (appointed officials), interest groups, research organizations, and mass media.

**Collaborative Innovation.** Public organizations have adopted innovation and collaboration as a strategy to achieve better results in general crisis management (Elston et al., 2018; Nohrstedt et al., 2018), optimization of available resources (Diamond & Vangen, 2017; Lewis et al., 2018), and as a response to technological and social development (Seo et al., 2018). Collaborative innovation is a new term that combines findings from recent research on collaborative governance with insights from the innovation theory (Torfing, 2013). Collaborative innovation, as stated by Ketchen et al. (2007) is defined as “the pursuit of innovations across firms’ boundaries through the sharing of ideas, knowledge, expertise, and opportunities.” Sørensen and Torfing (2015) understand innovation collaboration from the perspective of business, systems theory, or innovation theory in economics. However, in the latest context, this study examines it from the perspective of open innovation theory. The focus is on collaboration in policy formulation from a process standpoint, using the Cognition and Information approach. This approach views the formulation of innovation policies as accommodation and involvement of various elements. Collaborative innovation can take place in various forms, contexts, and partnerships across sectors, for example, in the Triple Helix (university-industry-government) model (Audretsch & Belitski, 2021).

Collaborative innovation is a means of developing synergy through interactions with organizations with different backgrounds. This shows that collaborative innovation is key to sustainable organizational development (Bai et al., 2020). Lindblom (1992) revealed that to understand who formulates policies, one must first understand the characteristics of all actors and participants. What part or role do they play, the authority or form of power they have, and how do they relate to and supervise each other? Simply put, Anderson (1984) reveals that policy actors include internal bureaucratic actors and external actors who always have an interest in the policy. Three factors play a role in the collaboration in the formulation of the innovation policy: 1) the Knowledgeability of Actors, (2) the actors’ commitment, and (3) resource dependence.

## Research methods

This study uses a mixed research method with a sequential explanatory design. In the first stage, qualitative methods were used. Triangulation concerning data convergence was initiated during the early stages of this study. This method provides informative insights into the research object. Various narrative data gathered during this qualitative research method assisted researchers in developing questions for questionnaires. The second stage employed quantitative methods, specifically survey types. Selection of research locations using the multiple cluster sampling method. Based on data from the Ministry of Home Affairs, East Kalimantan Province has ten regencies and cities, consisting of seven regencies and three cities. The number of sample areas was determined using an online sample size calculator with a confidence level of 95 and a confidence interval of 75 percent. Establish a dividing area between the municipal government (represented by Banjarmasin City) and the regency government (represented by the Penajam Regency). The research unit consists of 32 actors, five of which make up the research unit: politicians (12.5%), businesspeople (21.9%), community leaders (37.5%), academics from nearby universities (15.6%), and government officials (12.5%). Each actor was from the city government (50 percent) and the district government (50 percent).

This study focuses on the concept of the policy formulation process, which is the embodiment of the product of collaboration. The focus consists of three things: (1) the knowledgeability of actors, namely, knowledge and understanding of actors on innovation policies; (2) actor’s commitment, namely, support and involvement of actors in the formulation of innovation policies; and (3) actor dependency, namely, the level of dependency of the actor on the source of power he has. Research sources were (a) informants, (b) questionnaire distribution, and (c) documents. To analyse interview data using the NVivo 12 program, while statistical analysis using the SPSS program.

## Discussion

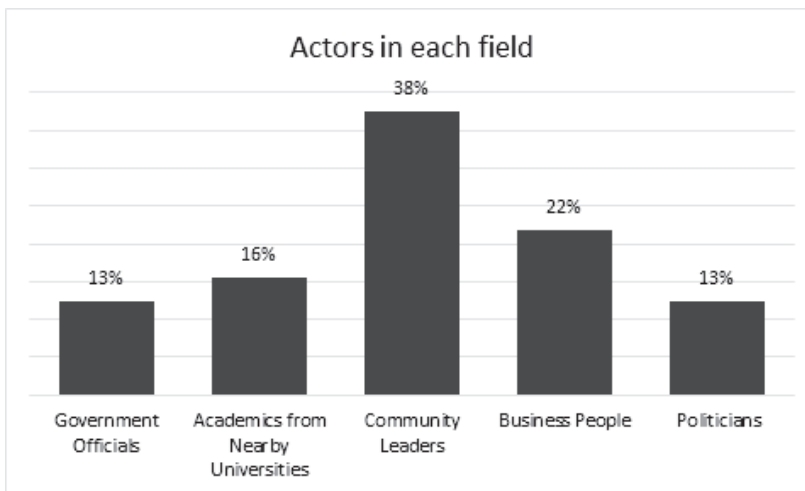
In this paper, we describe the research results in two subsections. First, we discuss the phenomenon of innovation policy in the research area, and then in the next subchapter, we discuss the innovation policy collaboration model in the local government.

**The Phenomenon of Innovation Policy in the Research Area.** There has been a shift in local government innovation over the past five years. Initially, innovation was the sole responsibility of local governments, particularly regional heads. However, demands for the involvement of actors outside the government have arisen along with changes in people's lives and social order. The concept of collaboration serves as a reference for developing innovation in local governments. Outside government, actors began to question their involvement in the formulation activities.

These conditions are not significantly different from those of the two research areas. Based on discussions with several informants, they revealed their views and complaints about the policies made by the local government. In general, informants are still the object of the policy. Although their involvement is the driving force behind the implementation of a policy, it is not far from innovation policies. In general, informants said they knew of an innovation policy after it became a policy product. This study further investigates this phenomenon by focusing on three factors: (a) the actor's knowledge, which is the actor's knowledge and understanding of innovation policy; (b) the actor's commitment, which is the support and involvement of actors in the formulation of innovation policies; and (c) resource dependence, which is the level of dependency of actors on the source of power they have.

a) **Knowledge-ability actors.** The first is the actor's understanding and knowledge of the innovation. The assumption is that someone understands and can explain why they do something. Therefore, these two factors are pillars for building collaborative innovation policies. Research has revealed that most informants understand and have knowledge of innovation.

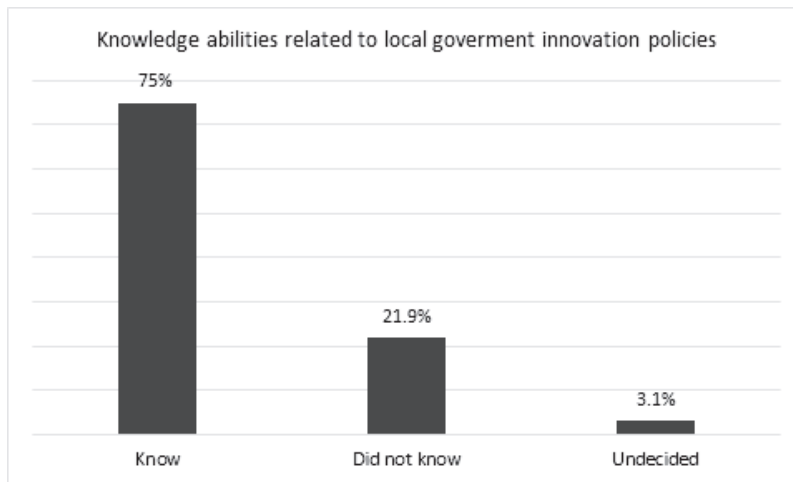
Based on research, 75 percent of actors know the local government's innovation policies. 21.9 percent answered that they did not know about this, but knew what innovation meant. Only 3.1 percent of respondents were undecided. This is not entirely different from the actors' understanding of local government innovation policies.



**Figure 2.** *The number of actors in each field*  
 Source: Ombudsman of Republic of Indonesia (2021)

In statistical tests using the chi-square test, there is a relationship between knowledge and understanding of innovation among actors. Statistical tests showed a significant relationship at an alpha level of 5 percent. This is in line with research conducted by Yu and Yan (2021). The results of this study indicate that the depth and breadth of knowledge affect innovation. This explains why the depth and breadth of knowledge together drive business model innovation. Kim and Chang (2009) also explained that information and knowledge sharing and learning culture are determinant factors in institutional innovation in the government.

b) **Actor's commitment.** To observe the commitment of actors in collaborative innovation, the second central factor that is the focus of this research is involvement and support in innovation policy formulations. In general, informants (more than 80 percent) understand that if a policy concerns the needs of many people, it requires the involvement of actors outside the government. This is consistent with research conducted by Dzieńdziora, et al. (2022) where the results of his research show that commitment influences innovation through a set of determinants that can be linked to innovative behaviour in the workplace. However, not all actors participate in formulating innovation policies. However, their knowledge and understanding of innovation are adequate.



**Figure 3.** Percentage of knowledge abilities of actors related to local government innovation policies

Source: Ombudsman of Republic of Indonesia (2021)

The statistical test shows (in the statistical test using the chi-square test at alpha 5 percent) that there is a relationship between knowledge and understanding of actors' commitment to innovation. They were not involved because they were not invited to the formulation process. One of them is academic. An academic interview yielded the following results. *We are not involved in the policy formulation for innovation. Once, but not significantly so. Even if there is an FGD, it is only a formality: we are just listeners. Discussions about innovation were only occasional, not involved until today, insignificant, and taken from outside universities, even though those who know are us. The academics are local scientists. Innovation is also our need and that of the community, and the impact of road congestion is not increasing.*

Likewise, with the statement of a community leader, the answer was as follows: *We do not invite anyone. We don't get involved. This is similar to brainstorming ideas. As a result, people have become too lazy to think about them. Although many people in the area, particularly young people, have creative thinking, the*

*impact of this is the lack of involvement of the two actors in innovation policy in the research area.* The statement of a member of a politician as well as an academic even stated that: *We know of various innovation awards. TOP 99 or the Innovative Government Award. As we have heard, the local government has accepted them. However, what does the local government do, and how is the process? We don't know at all.*

These results are different from those of Wang and Ellinger (2011), who indirectly revealed that the external environment, in this case, including its actors, influences organizational innovation through organizational learning. As stated by Hassel (2015), at the government level, the community (stakeholders) as the affected party also influences policy and plays a vital role in policy. Political actors are an essential part of the development and achievement of innovation in the local governments of developing countries.

**c) Resource dependence.** The third factor is the source of innovation. This study explores the primary sources of innovation in local governments. Ninety-five percent of respondents stated that "Regents or mayors are the main drivers of local government innovation." These are support centers for innovation development. Their reason is that without the commitment and support of regional leaders, the proposed innovations will not go well. This condition was observed in the two studied areas. The regional head is the dominant actor in regional innovation. This is in line with what was conveyed by Yoon's (2006) finding that leadership is a key factor in innovation success. There is no doubt that leadership is the most important success factor in government innovation. However, it is essential to expand commitment and leadership to other leaders and organizations within the government.

The support of regional heads and budget decisions are factors that cause this condition to arise. Regional leaders who are unresponsive to the progress of innovation have the potential to become obstacles to innovation. Statistical tests supported this statement. At a significance level of 5 percent, there is a significant relationship between regional innovation development and regional leadership. In addition, several politicians and local government officials have stated that the budget is also an obstacle to the development of innovation.

The results of an interview with a local government official revealed: "We have lots of ideas and lots of innovations, but implementation is rather difficult, due to a limited budget." According to them, the budget itself requires the approval of the members of the legislature. Agreeing with Capuno (2010), leaders are the main drivers of innovation in the local government. However, as stated by Shankera et al. (2017) and Schuldt and Gomes (2020), there are other stimulants for organizations to be innovative, namely, organizational climate and organizational culture.

## **Innovation Policy Collaboration in Local Government**

Collaboration occurs because there are similarities in views between government actors and stakeholders, namely business people, society, and academics. Sustainable innovation occurs if these actors cooperate. Local emotional issues can affect actors' views of the government, resulting in a negative view of the policies developed by the local government. Ansel and Gash (2008) reveal that in collaboration, there are important aspects that need attention, namely, face-to-face dialogue, trust building, and the development of commitment and shared understanding. We found that a virtuous cycle of collaboration tends to develop when collaborative forums focus on "small wins," which deepens trust, commitment, and shared understanding.

Thus, the first innovation policy for the government is to build togetherness between actors. Building trust and actively involving all actors are the most essential factors in the Regional Government Collaborative Innovation Policy. This is because the barriers to trust in actors outside the government are the main obstacles for the two governments in building collaborative innovation policies. The impact of academic dissatisfaction, public indifference, or ignorance of business people towards local government innovation policies was the main point during the interviews when the research was conducted.

Reducing barriers to innovation policy in this study is a major factor in the sustainability of these innovations. Regional heads who build trust in academics, business people, and the community are the main lever for the success of local government innovation. Face-to-face dialogue is a tool for building commitment and trust in the collaboration process.

Dialogues in the nuances of trust create a balance between actors in formulating innovation policies. Direct involvement in formulating policies occurs in an open process and is not merely a forum for consultation between these actors. In particular, the government's relationship and trust in the community's abilities. The Pearson correlation coefficient in the SPSS analysis shows that the value of the relationship between the government and community leaders is the weakest when compared to the relationship with other actors.

The absence of togetherness in developing innovation policies in local governments, and the absence of synergy and coordination between existing institutions in local governments and legislative institutions. Innovation policies in local governments are not well-developed. This is why resource dependence has the same value as actors' commitment in both research areas. Resource dependence on regional leaders or heads was the dominant factor in the study in both research areas.

Dependence on dominant resources can be a boomerang for regional leaders. With the dominance of an innovative leader, the region will indeed advance, i.e., become an innovative region. Leadership behaviour is one of the most important drivers of innovation, and there is no innovation without leaders with great innovation. However, there are negatives if they depend excessively on leaders. If a person is no longer the regional head, the region will lose its prestige as an innovative region. Such cases often occur in Indonesia, where a change in leadership occurs every five years.

Initially, it was considered a highly innovative area. However, after the regional head changed, the region lost its prestige as innovative. Oke, E. (2009) explains that while some innovations may be bottom-up activities, arising from members of the organization who are not necessarily leaders or top management. Most innovations tend to be the result of strategic responses or initiatives within the organization to compete effectively in the marketplace. For innovations to be successful in an organization, they require a commitment to key resources and strategies that are controlled by top management or organizational leadership.

However, if a region is less innovative, the fault lies with the regional head. Interview results conducted: "The regional leader is the main factor causing the two research areas to be less innovative. In general, the actors said that this condition arose because of the lack of responsiveness of regional heads to existing innovations. For example, lack of coordination and cooperation is a strong reason for this condition.

Based on this phenomenon, collaborative innovation policies, which will then trigger sustainable innovative local governments, can take place if the regional head is only a lever for innovation policy, namely, through brainstorming among existing actors. Knowledgeability Actors are the basic capital for regional heads in challenging the awareness of these actors to be involved in formulating regional innovation policies. In participation in the formulation of these policies, actors' commitment will be awakened in each actor to promote innovative areas. Thus, resource dependence for innovation policies spreads evenly among the actors in the area.

Based on the above studies, building collaborative innovative policies is a collaborative forum among existing actors, namely business people, communities, academics, politicians, and SKPD. Utilizing the Knowledgeability of Actors and transferring sources of innovation are not only focused on regional heads but on all existing actors. Where the Regional Head is only the main trigger and lever in collaboration, the Actors' commitment is the shared responsibility of the actors in the area. This means that the progress of the region is not only the responsibility of the regional head but is a joint task for each component in the area.



## Conclusion

Based on the studies conducted, the two research areas were two areas that were less successful in the regional innovation event (TOP 45 or IGA) held by the KemenPAN-RB or the Ministry of Home Affairs, in the 2017-2021 period. The study conducted revealed that innovation in the regions is more concentrated on regional government, namely the Regional Head or SKPD (Balitang). Actors who play more roles are only related apparatus, while political actors are only partners in the discussion and approval of the budget that will be used. Meanwhile, business actors, academics, or community leaders are rarely involved. They are more often used as objects of a policy. This is shown by the results of discussions with the three actors, who revealed that they were only invited when there was the socialization of an innovation policy that would be developed in the community. This certainly has an impact on collaboration between actors so that collaboration innovation does not run optimally. Collaboration innovation should be able to generate innovation based on ideas, knowledge, expertise, and opportunities that can be obtained from the full collaboration of all actors. The need for the personal awareness of the actors as well as the need for encouragement to carry out functions optimally and collaborate in a better way. Business actors, academics, or community leaders, who are rarely involved, may be more critical when invited to outreach events.

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## VIETOS VALDŽIOS INSTITUCIJŲ BENDRADARBIAVIMO INOVACIJŲ SRITYJE POLITIKA

**Anotacija.** Suinteresuotųjų šalių bendradarbiavimo trūkumas laikomas viena iš pagrindinių netvarių regioninių inovacijų priežasčių. Šis reiškinys dažnai pasitaiko archipelago šalyse dėl ribotų galimybių gauti informaciją regione. Atsižvelgiant į tai, dabartiniame viešojo administravimo mokslininkų ir politikos praktikų diskurse pabrėžiama bendradarbiavimo svarba diegiant politikos inovacijas. Šiuo tyrimu siekiama išnagrinėti vietos valdžios inovacijų politiką Indonezijoje, Pietryčių Azijos archipelago šalyje, daugiausia dėmesio skiriant politikos formavimo procesui, kuris apima bendradarbiavimą siekiant kurti inovatyvią politiką.

Šiame tyrime taikomas mišriųjų metodų tyrimo metodas, pagrįstas nuosekliu aiškinamuoju planu, kurį sudaro du pagrindiniai etapai. Pirmajame etape taikomas kiekybinis metodas, o antrajame etape - kokybinis metodas. Tyrimo duomenis sudarė pirminių ir antrinių duomenų, gautų iš klausimynų ir pusiau struktūruotų interviu, derinys. Šie duomenys buvo analizuojami aprašomuoju būdu naudojant NVivo programinę įrangą ir papildyti statistinės analizės rezultatais.

Šio tyrimo rezultatai patvirtina, kad tarp bendradarbiaujančių subjektų egzistuoja priklausomybės modelis, kuriame regionų vadovams tenka dominuojantis vaidmuo formuojant inovacijų politiką. Tačiau verslo subjektai, mokslininkai ir bendruomenių lyderiai dalyvauja retai, o tai rodo, kad jie yra labai priklausomi nuo regioninių vadovų iniciatyvų. Dėl to formuojama inovacijų politika paprastai būna netvari. Todėl šiame tyrime siūloma, kad bendradarbiavimo forumai taptų pagrindiniu orientyru kuriant ir kuriant tvarias regionines inovacijas. Tikimasi, kad šis forumas palengvins bendrus siekius ir inovacinius argumentus, taip pat paskatins kurti platesnio masto inovacijų politiką.

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad suinteresuotųjų šalių bendradarbiavimo trūkumas yra viena iš pagrindinių kliūčių kuriant tvarias politikos inovacijas regionuose. Siekiant įveikti šį iššūkį, svarbu organizuoti bendradarbiavimo forumus, kurie palengvintų įvairių suinteresuotųjų šalių bendradarbiavimą ir aktyvų dalyvavimą. Tikimasi, kad stipriau bendradarbiaujant bus kuriama tvari inovatyvi politika, sprendžiamos regioninės problemos ir gerinama žmonių gyvenimo kokybė.

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