# Orchestration of Regional Government Organization Capacity to Strengthen Public Aspiration-Oriented Development Planning

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**Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the orchestration capacity of local government agencies in Gorontalo Regency in integrating community aspirations into development planning. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method with data obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, document reviews, and focus group discussions involving officials, community representatives, and local stakeholders. The analysis focused on three main dimensions, namely technical, analytical, and communication capacity. The findings indicate that capacity fragmentation remains the main obstacle, as agencies with strong technical competence often show weaknesses in analytical ability, while those excelling in public communication tend to be weak in technical aspects. On average, only eighteen to twenty percent of community aspirations are accommodated in the regional budget, reflecting the dominance of sectoral programs, limited fiscal space, and weak inter-agency coordination. These challenges are further reinforced by regulatory frameworks that remain top-down, limiting regional flexibility to adapt policies to local needs. Nevertheless, the study identifies strategic opportunities to strengthen orchestration through the utilization of information technology to enhance transparency, accelerate data flows, improve policy integration, and expand public participation. Additional strategies include developing human resource capacity, promoting evidence-based planning, establishing IT-based coordination forums, and introducing regulations that are more adaptive to local contexts. The study concludes that strengthening orchestration should not be seen merely as an administrative process but as a transformative strategy to realize inclusive, responsive, and sustainable regional development governance.*

## Introduction

Regional development in the era of decentralization is not merely about constructing infrastructure, providing basic services, or distributing budgets fairly (Onofrei et al., 2021; Sakti et al., 2024; Ibrahim, 2024). It is a multidimensional process that involves multiple actors with different interests, resources, and levels of authority. One of the key actors in this process is the Regional Apparatus Organization. This institution functions as a vital instrument of local government that bridges public aspirations with policy implementation (Ghimire, 2024; Enaifoghe, 2022; Isi et al., 2022). However, in practice, the institutional capacity of Regional Apparatus Organizations has not been fully optimized. When institutional aspects are neglected, the result is fragmented policymaking, weak coordination across units, and development programs that often fail to align with the real needs of society (Prasetyo et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2022).

Burhanuddin et al. (2024) emphasize that regional capacity is strongly linked to the quality of human resource development. Their findings indicate that the success of local development does not only depend on budget allocation or program numbers, but more importantly on the ability of local institutions to orchestrate their internal capacities (Heaton et al., 2023; Sandberg, 2023; Roehrich et al., 2023). This perspective underscores that development should not be reduced to administrative service delivery, but must also be understood as a process of enabling social transformation through institutional performance. Similarly, Supratiwi et al. (2023) argue that investment in information technology and strengthening bureaucratic capacity can improve public sector performance, yet such investment can only succeed if supported by effective inter-organizational coordination. Without robust coordination, digitalization risks widening inequalities in public administration.

The importance of institutional capacity is further highlighted by Mayne et al. (2020) through the concept of state capabilities for problem-oriented governance. According to this framework, state capacity must not be limited to procedural administration but should instead be directed toward addressing real societal problems. In Indonesia, this framework resonates strongly because many Regional Apparatus Organizations continue to operate in a sectoral manner. This sectoral ego leads to fragmented policies that often fail to respond to the complexity of socio-economic challenges faced by local communities.

The weakness of institutional coordination has been further confirmed by Djafar (2022), who points out that the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) plays a vital role in managing public aspirations. However, the agency's effectiveness is often constrained by weak coordination across Regional Apparatus Organizations. In his later work, Djafar (2024) stresses that public administration theory should not only be understood in procedural terms but must be applied contextually to respond to local realities. Without contextualization, policies formulated by Regional Apparatus Organizations risk becoming formalistic exercises that fail to address concrete societal problems.

The urgency of this research also stems from its alignment with national policy priorities. The government's Asta Cita program stresses the importance of building development from villages and from below. This approach requires effective local institutional governance, as communities are positioned as subjects of development. Their aspirations must be integrated meaningfully into planning. Said et al. (2022), in their study of Gorontalo Regency, found that the success of development planning depends heavily on the implementation of collaborative governance. Collaboration between Regional Apparatus Organizations, legislatures, and communities is key to achieving participatory development. Without orchestration, however, collaboration risks remaining rhetorical and fails to overcome sectoral ego among local government units.

International scholarship also strengthens this argument. Bonvin and Laruffa (2024) introduced the concept of capability to aspire, which highlights that sustainable development can only be achieved if citizens have both the capacity and the opportunity to articulate their aspirations. Similarly, de Haas (2021) developed the aspiration–capability framework, which emphasizes that public institutions must ensure that citizens' aspirations are not merely symbolic but are translated into concrete policies. Without adequate institutional support, public aspirations risk being reduced to political rhetoric with little substantive impact.

Other international studies have revealed comparable challenges. Ikizer (2024), in research on local government in Turkey, found that weak inter-unit coordination prevented strategic planning from being genuinely participatory. Likewise, Mantey et al. (2024), in their study of Poland, demonstrated how public aspirations are often marginalized by the dualism of national

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and local development agendas. These studies demonstrate that institutional orchestration is a global challenge, not one unique to Indonesia. Hence, strengthening the capacity of Regional Apparatus Organizations to orchestrate public aspirations contributes significantly to both national and international discourses on governance and development.

Local research in Indonesia also offers important insights. Djafar et al. (2021) stress that the technical capacity of the Regional Development Planning Agency is critical to capturing community aspirations. Nevertheless, they also show that technical capacity alone is insufficient without strong institutional coordination. This means that technical expertise must be orchestrated within an integrated institutional system if community aspirations are to serve as the foundation for development policy (Addo, 2022; Chigbu & Makapela, 2025).

The rationale for this research is further reinforced by findings from Wouters et al. (2021), who examined inter-organizational digital transformation in Belgium. They found that digital reforms only succeed when accompanied by strong cross-organizational coordination. Without coordination, digitalization simply creates new layers of fragmentation within bureaucracy. This finding provides valuable lessons for Indonesia, suggesting that modernization efforts in public administration will only be effective if they are coupled with institutional orchestration. For Gorontalo Regency, strengthening the capacity of Regional Apparatus Organizations is not merely about technical upgrades but about establishing sustainable mechanisms of synergy across government units.

As a response to these challenges, this study proposes combining deliberative and co-productive approaches. Li and Wagenaar (2019) argue that deliberative policy analysis can produce more inclusive policies by involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making. Wagenaar (2022) adds that deliberative approaches enrich democracy by creating spaces for collective reflection. On the other hand, Kaiser et al. (2017) emphasize that co-production is an effective conceptual approach to integrating knowledge from multiple actors in development planning. By combining deliberative planning and co-production, this study seeks to develop a comprehensive orchestration strategy where coordination across Regional Apparatus Organizations is strengthened while simultaneously integrating community aspirations substantively into policy (Yustiarini et al., 2025; Aldhi et al., 2025; Haque & Uddin, 2024).

Methodologically, this study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. Such an approach is appropriate given its ability to explore complex social phenomena in depth. Aspers and Corte (2019) highlight that qualitative research provides rich insights into contextual social dynamics. Tomaszewski et al. (2020) further stress that careful research design is crucial for ensuring relevant and meaningful findings. In addition, Younas et al. (2023) propose the MIRACLE narrative framework to enhance qualitative inquiry, enabling researchers to capture complex realities such as the orchestration of Regional Apparatus Organizations in a more nuanced way. With this methodological foundation, this study seeks to uncover how institutional capacity can be orchestrated to integrate public aspirations into local development planning.

Based on these theoretical and empirical considerations, this research aims to produce both analysis and policy recommendations on strengthening the orchestration of Regional Apparatus Organizations in development planning. Specifically, the objectives are to identify the current conditions of institutional orchestration, analyze the factors that hinder coordination, and formulate strategies to strengthen institutional capacity that are adaptive and responsive to public aspirations.

The hypothesis advanced in this research is that the stronger the orchestration of Regional Apparatus Organizations, the greater the legitimacy of policies and the higher the quality of

development planning. In other words, enhancing institutional coordination and technical capacity is expected to significantly contribute to participatory, collaborative, and responsive policymaking. This hypothesis aligns with Djafar's (2022, 2024) arguments on the central role of the Regional Development Planning Agency as a driver of regional development, as well as de Haas's (2021) aspiration–capability framework, which underscores the necessity of institutional capacity in realizing community aspirations.

By focusing on Gorontalo Regency, this study is expected to deliver both academic and practical contributions. Academically, it enriches public administration literature by introducing an in-depth exploration of institutional orchestration in development planning, an area that remains underexplored in Indonesia. Practically, it provides actionable recommendations for local governments to strengthen synergy across Regional Apparatus Organizations. Ultimately, this study aspires to support the realization of development governance that is inclusive, participatory, and socially just.

## Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach designed to capture and interpret the complexity of institutional orchestration in regional development planning. The qualitative orientation was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of social dynamics, institutional practices, and the interaction between Regional Apparatus Organizations and public aspirations (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). To strengthen the analytical depth, this research integrated the frameworks of deliberative governance and co-production, which are considered highly relevant in contexts that require multi-actor participation to identify problems, formulate solutions, and implement collaborative policies (Li & Wagenaar, 2019; Wagenaar, 2022; Kaiser et al., 2017).

The research process was carried out through several participatory stages. The first stage was problem identification through initial engagement with stakeholders. At this stage, community representatives, government officials, and other actors were invited to articulate priority issues relevant to regional development. The second stage was the formulation of research questions and objectives collaboratively with stakeholders, ensuring that the study remained contextually grounded and responsive to real needs rather than abstract academic assumptions.

Data collection was conducted using a combination of techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, document review, and focus group discussions (FGDs). In the interviews, stakeholders were not positioned merely as informants but also as active contributors to the meaning-making process. FGDs were used to facilitate dialogue among various Regional Apparatus Organizations and community groups, creating deliberative spaces to discuss aspirations, tensions, and potential synergies. Observations were conducted on both formal and informal interactions in inter-organizational forums, such as coordination meetings, program verification forums, and development planning deliberations. This approach enabled the researcher to document decision-making dynamics and orchestration strategies used to align institutional interests with public aspirations (de Haas, 2021).

Observation was conducted in two phases. First, preliminary observation was carried out approximately two weeks before the proposal drafting stage, aimed at gaining a general understanding of planning practices at the local level, particularly the working patterns across Regional Apparatus Organizations. This phase included participation in informal meetings, brief interviews with staff at the Regional Development Planning Agency, and document reviews such as Musrenbang reports and meeting minutes. Second, extended observation was conducted for six weeks after the proposal was approved. During this stage, the researcher systematically attended cross-organizational coordination meetings, FGDs, and verification

forums of priority programs. The focus was on documenting interaction patterns, coordination mechanisms, and orchestration strategies applied to harmonize organizational agendas with public aspirations.

The research site was Gorontalo Regency, with a primary focus on Regional Apparatus Organizations that play strategic roles in development planning. The location was chosen based on its central role in orchestrating participatory and responsive planning processes. As public institutions serve as the bridge between community aspirations and policy design, Gorontalo Regency provided a relevant setting to examine institutional coordination in practice (Djafar, 2022, 2024).

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative thematic approach. The collected data were first summarized and categorized, then organized into themes that reflect the main patterns of institutional orchestration. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation, by comparing results from interviews, observations, and document reviews (Younas et al., 2023). Thematic findings were then interpreted collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure that the analysis was not only reflective but also participatory. This process enabled the research to produce both an academic understanding and contextually relevant practical recommendations.

The research process, once completed, was visualized in a flow diagram, which illustrates the stages from preliminary observation, problem identification, and stakeholder engagement to extended observation, data analysis, and policy formulation. This visualization emphasizes that every stage of the study was carried out systematically, participatively, and purposefully.
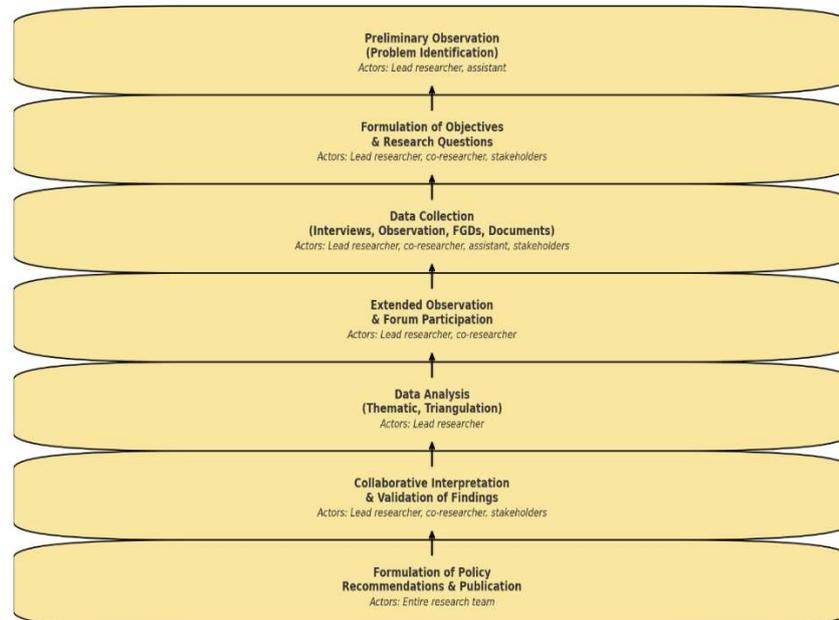


*Figure 1. Research flow diagram used in this study*

Source: Processed by the researcher (2025)

Thus, this methodological design ensures that the objectives of the study can be achieved through a combination of academic rigor and practical engagement. The qualitative approach provides deep contextual understanding; the deliberative and co-productive frameworks promote inclusivity; and the participatory process reinforces the legitimacy of findings. By situating the research within the context of Gorontalo Regency, this study contributes not only

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to theoretical development but also to the formulation of practical policy recommendations for regional governance.

## Results and Discussion

### The Existing Condition of Local Government Agencies in Development Planning

The research findings indicate that local government agencies in Gorontalo Regency hold a central position in determining the direction of development planning. Nevertheless, their institutional capacity still shows significant variations in technical, analytical, and communication aspects. These variations directly influence the quality of the planning process as well as the ability of local government agencies to comprehensively accommodate community aspirations. Technically, several local government agencies already have qualified human resources in preparing planning documents and mastering regulatory instruments. However, these technical aspects are not always accompanied by adequate analytical capacity, particularly in data processing, evidence-based evaluation, and the formulation of adaptive policies. In addition, communication capacity remains relatively weak in several local government agencies, resulting in ineffective dialogue with the community and cross-institutional coordination. Consequently, the planning process tends to be more procedural than deliberative, and community proposals have not been fully integrated into development documents (de Haas, 2021).

To provide a more objective picture, this study presents the assessment results of technical, analytical, and communication capacities in selected strategic local government agencies in Gorontalo Regency. The data were obtained from a combination of in-depth interviews with relevant officials, participatory observation in planning forums, and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving community representatives and local stakeholders. A summary of these assessment results is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Technical, Analytical, and Communication Capacity of Local Government Agencies in Gorontalo Regency

| Regional Apparatus Organization | Technical Capacity | Analytical Capacity | Communication Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Education & Culture | 22% | 18% | 20% |
| Department of Health | 18% | 21% | 19% |
| Department of Public Works & Spatial Planning (PUPR) | 25% | 20% | 18% |
| Department of Housing & Settlement Areas | 20% | 17% | 21% |
| Department of Social Affairs | 15% | 19% | 23% |
| Department of Community & Village Empowerment (PMD) | 19% | 22% | 20% |
| Department of Cooperatives & SMEs | 17% | 16% | 19% |

Source: Observation, Interviews, and FGDs

Table 1 illustrates the disparities in capacity across local government agencies. The Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning, for instance, demonstrates relatively high technical capacity (25%) since its infrastructure mandate requires strong technical competencies. However, its communication aspect remains low (18%), which often hinders coordination with both the community and other agencies. In contrast, the Department of Social Affairs excels in

communication capacity (23%) due to its intensive engagement with vulnerable community groups, but it has the lowest technical capacity (15%).

The Department of Education and Culture demonstrates a fairly good level of technical capacity (22%), yet its analytical capacity remains low (18%), indicating limitations in formulating data-driven policies. The Department of Health stands out in analytical capacity (21%), supported by its health data systems, although its technical and communication aspects remain relatively balanced, both below 20%. The Department of Community and Village Empowerment shows a more balanced capacity, with the highest analytical score (22%), highlighting its potential as a driver of coordination at the village level. However, its technical capacity still requires strengthening. Meanwhile, the Department of Cooperatives and MSMEs records the lowest scores across nearly all categories, signaling the need for more serious institutional capacity interventions.

This analysis reveals that none of the local government agencies (OPD) possess evenly distributed capacity across technical, analytical, and communication aspects. This condition underscores the importance of institutional orchestration mechanisms so that the strengths of each agency can complement one another. For instance, the technical capacity of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department (PUPR) can be combined with the communication strengths of the Social Affairs Department, while the analytical capacity of the Community and Village Empowerment Department (PMD) can serve as the basis for cross-sector policy integration. This perspective aligns with the findings of Wouters et al. (2021), which emphasize that inter-organizational coordination is a critical requirement for successful institutional transformation.

In addition to assessing the technical, analytical, and communication capacities across government agencies (OPD), this study also highlights the Public Aspiration Accommodation Index. This index reflects the extent to which community proposals submitted through the Development Planning Deliberation Forum (Musrenbang) are actually incorporated into the Regional Budget (APBD) documents of Gorontalo Regency. The presence of this data is crucial in demonstrating the linkage between public participation and the direction of regional development policy. Accordingly, the index achievement serves as a reflection of how far development policies are formulated based on the real needs of society. The following chart illustrates the trend of community aspiration accommodation achievements during the period 2021 to 2024.
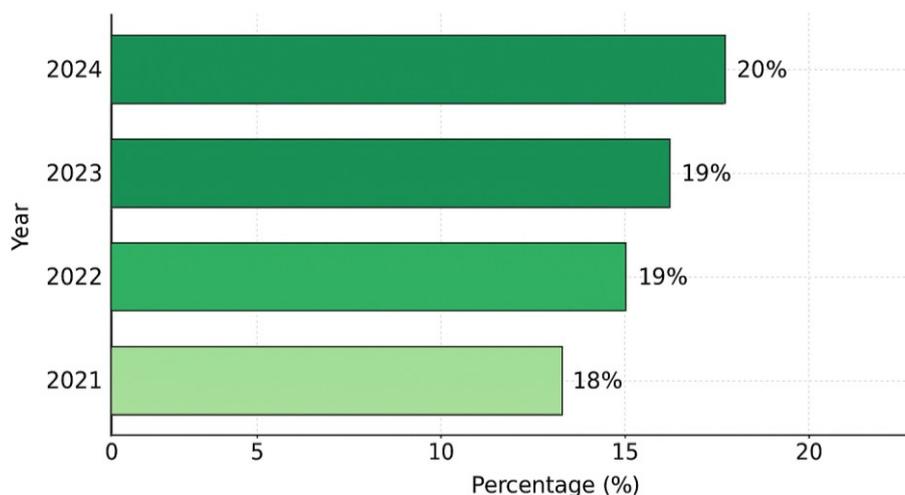
*Figure 2: Public Aspiration Accommodation Index of Gorontalo Regency (2021–2024)*

*Source: Observation, Interviews, and FGDs*

The graph shows that between 2021 and 2024, the level of public aspiration accommodation within the Regional Budget (APBD) remained stagnant at around 18–20%. In 2021, the achievement stood at only 18%. This low figure can be explained by the fact that local government budget priorities were still heavily influenced by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with most allocations directed toward the health sector and economic recovery. Entering 2022, the figure rose slightly to 19%. This increase was partly due to the gradual opening of fiscal space for several community-based development programs, although the continuing top-down nature of regulations still limited the flexibility of local governments in absorbing more proposals.

In 2023, the percentage remained at 19%, indicating no significant change. Fiscal constraints and weak coordination across local government agencies (OPD) prevented many community proposals from being integrated into development priorities. The Musrenbang forums also continued to operate more procedurally, making public aspirations appear more as a formality rather than a substantive basis for policy. In 2024, the figure increased slightly to 20%. This improvement was influenced by the introduction of a digital-based planning system that enabled a more transparent filtering of proposals. However, the increase was not yet substantial, as cross-agency coordination remained weak and most programs continued to follow predetermined sectoral patterns.

Overall, the stagnation of the index at 18–20% over the past four years indicates that community aspirations have not yet fully served as the foundation for development policymaking. The low absorption of public aspirations reinforces the conclusion that OPD orchestration in Gorontalo Regency still requires serious strengthening in terms of coordination, regulation, and the use of information technology so that development can truly be participatory, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

In addition, interviews with the Head of the Regional Planning, Research, and Development Agency of Gorontalo Regency revealed that the average absorption rate of community aspirations into the APBD was only around 20%. This figure is considered low, given the large number of proposals submitted through Musrenbang and other public consultation forums. This supports the view of Said et al. (2022) that collaborative governance at the local level still tends to be procedural, lacking effective mechanisms to anchor citizens' voices in development policy. The main factors influencing this condition are budget constraints, the dominance of predetermined sectoral programs, and weak cross-agency coordination.

Thus, even though each local government agency possesses certain strengths, fragmented capacities and weak institutional integration remain the key reasons behind the low absorption of public aspirations. This finding is also consistent with the aspiration–capability framework put forward by de Haas (2021), which emphasizes that citizens' aspirations can only be realized if institutions have the capacity to integrate them into concrete policies.

## Barriers and Challenges of Orchestration

One indicator of the weaknesses in orchestration within regional development planning can be observed from the level of accommodation of community aspirations in the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). Although public participation forums such as the Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang) and public consultations have been routinely conducted, most community aspirations are not fully incorporated into regional priority programs.

The trend of accommodating community aspirations from 2021 to 2024 is visualized in Figure 2. The data show that the percentage of community aspirations successfully included in the regional budget remains relatively low, ranging only between 18% and 20%. This condition reflects stagnation, indicating that efforts to expand participatory spaces have not been accompanied by effective institutional mechanisms to integrate community voices into development policy documents.
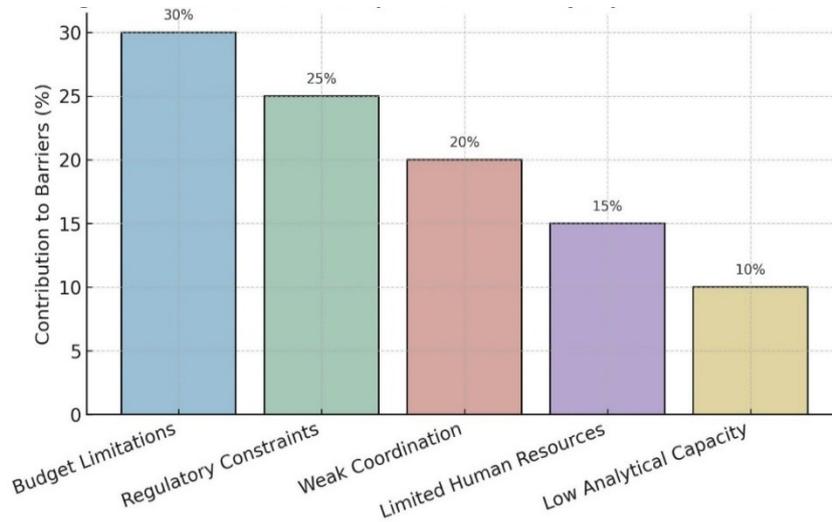


*Figure 3. Trends in Accommodating Community Aspirations in the Regional Budget (2021–2024*

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025*)*

The low level of accommodation can be attributed to several factors. First, regional budget constraints play a major role, as most public spending is already allocated to routine expenditures and mandatory obligations, leaving very limited fiscal space to accommodate community aspirations. Second, the dominance of predetermined sectoral programs reduces the flexibility of local government agencies to incorporate new proposals from the community. Third, weak cross-agency coordination often leads to overlapping proposals or a lack of integration with broader development programs.

In addition to these factors, barriers also arise from regulatory aspects. Many policies and legal frameworks governing development planning remain top-down in nature, thereby limiting regional space for innovation in absorbing community aspirations. For instance, technical regulations that set priorities for budget allocation often emphasize macro targets or national programs rather than providing flexibility for local governments to accommodate context-specific needs. As a result, agencies become bound to uniform program patterns, leaving local community aspirations sidelined.

These findings are reinforced by interviews with the Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency of Gorontalo Regency, who stated that on average, only about 20% of community aspirations are incorporated into the regional budget. This is also consistent with de Haas (2021), who argues that community aspirations can only be realized if institutional capacity is sufficient to process and synchronize public voices with policy frameworks. In other words, the main barriers to orchestration in development planning lie not only in resource constraints and weak inter-agency coordination, but also in regulatory frameworks that have yet to fully support participatory approaches.

**Thematic Analysis Process and Theme Development**

The data analysis in this study was strengthened through the application of a reflective thematic analysis, aimed at deepening the interpretation of institutional orchestration phenomena. This approach was conducted inductively, in which themes were developed from empirical data collected through interviews, participatory observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs), and later compared with the theoretical frameworks of deliberative governance and co-production.

The analysis process involved four key stages:

Open Coding – identifying meaningful statements from interview transcripts that reflected coordination dynamics, public participation, and structural barriers.

Axial Coding – grouping similar codes into broader categories, such as 'sectoral ego,' 'analytical limitations,' and 'formalistic participation.'

Selective Coding – integrating these categories into conceptual themes that captured institutional and social patterns.

Collaborative Reflection – validating the preliminary findings through discussions with stakeholders in FGDs to ensure contextual accuracy and interpretive coherence.

The analysis yielded three major themes that illustrate the dynamics of orchestrating the capacities of Local Government Agencies in Gorontalo Regency. A summary of these themes is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Main Themes, Subthemes, and Analytical Interpretation

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Representative Quotes | Analytical Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Institutional Capacity Fragmentation | a. Sectoral ego among agencies b. Limited analytical capacity | "Each department focuses on its own programs, making it difficult to align in a single plan." | Reflects weak inter-agency coordination and fragmented policymaking, aligning with the concept of *problem-oriented governance* (Mayne et al., 2020). |
| Ritualistic Public Participation | a. Musrenbang as a mere formality b. Community aspirations rarely accommodated | "We attend *Musrenbang* every year, but very few proposals are actually included in the budget." | Indicates a *deliberative deficit*, where participation remains procedural rather than substantive (Li & Wagenaar, 2019). |
| Transformative Potential through Technology and Collaboration | a. Digitalization of development data b. IT-based cross-agency forums | "With the integrated data application, we can now track other departments' activities." | Reveals the emergence of a new co-production mechanism driven by technology, enhancing orchestration |

| | | | capacity (Kaiser et al., 2017; Wouters et al., 2021). |
|---|---|---|---|

Source: Primary data obtained from fieldwork (interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis)

After the thematic analysis was conducted, it was necessary to systematically map the data sources used in this study. This mapping serves to clarify the relationship between the data collection techniques, the participant context, and their respective contributions to the development of the main themes. A summary of the data sources and their contributions to the thematic analysis is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Data Sources and Evidence Mapping

| Data Source | Collection Technique | Participants / Context | Purpose and Contribution to Thematic Analysis |
|---|---|---|---|
| **In-depth Interviews** | Semi-structured interviews | 12 key informants (Heads of local government agencies, planners, and community representatives) | Provided insights into coordination challenges, institutional dynamics, and perception gaps in local governance. |
| **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** | Group discussion sessions | 3 FGDs involving 18 participants from cross-sectoral agencies and community groups | Validated preliminary themes and strengthened triangulation between institutional and community perspectives. |
| **Participant Observation** | Direct participation and field notes | Local development coordination meetings, *Musrenbang*, and budget deliberations | Captured real-time interactions and behavioral patterns in decision-making processes. |
| **Document Analysis** | Review of official reports and planning documents | Local Development Plans (*RKPD*), Meeting Minutes, and Budget Realization Reports (2021–2024) | Supported empirical triangulation and provided evidence of institutional fragmentation and procedural tendencies. |

Source: Primary data obtained from fieldwork (interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis) conducted by the author, 2024.

The mapping results demonstrate that each data collection method provided complementary contributions to the formation of the main themes. Accordingly, the four data sources collectively enhance the validity of the findings and establish a solid empirical foundation for the thematic analysis presented in the subsequent section.

**Interpretation and Theoretical Implications**

The findings indicate that institutional fragmentation remains the primary obstacle to effective orchestration in local development planning. The disparity in technical, analytical, and communicative capacities among agencies restricts their ability to comprehensively

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incorporate community aspirations. Nevertheless, the emergence of technology-based co-production practices shows promising potential to foster inter-sectoral synergy and strengthen collaborative governance. From a theoretical standpoint, this study confirms that the current practice of deliberative governance in Gorontalo is still procedural rather than reflective, as idealized by Wagenaar (2022). In contrast, the implementation of *co-production* through information technology demonstrates a transformative capacity toward a more inclusive and adaptive form of governance. Within the *aspiration–capability* framework (de Haas, 2021), the gap between citizens' aspirations and institutional capabilities constitutes a central challenge. Strong institutional orchestration is therefore pivotal in translating public aspirations into equitable and actionable policies.

**Analytical Reflection**

This thematic process underscores the importance of an iterative interpretive trajectory between data and theory. The researcher continuously moved back and forth between empirical evidence and conceptual understanding to construct a comprehensive explanation of the social mechanisms underlying local governance. Consequently, the study transcends mere procedural description, offering a conceptual synthesis that elucidates how coordination, participation, and technology interact in shaping a more responsive and sustainable development governance framework.

Based on the thematic findings and theoretical interpretation presented earlier, this section emphasizes the strategies and opportunities for strengthening institutional orchestration in regional development planning. The proposed strategies are not merely technical or administrative in nature but also take into account the political, social, and relational dimensions that influence the success of collaborative governance. This approach is crucial to avoid a technocratic bias and to ensure that institutional strengthening efforts are grounded in empirical context and the real needs of the community.

**Strategies and Opportunities for Strengthening Orchestration**

The research findings show that capacity fragmentation among local government agencies remains a major obstacle in the development planning process. This imbalance makes policy integration difficult to achieve, as agencies that excel in technical aspects do not necessarily have strong analytical capacity, while those with good communication skills are often weak in technical areas. This highlights the importance of institutional orchestration strategies that not only address weaknesses but also create opportunities for governance transformation.

To respond to these challenges, strengthening strategies are directed toward budget allocation, regulatory frameworks, cross-agency coordination, human resource capacity, evidence-based analysis, and public participation. These strategies are designed not only to resolve short-term problems but also to open new opportunities for governance that is more transparent, inclusive, and responsive.

Table 5. Strategies and Opportunities for Strengthening Development Planning Orchestration

| Challenges | Strengthening Strategies | Opportunities |
|---|---|---|
| Limited Budget | Optimize efficiency through digital budgeting | Higher fiscal transparency, easier tracking of aspirations |
| Regulatory Barriers | Advocate regulatory revision for local flexibility | Adaptive regulations supporting public participation |
| Weak Coordination | Create cross-agency forum with IT dashboard | Integrated programs, reduced overlap among agencies |

| Limited Human Resources | Provide technical and analytical training | Improved agency capacity in data-based planning |
|---|---|---|
| Low Analytical Capacity | Develop integrated data system with participation | More evidence-based planning, measurable aspirations |
| Low Public Participation | Use digital platforms for consultation and dialogue | Wider participation, including youth and marginalized groups |

Source: Researcher's elaboration (2025)

Table 5 shows that each institutional challenge has a specific strengthening strategy accompanied by potential opportunities. Budget constraints, for example, can be addressed through digital budgeting, which not only improves spending efficiency but also enhances fiscal transparency. Regulatory barriers can be tackled through policy advocacy for revising rules to be more adaptive to local contexts. Meanwhile, weak coordination among agencies can be improved through IT-based forums that enable the integration of development programs.

The use of information technology serves as the main instrument supporting these strategies. Figure 3 visualizes the benefits of IT in strengthening agency orchestration, ranging from the provision of accurate data, enhanced budget transparency, and stronger monitoring to the expansion of online participation spaces. By linking technical, analytical, and communication capacities, IT can bridge institutional fragmentation and address the persistent limitations in accommodating community aspirations.
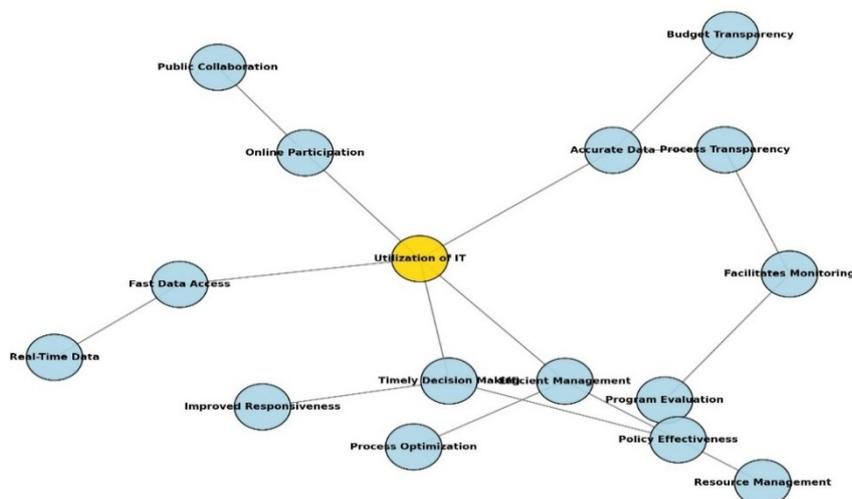


*Figure 4. Utilization of Information Technology as a Strategy for Strengthening Agency Orchestration*

Source: Researcher's elaboration (2025)

The utilization of information technology, as visualized in Figure 4, demonstrates that IT functions not merely as a supporting instrument but also as a primary catalyst in strengthening agency orchestration. Through digitalization, inter-agency coordination can be significantly improved as data flows become faster, more transparent, and more accurate. This has implications for creating cross-sector policy integration, reducing program overlap, and strengthening the legitimacy of development planning.

Furthermore, the use of IT can open wider spaces for public participation, particularly through online consultation platforms that allow communities including youth and marginalized groups to voice their aspirations without spatial and temporal limitations. Thus, this strategy not only addresses the gaps in technical, analytical, and communication capacities among agencies but

also positions technology as a bridge between government institutions and community aspirations.

In addition, the opportunities generated from implementing these strengthening strategies are visualized in percentage form in Figure 3. The pie chart illustrates the distribution of opportunity contributions from each strategy. Fiscal transparency and program integration account for the largest shares (20% each), while adaptive regulation, human resource capacity, evidence-based planning, and broad public participation each contribute 15%.

While information technology and digital systems offer the potential to improve efficiency and transparency, they should not be regarded as neutral tools. In practice, the implementation of digital systems may also generate new forms of inequality, particularly for groups with limited access to infrastructure and digital literacy. Moreover, bureaucratic resistance to technology-driven reforms often acts as a hidden barrier to effective inter-agency coordination. Therefore, the strategy to strengthen orchestration must go beyond technical innovation and also consider the social-political dynamics and institutional capacities that determine the success of governance reform. This reflective understanding is essential before examining the visualization in the following figure, which illustrates how digitalization, institutional collaboration, and public participation interact to strengthen the orchestration of regional development policies.
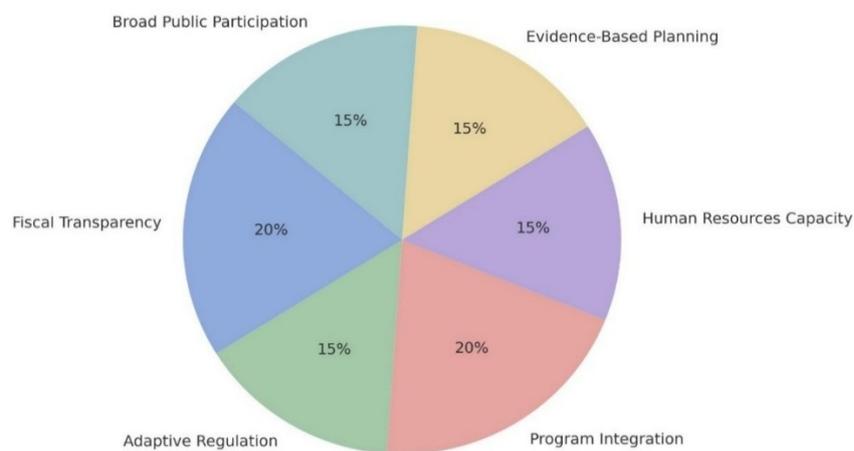


*Figure 5. Percentage of Opportunities from Orchestration Strengthening Strategies*

Source: Researcher's elaboration (2025)

This visualization emphasizes that the utilization of IT, the strengthening of cross-agency coordination, and transparent budget policies are the main pillars in creating more responsive development governance. Meanwhile, aspects of regulation, human resources, evidence-based planning, and public participation reinforce policy legitimacy and ensure that community aspirations are more broadly accommodated. With the combination of the strategy table, the IT diagram, and the opportunity distribution chart, Subsection 3 provides a comprehensive picture that strengthening orchestration is not merely an administrative technicality but also a transformative strategy for building inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable regional development governance.

## Acknowledgment

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the success of regional development planning largely depends on the ability of local government agencies to orchestrate their institutional capacities effectively. Fragmentation in technical, analytical, and communication capacities remains the main obstacle preventing the full integration of community aspirations into development policies. Although each agency possesses certain strengths, weak coordination and limited synergy across institutions have resulted in the low absorption rate of public aspirations only around 18–20 percent of proposals being accommodated in the regional budget (APBD).Beyond internal constraints, the top-down nature of regulatory frameworks continues to limit regional innovation and flexibility in adapting policies to local needs. Fiscal limitations and the dominance of sectoral programs further weaken participatory mechanisms in development planning.

Nevertheless, this research identifies promising opportunities for transformation through the utilization of information technology and collaborative co-production approaches. The digitalization of planning systems can enhance transparency, accelerate data flow, strengthen cross-sector coordination, and expand public participation especially among youth and marginalized groups.Therefore, strengthening institutional orchestration should not be viewed merely as an administrative exercise but as a transformative strategy to achieve inclusive, adaptive, transparent, and sustainable regional governance. The integration of inter-agency synergy, human resource capacity building, adaptive regulatory reform, and evidence-based planning is essential to bridge the gap between community aspirations and development policy implementation.

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