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Collaborative Policy Innovation for Accelerating Land Acquisition in the Economic Hub of Indonesia

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Abstract

Land acquisition for the public interest in Indonesia frequently encounters complex bureaucracy, inefficiencies, and community resistance, which impede the implementation of National Strategic Projects (NSPs). This study examines policy innovation in land acquisition through multi-stakeholder collaboration in South Sulawesi Province, where Makassar is the provincial capital and the economic hub of eastern Indonesia. The analysis also highlights urban expansion into Gowa Regency, which heightens both the urgency and the complexity of land provision for infrastructure projects. Using a qualitative case-study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis. The findings indicate that collaborative approaches expedite land acquisition, improve transparency, and reduce the risk of social conflict. Models that involve central and local government, private-sector actors, community representatives, and facilitation forums have proved effective in strengthening legitimacy and trust. Strategic recommendations include institutionalising facilitation forums, advancing digital transformation in land-acquisition governance, and reformulating compensation schemes to ensure equity and accountability. By embedding collaboration, transparency, and fairness, the study contributes to more inclusive and responsive public policy while supporting the sustainability of NSPs. It also aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—notably Goal 9 on resilient infrastructure, Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and Goal 16 on strong institutions—offering practical pathways for inclusive and sustainable development.

Introduction

Land acquisition for the public interest is a foundational element of national development and directly underpins the implementation of strategic projects (Păunescu et al., 2024). In practice, however, it often encounters prolonged bureaucracy, price disputes, and resistance from affected communities (Fitawok et al., 2023), underscoring the need for policy innovations that accelerate processes without compromising justice or transparency (Andreoletti & Blasimme, 2023).

Within this context, multi-stakeholder collaboration is pivotal because it engages central and local governments, communities, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations in decision-making (Bulmer & Yáñez-Araque, 2023). Such collaboration enables the pooling of resources and capabilities, improving the design and implementation of policy innovations. Recent studies indicate that multi-stakeholder engagement can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of public policies, including in land procurement (Andriyani et al., 2024).

Policy innovation should therefore prioritise efficiency in land acquisition while safeguarding the rights of affected communities through transparent, participatory mechanisms (Helbing et al., 2023). A collaborative approach also helps to address conflict and social barriers that frequently arise during the implementation of projects serving the public interest (George et al., 2024). Case studies show that multi-stakeholder collaboration can expedite land procurement relative to conventional approaches (Su et al., 2025). Contemporary public policy theory similarly emphasises adaptive capacity and rapid response to socio-economic dynamics (Abujder Ochoa et al., 2024), aligning with the need to address the complexity of land acquisition beyond reliance on standardised rules.

From a public administration perspective, developing innovative, collaborative policy models is challenging due to fragmented authority and weak inter-agency coordination (Jansen & Kalas, 2024). Nevertheless, multi-stakeholder policy innovation offers opportunities to accommodate community needs and aspirations more comprehensively. Implementing a collaboration model can integrate processes to both shorten timelines and improve implementation quality and policy accountability (Del Soldato & Massari, 2024). This in turn helps to build public trust and support the sustainability of public projects (IFC, 2023). Social and cultural challenges also necessitate a collaborative approach in which active local participation is central to conflict resolution and public buy-in (Atmoko et al., 2025). In Indonesia, persistent regulatory, bureaucratic, and social bottlenecks continue to hinder the acceleration of strategic projects (Kim, 2023). It is therefore essential to identify recurring obstacles—from price disagreements and divergent stakeholder perceptions to community resistance arising from limited communication and participation (Yuliani et al., 2023)—and to understand how collaborative mechanisms involving governments, communities, the private sector, and non-governmental institutions can operate effectively (Christian et al., 2024).

The relevance of this study extends beyond national boundaries and contributes to broader global development agendas. Accelerating land acquisition through collaborative innovation not only addresses pressing domestic challenges but also supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—notably Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) through timely delivery of strategic projects, Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through more inclusive and sustainable spatial planning, and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) through greater transparency, accountability, and fairness in land acquisition. Ensuring fairness, transparency, and participation can align land policies with national priorities while advancing international commitments to sustainable development.

South Sulawesi occupies a strategic position in Indonesia's development agenda as the economic hub of Eastern Indonesia, with Makassar as the capital and principal growth centre. As a metropolitan gateway for trade, services, and logistics, Makassar concentrates major infrastructure investments under National Strategic Projects (NSPs). Rapid metropolitan expansion into Gowa Regency has transformed peri-urban areas into industrial estates, residential clusters, and new public facilities, heightening both the urgency and complexity of land provision. Projects require not only the physical availability of land but also the alignment of diverse interests among governmental actors, private investors, and local communities. In Gowa, overlapping land rights, customary claims, and competing pressures between agricultural preservation and urban conversion complicate acquisition. These dynamics indicate that land procurement in South Sulawesi is not merely a technical-legal exercise, but a multidimensional governance issue. The South Sulawesi case thus provides a critical lens to examine how collaborative policy innovations can accelerate land acquisition while preserving legitimacy, equity, and sustainability.

Globally, land acquisition for public purposes has been debated across the Global North and Global South. In Eastern Europe, for example, Romania's national land registration programme—intended to support infrastructure and rural development— has faced administrative delays and coordination gaps between central and local institutions (Paul, 2020; Pîrvu et al., 2022; Stănică & Stănică, 2024; Gherheş et al., 2025), echoing challenges seen in many developing countries. Studies from the Global South report comparable or more acute issues: in Ethiopia, farmer resistance to urban land-use change (Fitawok et al., 2023); in Viet Nam, hydropower resettlement disrupting social and economic capital (Ty et al., 2023); and in Sub-Saharan Africa, overlapping tenure systems and limited institutional capacity undermining the legitimacy of state-led acquisition (MacLean, 2024). These comparisons show that reconciling state development imperatives with community rights is a universal policy problem, manifested with particular intensity in the Global South. Situating the Indonesian case within both Northern and Southern experiences, this study contributes to global debates on collaborative governance and policy innovation in land acquisition.

Scholarship on land acquisition spans public administration, law, and development studies and reveals three dominant strands. First, the administrative-legal perspective focuses on regulation, bureaucratic procedure, and compensation mechanisms (Melo &

Pijoh, 2020; Purba et al., 2021; Salleh & Peng, 2022; Zainuddin, 2022), often treating land acquisition as a technical-legal problem with limited attention to social legitimacy. Second, research on institutional fragmentation highlights overlapping mandates among central and local governments, sectoral ministries, and land agencies, which generate delays and inefficiencies (Adam, 2020; Ameyaw & de Vries, 2021; Follmann et al., 2023; Meckelburg & Wardana, 2024), explaining why well-intentioned regulations falter in practice. Third, a growing body of work advances collaborative governance approaches, emphasising multi-actor involvement, community participation, and negotiation fora to enhance legitimacy and reduce resistance (Alananga et al., 2021; Bokings, 2022; Hutama, 2025).

Notwithstanding these advances, several gaps remain. First, many studies offer normative recommendations on collaboration but provide limited empirical evidence of how collaboration accelerates land acquisition in specific contexts. Second, the role of formal mediation institutions—such as the prosecutor's office—has been under-examined despite their potential to provide legal certainty and reduce disputes. Third, although public administration literature raises digital transformation and participatory information systems, analyses of concrete tools (e.g., geo-tagging, online complaint tracking, integrated databases) and their effects on bureaucratic delay are scarce. Fourth, compensation studies remain focused on monetary valuation, with limited exploration of non-conventional models—such as livelihood restoration, resettlement by preference, or community-based benefit-sharing—that could more effectively mitigate social resistance. This study addresses these gaps with empirical evidence from South Sulawesi, demonstrating how collaborative innovation—through facilitation forums, digital tools, and alternative compensation schemes—can accelerate land acquisition while strengthening legitimacy and accountability.

Accordingly, this research seeks to contribute empirically and conceptually to the development of land acquisition policies that serve the public interest and are more responsive and innovative (Li et al., 2025). It identifies and analyses administrative, legal, and social constraints that hinder land acquisition in Indonesia, providing a basis for process improvement. It further examines the roles and mechanisms of multi-stakeholder collaboration, detailing the interactions and contributions of actors in accelerating land procurement (Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2023). To assess policy innovations adopted to overcome these barriers—including strategies and collaboration models that reflect emerging good practice—the study evaluates the impact of multi-stakeholder collaboration on effectiveness and efficiency in terms of time, cost, and implementation quality (Larson et al., 2022). It also identifies obstacles to implementing policy innovation and offers strategic recommendations for policymakers and practitioners (Wu, 2022). Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to public administration and public policy by providing implementable recommendations grounded in field evidence and theory (Irani et al., 2023), enabling land acquisition policies to be more innovative, effective, and inclusive in addressing evolving national development challenges (Vercher et al., 2023).

Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine land acquisition policy innovation grounded in multi-stakeholder collaboration. A case study enables rich, contextual understanding of complex public policy implementation, particularly in national strategic infrastructure projects (D'Ostie-Racine et al., 2016). The research was conducted in South Sulawesi Province, with a purposive focus on Gowa Regency as a key site where land acquisition is ongoing or has recently been implemented. Gowa was selected because metropolitan expansion from Makassar generates urgent and complex acquisition challenges, including overlapping land rights, competing land uses, and heightened socio-economic tensions. Primary informants comprised central and local government officials, representatives of affected communities, private sector actors, and non-governmental institutions (see Figure 1).
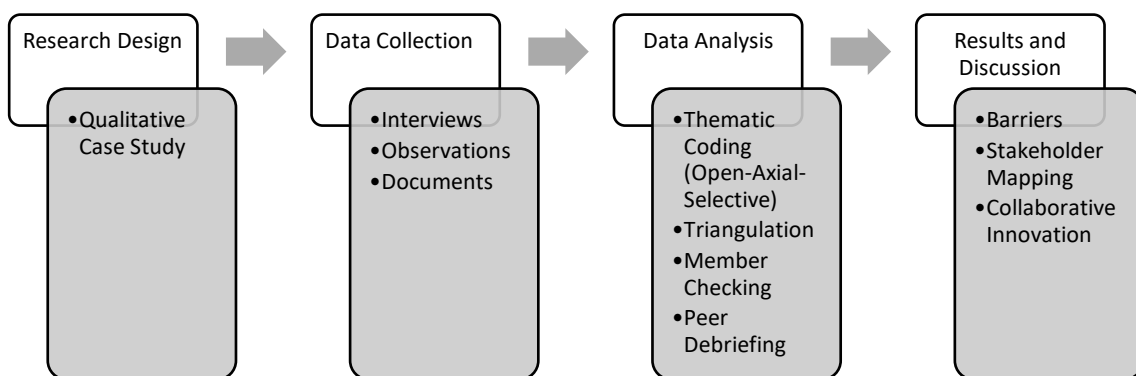

Figure 1. Research Flow
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The interview protocol explored actors' roles and interactions, administrative bottlenecks, social dynamics, and innovative strategies. Participant observation was undertaken directly in the field, while document analysis covered regulations, meeting minutes, and project reports (Roberts et al., 2019).

Data were analysed using thematic analysis with three coding stages—open, axial, and selective—to ensure analytic rigour and replicability of the codebook. Credibility and dependability were enhanced through triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail, as recommended in collaborative qualitative research (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This design enables the study to present a robust account of land acquisition policy innovations, identify key obstacles, and assess the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The findings inform evidence-based strategic recommendations for more responsive and inclusive public administration practices.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that land acquisition for National Strategic Projects (NSPs) in Indonesia is shaped by a combination of structural, institutional, and social dynamics that often complicate implementation. Although regulatory frameworks and administrative procedures are formally in place, practice reveals recurring challenges such as bureaucratic delays, overlapping mandates, and uneven enforcement across levels of government. These constraints are further compounded by socio-economic factors, including community resistance, contestation over land rights, and competing demands for land use. Accordingly, land acquisition cannot be reduced to a purely technical or legal process; it must be understood as a governance challenge that intersects with broader issues of legitimacy, trust, and social sustainability.

To analyse these dynamics, the discussion is organised around the main obstacles encountered in practice and the collaborative approaches developed to address them. The results show how institutional constraints, regulatory ambiguities, and fragmented coordination interact with local social dynamics to produce delays and conflicts in land acquisition. At the same time, the findings point to the potential of collaborative forums, negotiation platforms, and multi-stakeholder involvement as mechanisms for reducing resistance and strengthening public legitimacy. Framed in this way, the discussion not only illustrates the limitations of existing governance arrangements but also identifies opportunities for innovation that can make land acquisition more transparent, equitable, and sustainable.

Obstacles to Land Acquisition in Practice

Land acquisition remains one of the most persistent challenges in the realisation of National Strategic Projects (NSPs). Although legal frameworks and policy instruments have been introduced to standardise procedures, implementation on the ground frequently encounters delays, disputes, and inconsistencies that impede progress. These difficulties are not merely technical—such as sequencing approvals or verifying parcels—but also institutional and social, reflecting divergent mandates, uneven enforcement across tiers of government, and heightened sensitivities among affected communities. In many instances, the process becomes a contested arena in which state development objectives intersect with community rights and private sector interests, transforming what appears to be an administrative exercise into a complex governance problem that demands more than simple compliance with rules.

The study's findings indicate that obstacles arise from multiple, deeply interconnected sources. Bureaucratic complexity and overlapping institutional mandates generate transaction costs and create procedural choke points; regulatory ambiguities invite competing interpretations; and fragmented coordination across agencies produces duplication, gaps, and serial rather than parallel processing. At the same time, social dynamics—ranging from resistance by affected communities to contestation over land rights and competing demands for land use—amplify these administrative weaknesses. These forces often reinforce one another: for example, unclear procedural guidance can

intensify local disputes, while weak inter-agency information-sharing allows misunderstandings to persist, thereby prolonging valuation disagreements, grievance handling, and negotiation timelines. The cumulative effect is to slow acquisition, elevate costs, and erode trust in public institutions.

Recognising these interdependencies is essential to understanding why land acquisition remains problematic and to framing the need for collaborative innovations that foster transparency, fairness, and trust among stakeholders. Addressing the challenge requires not only clearer roles and responsibilities, but also structured arenas for multi-stakeholder engagement in which government bodies, community representatives, private actors, and civil society can surface information asymmetries, negotiate competing claims, and co-ordinate decisions. Such collaboration can reduce resistance by making procedures intelligible and predictable, while aligning expectations around compensation, resettlement options, and timelines. In turn, improved coordination and participatory practices help strengthen public legitimacy, creating conditions under which land acquisition can proceed more transparently, equitably, and sustainably in support of NSP delivery.

Administrative and Regulatory Constraints

The land acquisition process in National Strategic Projects (NSPs) often faces significant delays due to administrative complexity and overlapping regulations between central and regional governments. Law No. 2 of 2012 and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2023 provide the legal framework for land acquisition, yet their implementation frequently encounters practical obstacles. In Gowa Regency, for example, infrastructure projects are strategic undertakings with not only technical implications but also broader social and policy consequences. At the technical level, unclear land tenure status and overlapping boundaries remain major sources of conflict, requiring systematic administrative and legal risk management (Syagga & Olima, 1996). Boundary delineation and ownership certification mechanisms must be implemented with the active participation of the community to maintain transparency and legitimacy, thereby reducing the potential for disputes that could hinder project sustainability (Larson et al., 2022).

Additionally, land acquisition governance must be integrated with an objective and proportionate compensation policy to ensure justice and prevent social resistance. Failure to design a sound compensation system has the potential to trigger new conflicts that negatively impact development schedules and costs. Document verification is slowed by layered bureaucracy and a lack of synchronisation between permits from the central government and the urgency for acceleration from local governments (Huda et al., 2024). Empirical studies conducted in South Sulawesi Province indicate that administrative obstacles primarily stem from non-adaptive legal structures and a lack of institutional awareness regarding cross-sectoral procedures.

The study's results indicate that land acquisition in national strategic projects frequently encounters delays due to complex administrative processes and overlapping regulations between the central and regional governments. Several study locations show

that coordination between agencies (the National Land Agency, local governments, and technical ministries) is not optimal due to the absence of an integrated information system. This leads to duplication of authority and slow document verification. A local government official noted that efforts to expedite processes at the local level are typically constrained by the need to wait for central approval, and that coordination is still not channelled through a one-door mechanism. This condition aligns with the theory of institutional fragmentation proposed by Kettunen and Kallio (2022), which emphasises the lack of coordination across institutions as the primary inhibiting factor in policy implementation (Fernández-i-Marín et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Huda et al. (2024) emphasised that weaknesses in data integration and regulatory systems are the main inhibiting factors, causing document verification processes and decision-making at the regional and central levels to be asynchronous. Institutional fragmentation—such as that between the National Land Agency, local governments, and technical ministries—results in duplication of authority and administrative slowdowns (Sejarot & Hariri, 2023). In the context of the National Strategic Project in Gowa, this creates a dilemmatic situation: the process must wait for central approval, but the local government demands acceleration for the project's realisation (Haq et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the argument that the legal framework developed has not been fully implemented on the ground due to the lack of adequate institutional integration mechanisms (Ananda & Sadino, 2024).

A coordination meeting on land acquisition in Gowa Regency discussed various challenges in implementing development projects, especially those related to land conditions affected by human activities and erosion (Kim, 2023). In the meeting, relevant parties—including local governments and communities—were expected to collaborate to reach agreement on land use (Boru et al., 2025). The discussion also emphasised the importance of community participation in natural resource management, as well as the necessity of transparency in the land acquisition process for the public interest (Head, 2022). The importance of the legal aspect in land acquisition was also highlighted, with all parties reminded to comply with the applicable provisions (Nguyen et al., 2017). The state-owned plantation company and the government must collaborate to address the issue of land fragmentation between state-owned land and community-controlled land (Liu et al., 2024). The meeting aimed to establish clarity on the boundaries of the land to be released while also ensuring that the rights of the people who cultivate the land were respected.

The meeting focused on problem-solving strategies through deliberation and open discussions (Roberts et al., 2019). It is hoped that, through constructive dialogue among all parties, the land acquisition process can run smoothly. The government and the community must work together to ensure that development projects can be implemented without causing conflicts, while still respecting the rights of the affected communities (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983). From a social perspective, the success of land acquisition is highly dependent on involving and empowering affected communities. Empirical studies show that active community involvement in social risk mitigation—including the

development of inclusive compensation and resettlement plans—can build trust and support for projects.

This is a real implementation of the principles of sustainable development that prioritise a balance between economic, social, and environmental benefits. An approach that focuses on socio-ecological impacts and integrated risk management not only increases public acceptance but also minimises negative impacts on local ecosystems and social life. Hydropower projects in Central Asia exemplify the success of this strategy in maintaining both socio-economic and environmental sustainability within the community (Shao et al., 2021).

In terms of policy, land acquisition must be supported by an adaptive, responsive, and inclusive regulatory and governance framework to accommodate evolving social and technical dynamics during project implementation. Integration between local and national policies, accompanied by strengthened institutional capacity in conflict management and compensation, is a key factor in achieving sustainable and equitable outcomes (Museleku, 2010). In addition, continuous evaluation and social audit mechanisms are necessary to ensure policy implementation in accordance with applicable ethical and legal standards, while also providing opportunities for future improvement in land acquisition management (Larson et al., 2022). Thus, land acquisition is not just an administrative process but part of a development strategy oriented towards community welfare and holistic environmental protection.

Public Policy Theory and Institutional Fragmentation

Public policy theory examines how policies are formulated and implemented to achieve desired societal outcomes. In the context of land acquisition, it plays a crucial role in structuring negotiations among government, communities, and the private sector. Institutions—understood as the structures and processes that regulate interaction among policy actors—are decisive in shaping policy success. Strong institutions foster transparency and accountability, both essential to preventing conflict and enabling meaningful community participation (Ostrom & Ostrom, 2004).

Public policy and institutional theory are intrinsically linked: institutions comprise the formal and informal rules, norms, and routines that shape how policy is made and enacted. From a new institutionalist perspective, public policy cannot be comprehensively understood without analysing the rules, norms, and interactions within institutions that mediate the actions of public and private actors in the policy arena (Peters, 2023). In this sense, institutions provide a constraint-and-enablement framework: they regulate procedures and behaviours to allow policies to run effectively, yielding more stable and predictable outcomes (Berthod et al., 2017). Institutional theory thus explains how structures influence the policy process from agenda-setting through to evaluation.

A core implication of institutional theory is that sound institutional design strengthens policy-making by providing clear frameworks and expectations for all parties. As discussed in the land acquisition meeting outlined in the document, community participation and collaboration between government agencies and

communities are necessary to achieve desired outcomes. Empirical research indicates that inclusive institutions tend to produce more effective and sustainable policies because they incorporate a wider range of perspectives and interests (Kim, 2023).

Institutionally oriented public policy theory also emphasises adaptation and transformation in response to shifting social, economic, and political dynamics. This process of institutional change describes how evolving norms and rules reshape the direction and effectiveness of public policy (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983). In practice, overly rigid or bureaucratic institutions can hinder innovation and responsiveness to community needs, making institutional reform a crucial strategy for improving governance quality. Accordingly, the relationship between policy theory and institutions underscores that institutional capacity-building and change management are central to adaptive and sustainable policy implementation.

Furthermore, the interaction between public policy and institutional theory implies that policy design and implementation must account for local context and social dynamics. Responsive institutions help identify problems accurately and craft solutions tailored to specific conditions. This relationship is especially salient in land acquisition, where policy success depends on harmonious interaction among relevant actors (Nurhayati & Rahman, 2023).

From an implementation perspective, institutional theory supports multi-actor approaches and institutional networks in which diverse organisations and stakeholders interact and collaborate (Rudko et al., 2025). Such networking helps explain the complexity of cross-sector and multi-level coordination, which relies not only on formal hierarchies but also on social relations and informal mechanisms within and between institutions. This is particularly relevant in contemporary public policy, which demands decentralisation, community participation, and transparent, accountable governance (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983). In sum, institutional theory enriches public policy analysis by highlighting how institutional interactions shape effective and inclusive policy outcomes.

The Role and Dynamics of Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is a crucial element of the public policy process, particularly in negotiations, mediations, and decision-making that involve diverse actors, including central and local governments, the private sector, and local communities. Collaboration theory emphasises that inclusivity and broad participation enable more representative and sustainable decision-making (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Central and regional governments act as facilitators and regulators, creating conditions for constructive dialogue and legitimacy mechanisms throughout negotiations (Swette et al., 2023). The private sector contributes resources and innovation, while the involvement of local communities is essential to ensure that resulting policies align with local needs and aspirations, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and sustainability of implementation.

This collaborative dynamic is anchored in a facilitation forum that functions as a space for negotiation and mediation, bringing stakeholders together within a dialogue- and consensus-based setting. The forum manages conflict, builds trust, and helps formulate mutually acceptable solutions through structured mediation (Fung, 2010).

Network governance theory underscores the importance of horizontal interactions among institutions and actors, supported by adaptive and communicative coordination mechanisms. Accordingly, the facilitation forum is not merely a technical instrument; it is also a socio-political arena that shapes power dynamics, actor roles, and the legitimacy of decision-making.

In the context of land acquisition (often termed *land procurement*) and public development projects, multi-stakeholder collaboration supports comprehensive solutions that integrate technical, social, and economic dimensions. Effective collaboration requires: (a) an active governmental role in establishing regulations that enable participation; (b) private-sector engagement in risk management and innovation; and (c) empowered local communities as impact recipients who also contribute to social monitoring and evaluation (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Empirical evidence suggests that capacity-building for facilitation forums, coupled with integrated policy support, significantly improves inclusive and fair negotiation and mediation, thereby reducing prolonged conflict and strengthening policy sustainability.

Collaboration in land acquisition involves complex interactions among central and local governments, the private sector, local communities, and facilitation forums. Success depends on stakeholders' ability to work together effectively, share information, and reach mutually beneficial agreements. Collaboration theory posits that synergies generated through joint action create added value and enable goals unattainable by any single actor. Central and local governments are pivotal in establishing policies, regulations, and legal frameworks; the central government ensures alignment with national interests and international standards, while local governments operationalise policy locally. Close collaboration is needed to address overlapping claims, weak institutional coordination, and limited public participation (Haq et al., 2025).

The private sector is frequently involved in land acquisition for infrastructure and industrial estate development and should be governed transparently and accountably to avoid conflicts of interest and to protect community rights. Local communities must have the right to participate in decision-making and to receive fair compensation for acquired land. Facilitation forums—through mediation and negotiation—help convene stakeholders and craft mutually beneficial agreements. Negotiation theory indicates that effective communication and mutual understanding can yield creative, durable solutions (Spiller, 2020). In land acquisition, mediation forums provide a platform for local communities to articulate concerns and expectations. In turn, effective facilitation not only builds trust among stakeholders but also strengthens the legitimacy and sustainability of the resulting policies (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Accelerating Land Acquisition: Innovation, Effectiveness, Implications

The dominant obstacle is resistance from affected communities. Key triggers include disagreement overcompensation, limited participation at the planning stage, and insufficient information about the project's long-term impacts. In one case, residents refused relocation because they felt excluded from early planning; they also reported only learning that their land was part of the project when heavy equipment arrived, with

no prior public consultation. Theoretically, this aligns with concepts of policy legitimacy and trust deficits, whereby the absence of public dialogue leads policies to be perceived as instruments of coercion rather than standard solutions (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Legally, the absence of firm technical guidelines for non-material compensation (e.g., loss of livelihood, psychosocial harms) frequently becomes a source of public complaints. In several cases, land values are assessed non-transparently, creating inequities in compensation. As emphasised in agrarian law literature, legal uncertainty in land acquisition has triggered lawsuits that prolong the process (Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2023). The lack of an efficient appeals mechanism further exacerbates these conditions.

Table 1. Findings on Obstacles to the Implementation of Land Acquisition
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Types of Constraints	Description	Source
Administrative	Poor Coordination Between Agencies; Overlapping Regulations	Bureaucrat Interviews; Documents
Social	Citizen Resistance; Lack of Participation; Social–Local Conflicts	Field Observations; Interviews
Legal	Unclear Basis for Non-Material Damages; Potential Legal Disputes	Regulatory Studies; Citizen Narratives

The obstacles identified can be grouped into three main categories—administrative, social, and legal—summarised in Table 1. Poor inter-agency coordination, overlapping regulations, and protracted document verification create administrative constraints; citizen resistance and limited participation generate social tensions; and unclear provisions for non-material damages produce legal disputes. These conditions create inefficiency and uncertainty that delay project implementation. Social obstacles are closely tied to community resistance, inadequate meaningful participation, and frequent local-level conflicts. Many affected citizens stated that their views were not adequately considered at the early planning stage, which reduced trust in government-led initiatives and often escalated into demonstrations or prolonged negotiations. Legal obstacles further complicate matters, particularly the lack of firm technical guidelines regarding non-material compensation—such as loss of livelihood, cultural attachment to land, or psychosocial impacts. This regulatory ambiguity has led to disputes and litigation, which, in turn, increase both the duration and cost of land acquisition. Taken together, the classification in Table 1 demonstrates that barriers to land acquisition are not merely technical or administrative; they are also social and legal, intersecting and reinforcing one another. Recognising this multidimensionality is essential for designing collaborative, innovative policy responses that address procedural bottlenecks alongside the legitimacy and justice concerns of affected communities.

This study also finds that land acquisition for strategic infrastructure projects involves multiple actors with diverse roles and interests. The principal actors include the central government (e.g., the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency; the Ministry of Public Works), local governments (provinces/districts), affected communities (individuals and community groups), the private sector (implementing contractors and investors), and non-governmental institutions (advocacy NGOs and mediation bodies). Each plays a specific role—ranging from policy decision-making and technical implementation to social mediation.

Table 2. Key Actors in Land Acquisition
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Actor	Main Role	Interests
Central Government	Regulation; Project Funding	Smooth National Strategic Programme Implementation
Local Government	Policy Implementation; Local Communication and Liaison	Local Social and Political Stability
Affected Communities	Landowners/Users; Compensation Recipients	Compensation; Justice; Participation
Private Sector	Project Implementers; Investors	Efficiency and Return on Investment (ROI)
CSOs/NGOs	Advocacy; Mediation; Dialogue Facilitation	Social Justice and Human Rights Protection

The process of land acquisition involves a constellation of actors with distinct roles, responsibilities, and interests that collectively shape policy trajectories and outcomes. As summarised in Table 2, at least five key actor groups are evident in the field: the central government, local governments, affected communities, the private sector, and civil society organisations (CSOs/NGOs). The central government—represented by the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency—acts as the primary regulator and funder, aiming to ensure the smooth implementation of national strategic programmes. Local governments serve as frontline implementers and communication bridges to local communities, with their legitimacy tied to maintaining social and political stability within their jurisdictions. Affected communities—comprising landowners, cultivators, and residents—hold the most direct stake: they are entitled to fair compensation and participation in decision-making; however, their bargaining position is often weakened by limited access to legal and technical knowledge. The private sector, typically contractors or investors, plays a pivotal role as project implementers and funders, seeking efficiency and return on investment—priorities that can, at times, sit in tension with social justice demands. Finally, CSOs and advocacy groups facilitate dialogue and safeguard social justice, providing checks and balances to prevent rights violations and to promote equitable solutions. The mapping in Table 2 makes clear

that the dynamics of land acquisition cannot be understood through government action alone; rather, they are negotiated through interaction, contestation, and collaboration among multiple stakeholders with overlapping—and sometimes conflicting—interests. Understanding these roles and their interplay is critical to designing collaborative governance arrangements that both accelerate land acquisition and build legitimacy and trust among all parties.

Field findings indicate that collaboration patterns are not linear and vary by local context. In some locations, independent facilitators enable balanced collaboration; elsewhere, the dominance of actors weakens participatory principles. Successful interaction models are characterised by intensive cross-actor communication, transparency regarding community rights, regular public consultation forums, and strong political commitment from local governments. Conversely, failed models tend to exhibit top-down approaches, limited transparency, and the absence of community complaint mechanisms. These observations are consistent with the Collaborative Governance framework (Ansell & Gash, 2008), which emphasises face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, shared understanding, and intermediate outcomes.

On the ground, the success of collaboration depends heavily on local actor capacity and the availability of open negotiation spaces. When communication and trust are built from the outset, policies tend to be more acceptable—even where trade-offs are significant. Although collaboration is expected to mitigate fragmentation, real challenges persist: capacity asymmetries between actors (e.g., communities' limited understanding of legal rights), conflicts of interest between government and private actors, lengthy consensus-building timelines, and a lack of structural incentives to sustain collaboration. Several informants suggested that success is often enabled by local champions—individuals or institutions that can bridge differences and expedite negotiation processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The study's results show that adopting policy innovations based on multi-stakeholder collaboration positively affects both the speed and quality of land acquisition. Indicators of effectiveness include: completion time—projects using collaborative forums and early citizen engagement achieved average accelerations of 3–5 months compared with conventional approaches; social costs—reductions in legal disputes and citizen demonstrations; and quality of implementation—higher community satisfaction, especially where two-way consultations and local actor empowerment were instituted. Citizens stated that being involved in discussions made them feel more valued than merely receiving one-way information. Theoretically, this aligns with policy co-design, in which policies are developed with citizens and stakeholders to enhance local relevance and social legitimacy (Candel & Paulsson, 2023).

Finally, the findings reinforce the contribution of collaborative land acquisition models to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Inclusive, participatory mechanisms that accelerate infrastructure delivery support Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by improving timeliness and efficiency; mechanisms ensuring citizen involvement and equitable compensation advance Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through inclusive urban development and community well-being; and

transparent facilitation forums—alongside the involvement of institutions such as the prosecutor's office—advance Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by enhancing accountability, reducing conflict potential, and building legal certainty and social legitimacy. These linkages demonstrate that collaborative governance in land acquisition is both a local innovation and a strategic contribution to global agenda of sustainable development.

Policy innovation to accelerate land acquisition focuses on developing mechanisms that enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of administrative processes and decision-making. Innovative approaches—such as participatory information systems—enable active community involvement via open access to project information, thereby expediting verification and reducing social resistance. In addition, public consultation forums provide a structured space for dialogue among government, the private sector, and local communities, supporting transparency and policy legitimacy. Evaluation results indicate that these innovations reduce the time required to settle land acquisitions, mitigate conflict, and improve satisfaction among affected communities (OECD, 2017).

The success of this policy innovation is also evident in the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder collaboration involving central and local governments, the private sector, local communities, and facilitation forums, including the role of the prosecutor's office as mediator. Such collaboration facilitates cross-sector coordination and accelerates negotiations through collaborative mediation, reducing potential conflicts and strengthening decision-making legitimacy. Performance indicators—shorter turnaround times, higher levels of public participation, and improved community satisfaction—provide empirical evidence of effectiveness (Swette et al., 2023).\Within policy innovation theory, the acceleration of land acquisition reflects local governments' responsiveness to community needs and evolving development dynamics. The theory emphasises adaptation to improve the speed and quality of public services while encouraging participation as a mechanism of social oversight. Responsive local governments can deploy digital technologies and consultation-forum mechanisms to address public aspirations and anticipate conflict through swift, structured mediation. The establishment of a facilitation forum that includes the prosecutor's office is an additional innovation, offering legal assurance and mediation capacity for resolving land disputes (Fernández-i-Marín et al., 2025).

Analysis of best practice shows that participatory information systems and public consultation forums provide transparency and information access that are essential to strengthening public participation. Collaborative mediation mechanisms—including facilitation forums integrated with the role of the prosecutor's office—serve as platforms for peaceful and efficient dispute resolution. This approach not only reduces the risk of protracted conflict but also increases public trust in the land acquisition process. Performance assessments focusing on completion time, public participation, and satisfaction among affected communities constitute key benchmarks for success (Fernández-i-Marín et al., 2025).

Policy innovations that integrate participatory technology, consultation forums, collaborative mediation, and facilitation forums involving prosecutors do more than

increase the effectiveness of land acquisition; they also strengthen the legitimacy and responsiveness of local government. This approach supports transparent, inclusive, and adaptive governance in response to shifting community needs, thereby fostering sustainability in public infrastructure development. Strategically, forum capacity should be strengthened and digital technologies integrated to accelerate fair and accountable decision-making.

Policy innovation must also consider sustainability by reinforcing institutional and stakeholder capacities. Recent research indicates that the success of innovative policies hinges on integrating digital technologies with human resource development, enabling acceleration of administrative processes while maintaining accountability (OECD, 2024). The adoption of digital platforms that support real-time public participation and open project monitoring allows local and central governments to minimise bureaucratic barriers and anticipate potential conflicts at an early stage.

Moreover, the effectiveness of policy innovations in accelerating land acquisition depends on synergistic multi-stakeholder collaboration, wherein the active roles of central and local governments, the private sector, local communities, and facilitation forums are critical. Empirical studies find that forums involving prosecutorial agencies as formal mediators can strengthen negotiation and mediation, reduce conflicts of interest, and provide legal clarity that enhances the legitimacy of decisions. This underscores the importance of cross-sector coordination in designing policies that are responsive to local needs while remaining aligned with national development targets (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The success of these innovations can be gauged through key performance indicators such as reduced completion times, increased public participation rates, and empirically tested satisfaction among affected communities. The theory of local government responsiveness holds that adaptive and inclusive policy innovation not only improves public service effectiveness but also builds public trust—particularly salient in land acquisition, which often generates social conflict. Implementing best practices—collaborative mediation mechanisms and participatory information systems, supported by a prosecutor-facilitated forum—offers a replicable model for other infrastructure contexts to advance sustainable public governance (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

Accelerating land acquisition through policy innovation requires an adaptive, responsive approach to prevailing social, economic, and environmental dynamics. Policy innovation theory emphasises experimentation, learning, and the adoption of best practices to improve policy effectiveness (Guerrero-Ocampo et al., 2022). In land acquisition, relevant innovations include information technologies to increase transparency and participation, fairer and more sustainable compensation mechanisms, and strengthened institutional capacities to manage processes efficiently. Policy evaluation should be conducted periodically to assess progress towards stated goals and to identify both positive and adverse implications (Nurhayati & Rahman, 2023). Relevant indicators include land acquisition completion time, levels of public participation, satisfaction among affected communities, and the number of conflicts resolved. Evaluation results should inform iterative policy design, strengthen implementation, and ensure optimal benefits for communities.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration—including central and local governments, the private sector, local communities, and facilitation forums (such as the prosecutor's office)—can play a decisive role in shortening completion times, mitigating conflict, and enhancing legitimacy (Ansell et al., 2020). Effective collaboration requires open communication, trust, and a shared commitment to agreed goals. Collaboration theory suggests that the synergies generated by joint action create additional value and enable objectives that are unattainable for single actors.

Best practices and innovations in land acquisition (often termed land procurement) can be identified through case studies, benchmarking, and comparative analysis. Examples include participatory information systems to increase transparency and accountability; public consultation forums to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders; collaborative mediation mechanisms to resolve conflict; and the involvement of the prosecutor's office to provide legal assistance and ensure compliance with laws and regulations (Candel & Paulsson, 2023). The prosecutor's office can act as an independent, neutral facilitation forum in land acquisition, providing legal assistance to government and communities, mediating stakeholder conflicts, and ensuring that processes comply with applicable regulations. Its involvement can enhance public trust and reduce the risk of corruption and abuse of authority (Head, 2022). These findings are summarised in the Land Acquisition Acceleration Innovation Scheme (see Figure 2), which highlights collaborative mechanisms and institutional roles that strengthen legitimacy and effectiveness.
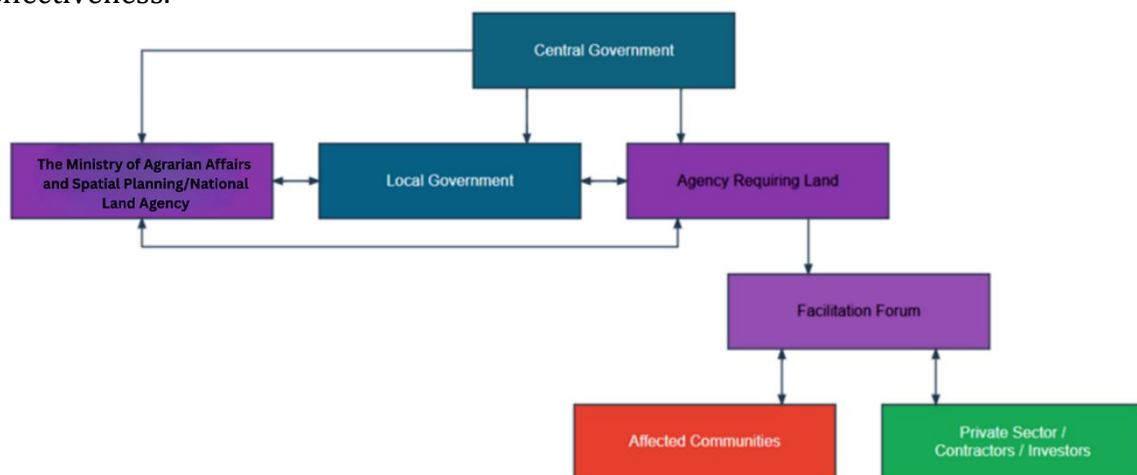
Figure 2. Collaborative Innovation to Accelerate Land Acquisition
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Based on Figure 2—which depicts central government entities (the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency), local governments, land-requiring agencies, facilitation forums (the prosecutor's office), affected communities, and the private sector/contractors/investors—we can connect the earlier analysis of land acquisition acceleration policy innovations to the structure and roles of these actors. In public policy theory, the institutional architecture that assigns and coordinates these roles provides a crucial foundation for effective, responsive governance. Clear

institutional arrangements and cross-actor coordination are key pillars in implementing complex public policies that involve multi-stakeholder interests (Liu et al., 2024).

Figure 2 also presents multi-stakeholder collaboration as the core of policy innovation to accelerate land acquisition. The strategic role of the central government—through the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency—as policymaker and regulator, and of local governments as implementers and local adaptors, is fundamental. This aligns with multilevel governance theory, which emphasises the importance of both vertical and horizontal coordination to enhance policy effectiveness (Sørensen & Torfing, 2023). The presence of facilitation forums involving the prosecutor's office as a formal mediator provides legitimacy and strengthens negotiation and mediation processes, consistent with findings by Ansell and Gash (2022) on the role of independent mediators in reducing conflict and facilitating decision-making in public–private collaborations.

Moreover, the involvement of land-requiring agencies, affected communities, and the private sector—including contractors and investors—underscores the need for public participation mechanisms and open communication. The theory of public participation advanced by W. Cao (2025) indicates that inclusivity and open access to information increase accountability, strengthen policy legitimacy, and support successful implementation (Cao & Tao, 2025). As analysed earlier, participatory information systems and public consultation forums serve as tools for transparency and spaces for dialogue among all stakeholders. They also support performance measurement using indicators such as completion time, levels of public participation, and satisfaction among affected communities as benchmarks for the effectiveness of policy innovation (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

Table 3. Impact of Collaborative Innovation
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Aspects	Before Innovation (Conventional Method)	After Collaborative Innovation
Process Duration	Long; Often Delayed Due to Conflict	Faster; Conflicts Minimised
Public Participation	Low; Informative Only	Highly Participatory from Initial Planning
Citizen Satisfaction	Low; Considerable Resistance	Improved Due to Clarity and Dialogue
Legal Disputes	Frequently Occur	Marked Decline
Policy Quality	Technical Focus; Minimal Participation	Adaptive, Responsive, and Socially Informed

The research findings indicate that innovation strategies are most effective when supported by complementary measures: implementing a transparent digital system for land acquisition (e.g., geo-tagging and online reporting); establishing a multi-stakeholder

consultation forum active from the planning stage rather than limited to socialisation; involving independent institutions as dialogue facilitators; and preparing social impact assessment documents. Non-conventional compensation schemes—such as job training, relocation based on citizens' preferences, or community shareholding in infrastructure projects—further strengthen process legitimacy. Collectively, these strategies show that policies incorporating social dimensions are more effective in addressing field complexities than purely technocratic approaches. All components that can be accelerated through the collaborative innovation model are presented in Table 3, which illustrates the integration of digital governance, participatory forums, independent facilitation, and alternative compensation mechanisms.

The comparative field evidence shows that adopting collaborative innovation significantly reshapes land acquisition dynamics. As Table 3 indicates, moving from conventional methods to collaboration-based approaches yields measurable gains across the process. Conventional approaches are often protracted—delayed by conflict and bureaucratic bottlenecks—whereas collaborative innovations shorten timeframes by minimising disputes and enabling swifter decision-making. Participation likewise shifts from limited, largely one-way communication to genuine dialogue, consultation, and joint problem-solving, resulting in greater inclusivity. This improvement corresponds with higher citizen satisfaction: communities report greater acceptance where information is clear and involvement in negotiations is substantive. Legal disputes decline where mediation forums, participatory compensation schemes, and transparent procedures are adopted. Finally, policy quality improves: rather than being narrowly technical, outcomes become more adaptive, responsive, and socially informed. Collectively, the evidence confirms that collaborative innovation not only accelerates land acquisition but also strengthens legitimacy, accountability, and sustainability—supporting the case that innovative governance outperforms traditional technocratic models in addressing complex public-interest land acquisition.

The roles and involvement of stakeholders in accelerating land acquisition reflect complex collaborative dynamics. The central government sets policy and exercises oversight to ensure efficiency, while local governments act as technical implementers and communication bridges between communities and the centre, with a focus on local social and political stability (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Affected communities—as landowners or users—have interests in economic security and social justice, yet their involvement often remains low to moderate, signalling a continued need to strengthen participation to ensure transparency and accountability (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). The private sector functions as project implementer, prioritising return on investment (ROI) and timely delivery, while facilitation forums mediate social processes and safeguard human rights. Effective collaboration among these actors is essential to mitigate conflict and enhance the legitimacy of land acquisition policies (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). These roles and interactions are summarised in Table 4, which outlines the distribution of responsibilities among key stakeholders.

The mapping of stakeholder roles in the land acquisition process reveals the complexity of collaborative governance. As summarised in Table 4, each actor contributes

differently to accelerating land acquisition, yet their involvement is interdependent and often conditioned by power dynamics and questions of legitimacy. The central government has the highest engagement, acting as policymaker, funder, and national watchdog to align strategic projects with national priorities. Local governments operate as technical implementers and communication liaisons, maintaining medium–high engagement due to their proximity to affected communities and responsibility for local stability. By contrast, affected communities—despite being the most directly impacted— often show low–medium engagement, constrained by limited legal knowledge and bargaining power; this underscores the need for stronger empowerment and representation mechanisms. The private sector, including investors and contractors, typically exhibits high engagement given its critical role in financing and execution, though this involvement can prioritise efficiency and ROI over broader social considerations. Facilitation forums (e.g., mediation bodies or the prosecutor's office) assume medium–high engagement, mediating among interests and providing oversight to uphold distributive justice and protect human rights. These patterns confirm that land acquisition is not simply a governmental function but a collaborative endeavour shaped by asymmetries in engagement and authority. Recognising these differentiated roles— and balancing them through institutional design—is essential for building trust, reducing conflict, and ensuring collaboration delivers both efficiency and fairness.

Table 4. The Role of Collaborative Stakeholders
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Actor	Role in Land Acquisition	Key Importance	Engagement Rate
Central Government	Policymaker; Funder; National Watchdog	Efficiency of Strategic Project Implementation	High
Local Government	Technical Implementer; Community Liaison; Progress Reporter	Local Social and Political Stability	Medium–High
Affected Communities	Landowners/Users; Compensation Recipients	Economic Security; Social Justice	Low–Medium
Private Sector/Investors	Project Implementer; Investment Manager	ROI and Smooth Project Delivery	High
Facilitation Forum	Mediator; Facilitator; Supervisor of Social Processes	Human Rights and Distributive Justice	Medium–High

Public participation theory emphasises that inclusivity and open access to information enhance policy legitimacy and accountability while supporting successful implementation. This study's findings show that dialogue forums, when supported by

participatory information systems, not only reduce conflict potential but also strengthen public trust in government institutions. A comparison of several research locations—grouped by the author into three main categories—reveals significant differences in both processes and outcomes. These comparative insights are presented in Table 5, which highlights the variations observed across contexts.

Table 5. Comparison of Research in Three Locations
Source: Processed by the authors (2025)

Aspects	Group A Location	Group B Location	Group C Location
Levels of Social Conflict	High (Citizens' Refusal; Demonstrations)	High (Citizens' Refusal; Demonstrations)	Low (Consultative Process From the Outset)
Completion Time	≥ 30 Months (Beyond Target)	≥ 18 Months (Beyond Target)	12 Months (On Time)
Collaboration Strategy	Top-Down; No Role for the Facilitation Forum	Top-Down; Some Stakeholder Roles Present but Ad Hoc (Casuistic)	Collaborative; Facilitated by the Facilitation Forum
Citizen Satisfaction	Low; Numerous Complaints	Low; Numerous Complaints	High; Residents Feel Involved
Forms of Innovation	Unilateral Socialisation; Technical Documents Difficult to Understand	Unilateral Socialisation; Technical Documents Difficult to Understand	Citizens' Dialogue Forum; Innovative Compensation

The comparative analysis across the three locations provides further insight into how collaborative innovation reshapes land acquisition outcomes. As Table 5 shows, contrasts between conventional approaches and collaboration-based mechanisms are substantial. Group A was characterised by high social conflict—widespread refusals and demonstrations. The top-down approach, lacking facilitation forums and genuine community engagement, led to completion times exceeding 30 months and persistent dissatisfaction. Group B exhibited similar patterns: although some stakeholders were involved, the process remained largely top-down and ad hoc (casuistic), resulting in delays beyond 18 months and continued complaints. By contrast, Group C demonstrates the transformative potential of collaboration: land acquisition was completed within 12 months (on schedule), with markedly higher community satisfaction owing to the presence of a facilitation forum and innovative compensation mechanisms. Residents reported feelings included in dialogue and decision-making, which substantially reduced resistance. Overall, the comparison confirms that collaborative innovation is not only more time-efficient but also more effective in building legitimacy and trust; stakeholder

presence alone is insufficient—what matters is the design of participatory mechanisms, transparency of information, and responsiveness to community concerns.

In Group A, social conflict was high, marked by citizen rejection and demonstrations; the process exceeded 30 months, well beyond the target. A strictly top-down approach without facilitation institutions exacerbated dissatisfaction (Fung, 2010). In Group B, turnaround was shorter yet still over 18 months and beyond expectations. Although several stakeholders were involved, the process remained largely top-down and case-by-case (casuistic), indicating that without an effective participatory approach, similar problems persist, including high levels of public complaint (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). In Group C, outcomes were markedly better: completion occurred on time (12 months). A collaborative approach—facilitated by the facilitation forum—created space for active community involvement in decision-making, and resident satisfaction rose significantly as people felt included and heard throughout dialogue and implementation (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Conclusion

This study shows that land acquisition for National Strategic Projects in Indonesia—particularly in South Sulawesi—continues to face structural and social obstacles despite formal legal frameworks. The findings highlight that collaborative policy innovations—such as facilitation forums, digital governance systems, independent mediation, and alternative compensation mechanisms—are critical to overcoming bureaucratic fragmentation, reducing social resistance, and strengthening legitimacy. These strategies affirm that land acquisition cannot be treated merely as a technical–legal procedure; it must be approached as a governance challenge requiring transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness to community needs.

By situating the Indonesian case within wider debates, the study contributes to understanding land acquisition challenges across the Global South, where institutional weakness, overlapping land rights, and community resistance frequently undermine development initiatives. Comparative insights indicate that collaborative and participatory models provide practical pathways to balance state development imperatives with citizens' rights.

The conclusions also align with the Sustainable Development Goals—especially Goal 9 (resilient infrastructure), Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions)—by underscoring the importance of inclusive governance, transparency, and accountability in accelerating land acquisition. Strengthening collaborative policy innovation in land governance is therefore vital not only for Indonesia but also for advancing more sustainable and equitable development outcomes across the Global South.

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