



COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE MODEL BETWEEN REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND CUSTOMARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL AUTONOMY POLICY IN PAPUA PROVINCE

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Abstract

The implementation of the Special Autonomy policy in Papua Province faces various challenges, including inter-agency coordination, indigenous community involvement, institutional capacity, and the effectiveness of local governance. These conditions highlight the importance of a collaborative governance approach that builds synergy among local government, indigenous institutions, civil society, universities, religious leaders, and other stakeholders. This study aims to analyze the implementation of collaborative governance in the Special Autonomy policy in Papua, identify the supporting and inhibiting factors of collaboration, and formulate a Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP) suited to Papua's social, cultural, and institutional characteristics. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature and policy-document analysis strategy, covering Special Autonomy regulations, the 2025-2029 Papua Development Acceleration Action Plan (RAPPP), Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data, and prior research, analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The findings show that the five dimensions of collaborative governance—dialogue, trust building, commitment, shared understanding, and shared outcomes—are interrelated and need enrichment through the knowledge and institutional legitimacy of Papuan indigenous institutions. This study produces the Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP), integrating inclusive stakeholder engagement, institutional coordination, indigenous knowledge integration, evidence-based governance, and measurable collaborative outcomes to strengthen coordination, participation, accountability, and public service quality in Papua.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance; Good Governance; Indigenous Institutions; Local Government; Special Autonomy Papua.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Special Autonomy (Otsus) in Papua Province is one of the Indonesian government's strategic policies to accelerate development, improve public welfare, reduce development disparities, and recognize the rights of Indigenous Papuans through a broader decentralized approach. Special Autonomy not only grants administrative authority to local governments but also creates space for strengthening cultural identity, protecting indigenous communities, and improving the quality of public services. More than two decades after the policy was enacted, the implementation of Special Autonomy continues to face numerous challenges. Various evaluations indicate that the policy's successful implementation has not been fully accompanied by improvements in the quality of governance, the effectiveness of public services, or synergy between stakeholders. Issues of institutional coordination, bureaucratic capacity, budget accountability, and low public participation remain critical issues in regional governance in Papua.

In this context, the *collaborative governance approach* has become a paradigm increasingly used in public administration to address complex policy issues (Ansell & Gash, 2008). *Collaborative governance* emphasizes that resolving public issues cannot be done solely by the government, but requires the active involvement of various actors, such as traditional institutions, universities, civil society organizations, the private sector, religious leaders, and the community. Collaboration built through dialogue, trust, role-sharing, and shared commitment is believed to increase the effectiveness of public policy implementation (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Papua has distinct social characteristics from other regions in Indonesia. The social structure of Papuan society remains heavily

influenced by customary systems, traditional leadership, and local cultural values. Therefore, the success of regional governance is determined not only by bureaucratic capacity but also by the government's ability to build harmonious relationships with customary institutions. Customary institutions possess strong social legitimacy, enabling them to serve as strategic partners in the implementation of various development policies. However, the relationship between local governments and customary institutions has shown considerable variation in practice: in some regions, partnerships operate quite well through customary consultation and deliberation forums, while in others, coordination is suboptimal due to differing perceptions, weak communication, and the absence of a structured collaboration model.

Previous research has discussed *collaborative governance* in various sectors in Papua and West Papua, including agrarian conflict resolution (Parukka & Adam, 2026), environment-based development (Wahyudi, Suljatmiko, Sutrisno, Faturrochman, & Ngatimin, 2026), and smart public services (Salmawati et al., 2026). However, there is still little research that specifically develops a collaboration model between local governments and customary institutions in the implementation of Special Autonomy with a focus on improving local government performance. This gap is the important basis for this research, namely to analyze the implementation of *collaborative governance* between local governments and customary institutions, identify factors that influence the effectiveness of collaboration, and formulate a *collaborative governance model* that is appropriate to the social, cultural, and institutional conditions in Papua Province. The novelty of this research lies in the development of the *Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP)*, which integrates local governments, traditional institutions, religious leaders, universities, community organizations, and the private sector within a single governance framework for the implementation of Special Autonomy. This model adapts *collaborative governance theory* by incorporating traditional institutions as core actors, thus possessing characteristics appropriate to the socio-cultural context of Papua. It is hoped that it can serve as a recommendation for local governments in strengthening the implementation of Special Autonomy while simultaneously improving the quality of governance and public services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative Governance Theory

The concept of *collaborative governance* developed in response to the limitations of traditional bureaucratic approaches in resolving increasingly complex public issues. This approach positions the government not as the sole decision-making actor, but as a facilitator working with the community, the private sector, civil society organizations, and various other stakeholders to achieve common goals. Ansell and Gash (2008) define *collaborative governance* as a governmental arrangement in which one or more public institutions directly engage non-governmental actors in a formal, consensus-oriented decision-making process aimed at formulating or implementing public policy. This model consists of four main components: starting *conditions*, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and a collaborative process that includes face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to the process, shared understanding, and shared *outcomes*. Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) expand on this framework through the concept of *collaborative governance regimes* which emphasizes system dynamics, collaborative action, and sustainable impacts.

Good Governance

The concept of *good governance* is the foundation of modern government administration, emphasizing effective, transparent, accountable, responsive, and participatory governance. Its core principles include participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, the rule of law, responsiveness, and justice. In this study, the principles of *good governance* serve as indicators to assess the extent to which collaborative models can improve the quality of regional government administration.

Regional Government, Special Autonomy, and Customary Institutions in Papua

Regional governance is the administration of government affairs by the regional government and the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) based on the principles of autonomy and assistance tasks within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Law Number 23 of 2014). In Papua, the implementation of regional governance is unique because it is influenced by the Special Autonomy policy, the existence of indigenous legal communities, local socio-cultural structures, and affirmative policies for Indigenous Papuans. Special Autonomy itself is an asymmetric decentralization policy regulated by Law Number 2 of 2021 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 21 of 2001, with the aim of improving community welfare, accelerating development, protecting the rights of Indigenous Papuans, strengthening public services, and improving the quality of governance. Traditional institutions are social institutions that have strong legitimacy in the lives of Papuan society, with the function of resolving conflicts, preserving cultural values, representing indigenous communities, and providing consideration in public policy. From a *collaborative governance perspective*, traditional

institutions are positioned as key actors possessing social resources in the form of community trust and local knowledge, so that these characteristics make a collaborative model involving traditional institutions highly relevant for Papua.

Previous Research and Framework of Thought

Previous studies have shown that *collaborative governance* has been implemented in various sectors, such as village development (Alkadafi, Susanti, Wasistiono, & Broto, 2025), strengthening the capacity of island governments (Fataruba, Khairunnisa, & Muhtar, 2026), and in the context of the Papuan political conflict (Rahayu & Salomo, 2021). A study by Salmawati, Saragih, Banggu, Refra, Zuhdan, and Auliya (2026) in Southwest Papua found that stakeholder participation, interagency coordination, indigenous community involvement, and digital innovation are important factors in the effectiveness of collaborative governance and smart public services. However, research specifically developing a collaborative model between local governments and customary institutions in the implementation of Papua's Special Autonomy is still relatively limited. This gap provides an opportunity for this study to offer a more contextual model.

Conceptually, the framework of this research begins with the implementation of Papua's Special Autonomy, which encourages the implementation of *collaborative governance* between local governments, traditional institutions, and civil society. The collaborative process, built through dialogue, *trust building*, commitment, and consensus, is directed toward realizing *good governance*, which in turn improves local government performance and the quality of public services. The general framework of *collaborative governance* from Ansell and Gash (2008) is then enriched with the dimensions of Papuan traditional institutions, namely traditional values, traditional leadership, religious leaders, universities, civil society, and local deliberation mechanisms, resulting in a conceptual model called the *Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP)*. This conceptual model is the main novelty of the research and is further developed in the results and discussion sections.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with library research *and* policy document analysis. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the dynamics of *collaborative governance implementation* in Special Autonomy policies in Papua Province based on regulations, development planning documents, official statistical data, and previous research results.

The data sources consist of secondary data which include: (1) laws and regulations, namely Law Number 2 of 2021, Law Number 23 of 2014, Law Number 25 of 2009, Government Regulations Number 106 and 107 of 2021, and Presidential Regulation Number 107 of 2025 concerning the Action Plan for the Acceleration of Papuan Development (RAPPP) 2025-2029; (2) official data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) regarding the socio-economic conditions of Papua Province; (3) policy documents and reports from government institutions, including Bappenas; and (4) national and international scientific journal articles regarding *collaborative governance* published between 2021 and 2026.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, namely tracing and reviewing regulations, statistical data, policy reports, and relevant scientific literature. The data were then analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques *with* stages of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions as developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020). The theoretical framework of *collaborative governance* by Ansell and Gash (2008) was used as an analytical lens to identify and categorize findings into five dimensions of collaboration. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing findings across regulatory documents, statistical data, and academic literature to ensure consistency and validity of interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development of the Papua Special Autonomy Policy Framework

The implementation of Special Autonomy in Papua has entered a new phase following changes to the regulatory framework through Law Number 2 of 2021, which strengthens institutional design, management of Special Autonomy revenues, and Papua's development planning. The implementation framework is strengthened through Government Regulation Number 106 of 2021 concerning authority and institutions, and Government Regulation Number 107 of 2021 concerning revenue, management, supervision, and the master plan for accelerated development. Recent developments indicate that the government has established the Action Plan for the Acceleration of Papuan Development (RAPPP) 2025-2029 through Presidential Regulation Number 107 of 2025, which was formulated inclusively by involving ministries/institutions, regional governments, the Papuan People's Assembly,

the Papua Steering Committee, traditional leaders, religious leaders, women, and academics (Ahmad, Jamil, Zidan, & Huda, 2024). This indicates a shift towards a more collaborative development model, so that the success of Special Autonomy is no longer determined solely by regulations and budgets, but also by the quality of relationships between stakeholders.

Socio-Economic Conditions as a Context for Policy Implementation

Official data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that welfare issues remain a significant challenge in Papua. The percentage of poor people in Papua Province in September 2025 was recorded at 17.82 percent, according to a February 2026 release by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). Despite this decline, this figure demonstrates that the success of Special Autonomy cannot be measured solely on administrative aspects or the amount of budget disbursed, but rather must be linked to changes in the quality of people's lives, access to basic services, and community involvement in development. This situation reinforces the strategic relevance of *collaborative governance*, as Papua's welfare issues are multidimensional and cannot be resolved by a single government organization.

Collaboration as an Approach to Implementing Special Autonomy

A review of recent policies and research indicates that collaborative approaches are increasingly gaining ground in Papuan development governance. In 2022, Bappenas established a partnership through the Papua Collaborative Governance Indonesia (PCGI) 2022-2027 program to support the acceleration of welfare development in Papua. Research on the implementation of Special Autonomy also shows that the process requires the involvement of state and non-state actors in planning, program implementation, resource management, and monitoring and evaluation. These findings reinforce the argument that the implementation of Special Autonomy is a complex policy arena: the government holds formal authority, while indigenous communities and community organizations hold social legitimacy and local knowledge. Therefore, collaboration is needed to bring these two types of resources together.

Face-to-Face Dialogue and Trust Building

The first dimension of *collaborative governance*, namely dialogue between stakeholders, is crucial in the Papuan context because policy implementation often confronts differences in interests, perceptions, and historical experiences. The involvement of traditional leaders, religious leaders, academics, women, and local government in the development of the 2025-2029 RAPPP demonstrates an expansion of space for dialogue, although formal participation does not necessarily automatically result in substantive collaboration. Dialogue will result in collaborative governance if there is space for each actor to express interests, influence decisions, and obtain information regarding follow-up actions. The second dimension, *trust building*, is strategically important because public policy implementation in Papua takes place in a social environment with a history of complex relationships between the state, local government, and the community. Trust cannot be built solely through regulation but requires consistent government action, transparency of information, and the ability to fulfill mutual agreements with the community. Therefore, the government needs to transform from the primary implementer to a facilitator of collaboration.

Commitment to Process and Shared Understanding

Collaboration requires a long-term commitment, as changes in policy, leadership, and budget priorities can impact its sustainability. Within the framework of the 2025-2029 RAPPP (Regional Development Plan), the government integrated Papua's development acceleration with the 2025-2029 RPJMN (National Medium-Term Development Plan) and established a joint monitoring mechanism by the central government, regional governments, the Papua Steering Committee, and the Papua Development Acceleration Executive Committee. This arrangement is a positive development, but requires adequate regional institutional capacity. The *shared understanding dimension* demands a common understanding of Papua's development goals, given that the government tends to view success from the perspective of budget absorption and program achievements, while the public assesses success from the perspective of access to basic services, economic opportunities, and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Aligning the RAPPP with the 2025-2029 RPJMN opens the opportunity to develop mutually agreed-upon success indicators between the government and Papuan stakeholders.

Indigenous Community Involvement and Inter-Agency Coordination

The existence of indigenous communities and social institutions with strong legitimacy is a key characteristic of Papuan governance. Salmawati et al.'s (2026) study on *collaborative governance and smart public services* in Southwest Papua, with 412 respondents and 22 stakeholders, found that indigenous community involvement is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of collaborative governance and the development of smart public services. This finding confirms that indigenous communities cannot be positioned solely as objects of development, but rather as sources of local knowledge, social capital, and legitimacy that strengthen the quality of policy implementation. Correspondingly, inter-institutional coordination is a determining factor in the success of collaboration, given the complexity of Papuan development, which involves many organizations with different authorities. The 2025-2029 RAPPP and the Papuan development information system demonstrate the need to combine social collaboration with information integration; collaboration without information integration has the potential to result in overlapping policies, while an information system without community participation can result in technocratic governance that is less responsive to local needs.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Collaborative Governance

Based on a synthesis of the latest policies and research, several supporting factors for *collaborative governance* in Papua have been identified, namely:

- policy support through the Special Autonomy regulatory framework and the 2025-2029 RAPPP;
- broader stakeholder involvement, including the MRP, traditional leaders, religious leaders, women, academics, and community organizations;
- social capital of indigenous communities in the form of local knowledge and social networks;
- planning integration through alignment of the RAPPP with the 2025-2029 RPJMN; and
- utilization of information technology for transparency and development monitoring.

On the other hand, some of the identified inhibiting factors include:

- uneven institutional capacity due to Papua's complex geographical and administrative conditions;
- inequality in access to public services, as reflected in the poverty rate of 17.82 percent;
- limited digital infrastructure and inequality of internet access (Salmawati et al., 2026);
- the gap between formal participation and substantive influence of communities on decisions; and
- potential institutional fragmentation due to overlapping authority between actors.

Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP): Synthesis and Conceptual Framework

Based on the analysis, this study formulated the *Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP)* consisting of five main components. First, *inclusive stakeholder engagement*, namely the involvement of indigenous communities, the MRP, religious leaders, academics, civil society, women, youth, and the business sector according to policy needs. Second, *institutional coordination*, namely a clear division of authority and responsibility between the central government, local governments, and non-governmental actors. Third, *indigenous knowledge integration*, namely the integration of local knowledge and indigenous institutions into the planning and implementation process of policies. Fourth, *evidence-based governance*, namely decision-making supported by socio-economic data, public service data, and development information systems. Fifth, *measurable collaborative outcomes*, namely measuring the success of collaboration through the results felt by the community, such as improved public services, welfare, participation, transparency, and accountability.

Conceptually, the MCGP Model flow can be described as a series of processes that run from the policy context to development outcomes: the Special Autonomy context encourages *inclusive stakeholder engagement*, which then forms dialogue and coordination between actors; this process fosters *trust building* which is a prerequisite for the integration of indigenous knowledge with government data; this integration then becomes the basis for collaborative policy planning and implementation, which is monitored through joint monitoring and evaluation; ultimately, this series of processes culminates in improving the quality of public services as well as improving community welfare and the realization of *good governance*. This model emphasizes that collaboration in the Papuan context is not enough to simply adopt a generic *collaborative governance model*, but needs to be adapted to the social, cultural, and institutional structures of Papuan society.

Discussion: Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a governmental science perspective, the findings of this study indicate a paradigm shift from *government* to *governance*, where the government is no longer the sole actor determining development, but rather

functions as a director, facilitator, coordinator, and guarantor of public interests. This change has consequences for the capacity of local government officials, which requires not only administrative skills, but also the ability to build networks, manage conflicts, conduct public communication, and integrate community knowledge into policy. Theoretically, the results of the analysis support the relevance of Ansell and Gash's (2008) *collaborative governance* for complex public policies, while also demonstrating the need to develop a more contextual model through the integration of the five dimensions of collaboration with the knowledge and legitimacy of customary institutions. Practically, these findings imply that local governments need to build more structured, non-consultative collaboration forums, involve customary institutions from the early stages of planning, increase the transparency of development data, direct indicators of the success of Special Autonomy towards outcomes perceived by the community, and strengthen the capacity of officials in the areas of public communication, negotiation, and conflict mediation.

Comparison with Previous Research

Previous research on *collaborative governance* in Papua has shown that the implementation of Special Autonomy requires the involvement of both government and non-government actors, while addressing the issue of collaboration effectiveness (Rahayu & Salomo, 2021). Salmawati et al.'s (2026) study in Southwest Papua expands this perspective by demonstrating a positive relationship between *collaborative governance*, intelligent public services, and sustainable development. Compared with these studies, this study's conceptual contribution lies in its effort to connect three dimensions that have often been discussed separately: the implementation of Special Autonomy, indigenous community institutions and participation, and *collaborative governance* as a mechanism for improving government performance, which are collectively formulated into the *Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP)*.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of *the Collaborative Governance Model* of Regional Governments and Traditional Institutions in the Implementation of Special Autonomy Policy in Papua Province, it can be concluded that the implementation of Special Autonomy needs to be understood as a governance process involving many actors, not merely a government administrative process. *Collaborative governance* has strong relevance in strengthening the implementation of the policy, with five interconnected dimensions, namely dialogue, *trust building*, commitment to the process, shared understanding, and shared results, which need to be developed according to the social, cultural, geographical, and institutional characteristics of Papua.

Traditional institutions hold a strategic position in Papuan governance due to their local knowledge, social networks, and legitimacy within the community. Therefore, their involvement should be positioned as a substantive partnership, not merely a symbolic one. Inter-institutional coordination is a crucial issue that can be a strength if there is a clear division of roles and monitoring mechanisms, but can also lead to fragmentation if coordination is ineffective. The socio-economic conditions of the community, including the poverty rate of 17.82 percent in September 2025 (Central Statistics Agency, 2026), indicate that the success of Special Autonomy must be measured based on real changes in community welfare and the quality of public services, not solely administrative aspects.

Based on theoretical synthesis and policy document analysis, this study produces the *Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP)* that integrates five main elements, namely *inclusive stakeholder engagement*, *institutional coordination*, *indigenous knowledge integration*, *evidence-based governance*, and *measurable collaborative outcomes*, with the local government acting as a facilitator and coordinator, while traditional institutions, communities, academics, religious leaders, and civil society organizations become partners according to their capacity and authority. This model is expected to strengthen coordination between stakeholders, increase community participation, strengthen government accountability, and encourage the realization of *good governance principles* and improve the quality of public services in Papua.

This study has limitations because the analysis presented uses secondary data, regulations, and previous research results, so that field research involving local governments, traditional institutions, and communities is still needed to empirically test the *Papua Collaborative Governance Model (MCGP)*. *Further research is recommended to use a mixed methods approach* in several districts/cities in Papua, including testing the relationship between *collaborative governance*, public service quality, public trust, local government performance, and community welfare, in order to produce a stronger empirical model for the development of regional governance theory in regions with Special Autonomy characteristics.

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