



## Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Governance at the Local Level: A Policy Analysis of Grobogan Regency's Regional Action Plan, Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Food and nutrition governance is a central issue in subnational development, especially in areas with high agricultural potential but persistent malnutrition. This study analyzes how Grobogan Regency, Indonesia, implements food and nutrition governance through its 2025–2029 Regional Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Based on Local Resource Potential (RAD-PGBPSDL). Using qualitative policy analysis, the research examines policy design, strategic priorities, coordination mechanisms, and indicator frameworks, supported by secondary data on food production, consumption, poverty, and nutrition. Findings show that Grobogan possesses strong local food assets, including surplus production, improved dietary quality, and diverse commodities. However, major governance challenges persist, such as high stunting rates, maternal energy deficiency, uneven food access, climate-related production risks, and fragmented cross-sector data systems. The policy demonstrates a shift toward multisectoral governance by integrating food availability, affordability, utilization, institutional coordination, climate resilience, and local food diversification. Implementation may be constrained by limited operational detail, uneven agency readiness, and insufficient monitoring and accountability. The study highlights that effective food and nutrition governance requires institutional coordination, evidence-based planning, and adaptive public management. The Grobogan case provides practical lessons for strengthening subnational governance in Indonesia and similar developing contexts.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Commodities; Food Security; Local Governance; Nutrition Policy; Subnational Development.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Food and nutrition are foundational to human development, social welfare, and long-term economic productivity. Yet, in many developing countries, food and nutrition challenges persist despite improvements in agricultural output and market integration. This apparent contradiction has led scholars and policy makers to move beyond a narrow production-oriented view of food security toward a broader governance perspective. Food security is now commonly understood through interrelated dimensions of availability, access, utilization, and stability, all of which require coordinated public action across sectors and levels of government (Barrett, 2010); (Capone et al., 2014). More recent discussions also emphasize sustainability, nutrition sensitivity, and resilience, especially in the face of climate variability, inflationary pressures, and changing food consumption patterns ((Galanakis, 2022);(UNICEF Indonesia, 2024). In this context, food and nutrition governance has emerged as a critical field of public policy, particularly at the subnational level where implementation, coordination, and service delivery are most visible.

A governance approach is especially important because food and nutrition outcomes are not produced by a single institution. They are shaped by the interaction of agricultural production systems, food markets, public health services, education, social protection, infrastructure, environmental management, and household behavior. As a result, food and

nutrition problems should not be treated as isolated sectoral issues. They are cross-cutting development problems that require multisectoral planning, institutional coordination, and evidence-based public management. The food systems literature increasingly recognizes that the relationship between food production, nutrition outcomes, and environmental sustainability is highly interconnected (Galanakis, 2022). Likewise, studies on food security determinants show that undernourishment is closely linked not only to production or income levels but also to broader institutional and social conditions such as inequality, literacy, governance quality, and public service capacity (Aziz et al., 2021); (Eini-Zinab et al., 2020). From a public administration perspective, this means that the quality of governance is central to explaining why food-rich regions may still experience poor nutrition outcomes.

This issue is highly relevant in decentralized governance contexts such as Indonesia. Since decentralization, local governments have gained broader responsibilities for planning and implementing development programs, including those related to public health, agriculture, food security, poverty reduction, and social protection. This creates important opportunities for context-sensitive policy innovation, but it also raises coordination challenges. National priorities may not automatically translate into coherent local action, particularly where data systems are fragmented, institutional mandates overlap, or budget priorities are weakly aligned. Food and nutrition governance at the district level therefore becomes a crucial site where national goals, local resources, and everyday administrative practice intersect. In recent years, Indonesia has increased policy attention to stunting reduction, food diversification, local food development, and climate-responsive planning. However, the effectiveness of these efforts depends heavily on how subnational governments integrate multiple agendas into operational planning frameworks.

The importance of local planning is even greater because food and nutrition challenges in Indonesia are territorially uneven. Some regions possess strong agricultural potential yet continue to struggle with child undernutrition, maternal malnutrition, low dietary diversity, or unequal food access. This pattern suggests that food production alone is insufficient to secure nutritional well-being. A diverse and resilient local food system must be linked to nutrition services, behavior change communication, maternal and child health interventions, sanitation, and household economic capacity. Research on production diversity underscores that diversified local food production can improve food security and reduce dependence on a narrow range of staple crops, especially when linked to local consumption systems and supportive institutions (Huang et al., 2024). At the same time, the agricultural sector itself faces increasing pressure from climate uncertainty, environmental degradation, and resource

constraints, making governance for adaptation and resilience increasingly urgent (Stević et al., 2025)

Grobogan Regency in Central Java offers a compelling case for examining these issues. As one of the largest regencies in the province and an area with a strong agricultural base, Grobogan has substantial local food potential. Its agricultural profile includes rice, maize, soybean, vegetables, fisheries, livestock, and other local commodities that can support both food availability and dietary diversification. Official regional planning data indicate that the regency maintains a food-carrying capacity surplus across most subdistricts and has shown improvement in several consumption-related indicators, including the Food Consumption Pattern Score, energy adequacy, and protein adequacy. Poverty has also declined gradually in recent years. At first glance, these trends suggest that Grobogan is relatively well positioned to strengthen food and nutrition security through local resource-based development.

However, a closer look reveals a more complex picture. Despite improvements in food-related indicators, Grobogan continues to face serious nutrition challenges. Child stunting remains a significant concern, with regional data showing persistent and in some measures increasing prevalence. Wasting and underweight among children remain notable, while chronic energy deficiency among pregnant women has also risen. These trends indicate that better food availability does not automatically translate into better nutrition outcomes. The gap between food system capacity and nutritional performance points to deeper governance questions: how are food and nutrition priorities coordinated across sectors? How are local resources translated into effective public action? And to what extent are planning instruments capable of integrating food production, food access, public health, and institutional accountability into a coherent framework?

These questions are increasingly important because food and nutrition governance now operates in a context of compounded risk. Climate variability is affecting agricultural productivity, seasonal stability, and water availability across many Indonesian regions. UNICEF Indonesia (2024) notes that child nutrition and food security are highly vulnerable to systemic shocks, including climate disruption, food price inflation, and shifts toward low-quality processed diets (UNICEF Indonesia, 2024). In areas such as Grobogan, where local livelihoods remain closely connected to agriculture, fluctuations in rainfall, drought episodes, and pressure on irrigation systems may directly influence food supply and affordability. Climate-related risks also affect fishery and livestock systems, further complicating protein access and dietary quality. This means that local food and nutrition governance must be designed not only for routine administration but also for resilience under uncertainty.

Another critical dimension is the need to move from fragmented interventions to integrated food systems governance. Food and nutrition improvement requires more than stand-alone health or agriculture programs. It requires policy instruments capable of connecting upstream production with downstream consumption and nutrition services. This includes supporting local producers, maintaining food safety, strengthening local markets, improving food utilization practices, and ensuring that vulnerable groups receive targeted nutrition services. Studies on stunting interventions show that policy and management effectiveness depends on integrated intervention design rather than isolated program delivery (Aminah et al., 2024). Similarly, maternal nutrition remains a crucial determinant of child outcomes, as anemia and poor maternal nutritional status contribute to low birth weight and long-term developmental risks (Sun et al., 2017). The implication is clear: food and nutrition governance must be assessed as a system of public coordination rather than as a collection of disconnected projects.

The Grobogan Regency Government has attempted to address these issues through its Regional Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Based on Local Resource Potential (RAD-PGBPSDL) 2025–2029. The document is designed as a five-year strategic framework for coordinating multisectoral action on food and nutrition. It outlines four main strategic domains: food availability, food affordability, food utilization and essential nutrition services, and institutional strengthening. It also incorporates local food diversification, climate adaptation, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms. Importantly, the plan aims to align local action with broader national and regional policy priorities while grounding interventions in Grobogan's own production potential, vulnerability profile, and development challenges. From a public administration standpoint, this makes the document more than a technical planning instrument; it is a governance artifact that reflects how a local government defines problems, organizes responsibilities, and sets performance expectations.

Despite the growing policy importance of such planning documents, scholarly analysis of subnational food and nutrition governance in Indonesia remains limited. Much of the existing literature focuses on specific nutrition indicators, intervention effectiveness, or broad food security trends, while fewer studies examine how local governments actually construct integrated governance frameworks. There is particularly limited attention to how district-level action plans combine strategic priorities, institutional architecture, measurable indicators, and implementation mechanisms into a workable system of governance. This gap matters because policy success is often determined not only by what goals are declared, but by how responsibilities are distributed, how coordination is structured, how data are used, and how

implementation is monitored. In decentralized settings, the governance quality of local planning documents may significantly shape outcomes over time.

This article therefore focuses on food and nutrition governance at the local level by analyzing the policy design of Grobogan Regency's RAD-PGBPSDL 2025–2029. Rather than evaluating program impact directly, the article examines how the action plan conceptualizes local food and nutrition problems, how it structures multisectoral responses, and how it embeds governance mechanisms into the regional planning framework. The case is analytically important because Grobogan combines relatively strong agricultural potential with continued nutrition vulnerability, making it a useful example of the governance gap between resource capacity and human development outcomes.

Specifically, this article asks three interrelated questions. First, how does the Grobogan action plan define and respond to local food and nutrition challenges? Second, how are strategic priorities such as food diversification, nutrition improvement, institutional coordination, and climate resilience integrated into the policy design? Third, what does this policy framework reveal about the strengths and limitations of subnational food and nutrition governance in Indonesia? By addressing these questions, the article contributes to the literature on local governance, food systems, and development planning. It also offers practical insight for local governments seeking to strengthen food and nutrition policy through more integrated, evidence-based, and adaptive public management.

In doing so, the article argues that food and nutrition governance at the district level should be understood as a multidimensional administrative task involving coordination, regulation, resource alignment, and performance monitoring. Effective governance is not achieved simply by increasing production or launching isolated nutrition programs. It requires the institutional capacity to connect local food systems, social protection, health services, climate adaptation, and accountability structures within a coherent planning framework. The Grobogan case illustrates both the promise and the limits of such an approach, and thus provides a valuable lens through which to understand the evolving role of subnational governments in governing food and nutrition in contemporary Indonesia.

## **2. METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative policy analysis within a single-case study design to examine how food and nutrition governance is formulated at the subnational level through a formal planning instrument. Qualitative policy analysis is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to interpret policy content, institutional assumptions, strategic priorities, and

governance arrangements rather than to test causal relationships statistically (Walt & Gilson, 1994). In this article, the case study design was used to enable an in-depth examination of one local government's policy framework in its administrative and developmental context, which is particularly relevant when the boundaries between policy content and governance setting are closely intertwined (Yin, 2018).

The study focused on the Regional Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Based on Local Resource Potential (RAD-PGBPSDL) of Grobogan Regency for 2025–2029 as the principal object of analysis. The document was treated not merely as a technical planning text, but as a governance instrument that reflects how local authorities define food and nutrition problems, allocate responsibilities, establish priorities, and design implementation mechanisms. This approach aligns with document-based qualitative inquiry, which considers policy documents as socially and institutionally produced texts that both describe and shape public action (Bowen, 2009).

Grobogan Regency was selected purposively for three main reasons. First, the regency represents an agriculturally significant district in Central Java with substantial local food production potential, including rice, maize, soybeans, fisheries, livestock, and horticultural commodities. Second, despite this productive capacity, Grobogan continues to experience persistent nutritional problems, including stunting, wasting, underweight among children, and chronic energy deficiency among pregnant women. Third, the availability of a comprehensive regional action plan that explicitly integrates food security, nutrition, local food diversification, climate resilience, and institutional coordination makes Grobogan a relevant and information-rich case for examining subnational food and nutrition governance.

Purposive case selection is appropriate in qualitative inquiry when a case is expected to provide analytical insight into a broader governance issue rather than statistical representativeness (Patton, 2002). In this study, Grobogan was selected because it presents a meaningful policy paradox: relatively strong food resource capacity coexists with ongoing nutrition vulnerability. This makes the regency analytically valuable for understanding how local policy design attempts to bridge the gap between food availability and nutrition outcomes.

This study relied on documentary and secondary data sources. The primary source was the official RAD-PGBPSDL Grobogan Regency 2025–2029, which contains the policy background, situational analysis, strategic objectives, action plans, institutional arrangements, budget indications, and monitoring framework (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025a). The action plan provided the main empirical material for analyzing governance architecture and policy integration.

To contextualize the interpretation of the plan, the analysis also drew on secondary statistical data and supporting information embedded in the document, including district-level indicators on population, poverty, food production, food consumption, food security, maternal health, and child nutrition. These data were originally compiled from local government agencies such as the Food Security Office, Health Office, Agriculture Office, Livestock and Fisheries Office, Regional Development Planning Agency, and the local statistics office. Additional national and scholarly references were used to interpret the findings in relation to broader debates on food systems, nutrition governance, and multisectoral planning.

The use of documentary evidence as both data source and analytic object is well established in qualitative research, especially when the study seeks to understand policy logic, institutional framing, and formal administrative commitments (Bowen, 2009). Official planning documents are particularly useful because they reveal both what governments recognize as development problems and how they propose to address them.

The unit of analysis in this study was the policy architecture of the regional action plan. Rather than focusing on one program or one agency, the study examined the action plan as an integrated governance framework. Specifically, the analysis addressed: how food and nutrition problems were framed; how strategic objectives and targets were formulated; how sectors and institutions were coordinated; how local food systems, climate resilience, and gender mainstreaming were incorporated; and how implementation, monitoring, and evaluation were structured. This approach allowed the study to assess whether the action plan functions as a coherent policy instrument rather than as a collection of disconnected sectoral activities.

The analysis was guided by a multisectoral governance perspective, which assumes that food and nutrition outcomes are shaped by interactions among multiple policy sectors, institutions, and governance processes. This perspective is relevant because food and nutrition cannot be adequately addressed by agriculture or health sectors alone; they require coordinated responses involving production, market access, public health, social protection, infrastructure, and local institutions (Walt & Gilson, 1994).

To operationalize the analysis, four dimensions were used. The first dimension examined how the action plan identifies and frames local food and nutrition challenges. Policy analysis literature emphasizes that problem definition is fundamental because the way a problem is framed influences the range of acceptable policy responses (Walt & Gilson, 1994). In this study, attention was given to whether the document recognized issues such as food production vulnerability, malnutrition, poverty, unequal access, climate-related risks, and institutional fragmentation.

The second dimension assessed the extent to which the action plan integrated major components of food and nutrition governance, including food availability, affordability, utilization, nutrition services, local food diversification, climate adaptation, and institutional strengthening. Policy integration is especially important in complex development fields where fragmented interventions often reduce effectiveness and lead to duplication or policy gaps.

The third dimension focused on how the action plan distributed responsibilities among local agencies and other stakeholders. Institutional coordination is central to governance effectiveness because planning quality depends not only on stated goals but also on the administrative structure through which those goals are implemented. This dimension therefore assessed the presence of cross-sectoral mechanisms, division of roles, and coordination platforms.

The fourth dimension evaluated whether the policy framework contained operational features that support implementation, such as measurable indicators, baseline values, target trajectories, designated lead agencies, budget references, and monitoring procedures. In planning research, implementation readiness is a useful lens for distinguishing between aspirational commitments and actionable governance instruments.

The documentary analysis followed a structured and iterative reading process. First, the RAD-PGBPSDL document was read in full to understand its overall structure, narrative flow, and planning logic. Second, the document was reread by thematic sections, including background conditions, food and nutrition situation analysis, strategic goals, gender mainstreaming, climate adaptation, action matrices, institutional arrangements, and monitoring systems. Third, relevant passages, tables, and indicators were extracted and organized according to the four analytical dimensions described above.

Document analysis requires careful reading not only of explicit statements but also of underlying assumptions, silences, and structural emphases within the text (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, this study examined both narrative sections and tabular matrices, since action tables often reveal the operational priorities and administrative structure more clearly than descriptive sections alone.

The study used thematic content analysis to interpret the policy document. Thematic analysis is appropriate for identifying patterns of meaning across textual data and organizing them into analytically relevant categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the document was coded into broad themes such as food production, local food diversification, poverty, nutritional status, climate risk, gender, coordination, institutional roles, and monitoring mechanisms. Second, these initial codes were grouped under the four

analytical dimensions: problem definition, policy integration, institutional coordination, and implementation readiness. Third, the analysis identified patterns of alignment and misalignment between the situational diagnosis presented in the document and the strategies proposed in the action plan.

For example, when major local challenges such as rising maternal chronic energy deficiency or uneven food access were strongly identified in the situational analysis but weakly translated into operational action, such discrepancies were interpreted as policy design gaps. Conversely, where strategic priorities, agency responsibilities, and indicators showed strong alignment, these were interpreted as signs of more mature governance design.

To strengthen analytical rigor, the study applied several strategies associated with trustworthy qualitative analysis. First, source triangulation was used by comparing narrative policy commitments with statistical and planning evidence contained in the same document and related local references. Second, analytic transparency was maintained by using an explicit analytical framework and clearly defined dimensions of interpretation. Third, internal consistency checks were conducted to assess whether diagnosed problems, strategic priorities, indicators, and institutional assignments were aligned.

These procedures are consistent with recommendations in qualitative research for enhancing credibility, dependability, and analytic coherence (Nowell et al., 2017). Because the study relied on official documents, the objective was not to verify lived experience directly, but to evaluate the quality and coherence of governance design as represented in formal planning texts.

This study did not involve interviews, human subjects, or confidential personal information. All materials used were institutional and policy documents intended for public or administrative use. Therefore, formal ethical review was not required. Nevertheless, the study adhered to principles of responsible scholarship by accurately representing the content of the analyzed documents and distinguishing clearly between empirical description and analytical interpretation.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the study focused on policy design rather than implementation outcomes, so it cannot determine whether planned actions were fully executed or whether they produced the intended effects. Second, the analysis depended on the completeness and reliability of official documents and secondary data available within the planning framework. Third, as a single-case study, the findings are not statistically generalizable. However, the purpose of the study is analytical rather than statistical generalization, and the Grobogan case provides a useful lens for understanding how local

governments in decentralized settings construct food and nutrition governance frameworks (Yin, 2018).

### 3. RESULTS

#### **Grobogan's Local Food Potential and Development Context**

The policy document presents Grobogan Regency as an area with considerable structural advantages for local food system development. Geographically, Grobogan is one of the largest regencies in Central Java, with a land area of more than 2,023 km<sup>2</sup> and a substantial agricultural base. Of the total land area, a large share remains dedicated to agriculture, including both irrigated and non-irrigated land. This territorial profile positions the regency as a strategic food-producing area and provides the material basis for a local-resource-based food and nutrition strategy (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

The document shows that food production capacity is one of the regency's clearest assets. Agricultural output remains high for staple and non-staple commodities alike. Rice production, although fluctuating, remained substantial during 2020–2024, while maize and soybean production also represented important pillars of the local food economy. In addition, the regency recorded notable output in vegetables such as shallots and chili, as well as animal-source foods from livestock, fisheries, and egg production. This diversity matters from a governance perspective because it indicates that local food planning in Grobogan is not confined to rice security alone, but potentially has a broader base for promoting dietary diversity and nutrition-sensitive development (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

The policy also emphasizes that the regency's food-carrying capacity remains generally favorable. The district-level analysis of food support capacity classified most subdistricts as still within surplus conditions, suggesting that local production potential continues to exceed aggregate basic consumption demand in many areas. Although some subdistricts such as Geyer and Kedungjati face greater pressure on food-carrying capacity, the overall regency profile remains one of relative food surplus. This condition is significant because it provides a strong material foundation for local food governance and indicates that the central challenge is not absolute scarcity but the governance of distribution, utilization, and nutritional conversion (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

At the same time, the development context is not uniformly favorable. The policy document records pressures on agricultural land due to non-agricultural conversion, particularly in areas experiencing settlement growth and economic development. This suggests that the sustainability of local food production cannot be taken for granted. The preservation

of productive agricultural land and protection of long-term food-producing assets emerges as an implicit governance priority. Similarly, climatic variability is identified as a structural concern. The document notes fluctuations in rainfall and the increasing unpredictability of seasonal conditions, which affect planting schedules, irrigation management, and crop productivity. Thus, although Grobogan enjoys strong agricultural potential, its food system remains vulnerable to long-term environmental and land-use pressures (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

Socioeconomic indicators in the document further complicate the local development picture. Population growth in the regency has been relatively stable, with a gradual increase in total population over the observed period. Poverty has shown a declining trend, which may indicate improvements in local welfare and post-pandemic recovery. However, poverty levels remain higher than provincial and national averages, implying that access to nutritious food remains uneven across social groups. In policy terms, this means that productive food systems do not automatically ensure nutritional well-being at the household level. The food governance challenge in Grobogan is therefore not simply one of increasing production, but of ensuring that local food resources translate into equitable access and better nutrition outcomes for vulnerable groups (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

### **Food Consumption and Food Security Indicators Show Partial Progress**

The situational analysis in the action plan indicates encouraging improvements in several food consumption and food security indicators. One of the most important trends concerns the Food Consumption Pattern Score (Skor Pola Pangan Harapan), which improved steadily between 2020 and 2025. This suggests gradual progress in the diversity and quality of household food consumption. The plan interprets this improvement as evidence that local food programs, nutrition education, and diversification efforts have had some positive effect on dietary behavior. Similarly, energy adequacy and protein adequacy indicators increased over time, indicating that average household consumption may be moving closer to recommended nutritional standards (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

Another important indicator is the decline in the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU), which dropped substantially over the period described in the action plan. From a governance standpoint, this trend suggests progress in ensuring minimum caloric access at the population level. The document links this improvement to strengthened food reserves, improved supply stabilization, and better-targeted support for vulnerable households. In addition, indicators related to fresh food safety improved significantly, suggesting stronger regulatory and inspection efforts in food quality assurance. These improvements show that

Grobogan's planning framework is not limited to food production, but also includes growing attention to food consumption patterns, food safety, and basic food access.

Food security indicators also reveal positive institutional trends. The district's Food Security Index improved between 2020 and 2024, while the proportion of food-vulnerable villages declined sharply. Public food reserves, especially rice reserves, also expanded considerably. These trends suggest that the local administration has strengthened some of the buffering and stabilizing mechanisms associated with food governance. Such measures are particularly important in decentralized settings where district-level institutions play a major role in responding to food shocks, market fluctuations, and social vulnerability.

Yet the document also reveals an important contradiction: improvements in aggregate food indicators do not fully correspond to improvements in nutritional outcomes. This gap between food security progress and nutrition performance is one of the core findings of the policy analysis. Although food availability and average dietary indicators improved, these gains appear to coexist with significant nutritional vulnerabilities among specific groups, especially children and pregnant women. This divergence suggests that aggregate food system performance is not sufficient to ensure adequate nutritional outcomes and that food governance must be evaluated beyond production and caloric adequacy alone.

The plan also shows unevenness within consumption trends themselves. While consumption of animal-source foods and fish increased, fruit and vegetable intake fluctuated and then declined in later years. Consumption of tubers also varied considerably. These patterns indicate that dietary diversification remains unstable and subject to factors such as seasonality, price changes, household preferences, and local market access. Thus, the consumption gains reported in the document should be interpreted as partial and uneven rather than fully consolidated. From a governance perspective, this underscores the importance of not only promoting food diversity in production but also ensuring sustained access, affordability, and behavioral uptake at the household level.

### **Persistent Nutrition Problems Reveal a Governance Gap**

The most striking finding in the policy document is the persistence of poor nutrition outcomes despite the regency's strong food production base and improvements in several food security indicators. The action plan identifies child stunting as a continuing and serious concern. Depending on the data source used, the prevalence of stunting either increased gradually or fluctuated at high levels over the observed years. Although the document acknowledges measurement differences between administrative nutrition monitoring and

national survey-based estimates, both sets of figures indicate that child undernutrition remains a substantial problem in Grobogan.

The pattern is not limited to stunting. The document also reports increases in wasting and underweight among children, suggesting the coexistence of chronic and acute forms of malnutrition. In addition, indicators related to maternal nutrition raise further concern. Chronic energy deficiency among pregnant women increased over time, while anemia, though declining, remained significant. The percentage of low birth weight babies also showed fluctuations at levels that merit policy attention. Together, these findings indicate that the food and nutrition challenge in Grobogan is not reducible to availability of staple food or aggregate food surplus. Instead, it reflects a broader governance problem involving maternal health, child feeding practices, service quality, household vulnerability, and the conversion of food resources into actual nutritional well-being.

The policy document itself implicitly recognizes this gap. It repeatedly emphasizes that food and nutrition problems are multidimensional and cannot be addressed through sectoral action alone. The persistence of high stunting in a food-producing district suggests that the nutritional value of local food potential is not being fully translated into household diets and early-life interventions. This is especially evident in the emphasis placed on the first 1,000 days of life, maternal nutrition, and local-food-based complementary feeding for infants and young children. The need to bridge agricultural production and human nutrition is therefore a central governance challenge identified in the plan.

Another notable issue is the instability of child feeding support indicators. For example, the document reports a sharp decline in the percentage of children aged 6–23 months receiving complementary feeding in the final year of the time series. Whether this reflects real service disruption, measurement inconsistency, or implementation weakness, the figure points to fragility in nutrition service delivery and monitoring. Such inconsistency is analytically important because it indicates that the governance challenge is not only about defining the right interventions, but also about maintaining the continuity, quality, and reliability of service systems.

From the standpoint of policy architecture, this nutrition gap supports the article's core argument that food and nutrition governance must be treated as a systemic administrative problem. The evidence presented in the action plan suggests that improved production, stronger reserves, and better food adequacy are necessary but insufficient conditions for better nutrition outcomes. The persistence of child and maternal malnutrition indicates that governance performance depends equally on health service integration, social targeting, behavioral change

communication, sanitation, food access, and the ability to identify and reach nutritionally vulnerable households (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025).

### **The Action Plan Reflects a Shift Toward Integrated Multisectoral Governance**

One of the clearest results of the policy analysis is that the RAD-PGBPSDL reflects an intentional move away from fragmented programming toward a more integrated governance model. The document is organized around four strategic domains: food availability, food affordability, food utilization and essential nutrition services, and institutional strengthening. This structure is significant because it aligns the local planning framework with a systems-oriented understanding of food and nutrition, rather than restricting policy attention to agricultural output or health services in isolation (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025).

The food availability domain focuses on increasing the production of diverse, nutritious, safe, and climate-resilient food. It includes measures related to local food production, backyard food use, fisheries development, food safety oversight, and reduction of post-harvest loss. The food affordability domain addresses market access, food price stabilization, food assistance, UMKM strengthening, BUMDes engagement, and logistical support. The utilization domain expands the scope toward sanitation, safe drinking water, food safety education, maternal and child health services, breastfeeding support, adolescent nutrition, and behavior change campaigns such as B2SA and fish consumption promotion. Finally, the institutional domain includes data strengthening, mapping, coordination platforms, gender mainstreaming, research, and policy monitoring. Taken together, these components show that the action plan attempts to govern food and nutrition as an interdependent system rather than a collection of isolated interventions (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025).

The plan also embeds this integrated approach in a measurable indicator framework. It specifies baseline values and medium-term targets for multiple indicators, including food production, dietary diversity, undernourishment, food reserves, food safety, food insecurity, water and sanitation access, and nutrition outcomes such as stunting and wasting. This degree of indicatorization is important because it translates broad strategic intentions into a performance-oriented policy instrument. In governance terms, this signals a shift from rhetorical commitment to more formalized planning logic, where actions are at least partially tied to measurable outputs and outcomes (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025).

Another notable feature is the way the plan links local development priorities with national and global agendas. The document aligns itself with the national medium-term development plan, food diversification policy, stunting reduction agenda, sustainable development goals, and climate-resilient development. This vertical alignment matters in

decentralized governance systems because local plans often function as translation mechanisms between higher-level policy priorities and local implementation realities. In Grobogan's case, the action plan serves as a bridging document that localizes national goals through district-specific diagnoses, targets, and institutional arrangements (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025).

At the substantive level, the action plan also demonstrates an effort to foreground local food systems. It promotes non-rice diversification, local protein sources, horticulture, fishery development, food processing, and local food campaigns. This orientation is significant because it broadens the regency's food governance model beyond staple sufficiency and toward a more nutrition-sensitive local food strategy. The policy implication is that local resources are not only viewed as economic assets but also as nutritional and governance resources that can support resilience, dietary quality, and local participation (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025).

### **Institutional Coordination Is a Core Strength of the Policy Design**

The policy analysis shows that institutional coordination is one of the strongest and most explicit dimensions of the Grobogan action plan. The document lays out a formal governance structure involving a steering forum, a technical forum, and thematic working groups. This arrangement is intended to coordinate planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation across multiple agencies and stakeholders. The thematic working groups are organized around the same core strategic domains as the plan itself—availability, affordability, utilization, and institutional strengthening—thereby reinforcing integrated administrative logic.

This organizational design is important because food and nutrition governance in decentralized systems often fails when agency mandates are fragmented and coordination remains informal. In contrast, Grobogan's plan explicitly identifies lead agencies and supporting stakeholders for many action lines. The Food Security Office, Health Office, Agriculture Office, Livestock and Fisheries Office, Public Works Office, BPBD, Trade Office, Social Office, women's empowerment institutions, and planning agencies are all assigned roles. The inclusion of non-government stakeholders such as civil society, producer organizations, women's groups, cooperatives, universities, and the private sector further suggests that the governance framework extends beyond bureaucratic coordination alone.

The action matrices provide additional evidence of implementation-oriented coordination. Many actions are linked to specific sub-activities in sectoral strategic plans, target values, and indicative budgets across years. This is a significant result because it suggests that

the plan is not merely declarative; it is partially embedded in the existing planning and budgeting architecture of local government. Such integration increases the likelihood that food and nutrition governance will be mainstreamed into actual administrative processes rather than remain a stand-alone document with weak operational traction.

The monitoring and evaluation framework further reinforces the policy's governance orientation. The document specifies annual reporting mechanisms, performance scoring, field visits, feedback forms, and mid-term and endline evaluation. These instruments are designed to track both outputs and implementation processes, including stakeholder involvement, policy coherence, activity realization, and resource mobilization. In administrative terms, this indicates an awareness that governance effectiveness depends not only on program delivery but also on coordination quality and institutional follow-through.

### **Important Governance Gaps and Implementation Risks Remain**

Despite these strengths, the policy analysis also identifies several important limitations in the action plan's implementation readiness. First, not all strategic commitments are equally operationalized. Some policy areas—such as biofortification, smart farming, food waste reduction technologies, and certain climate-related indicators—are included conceptually but remain weakly elaborated in terms of concrete activities, budget allocations, or implementable steps. This unevenness suggests that some parts of the plan are more mature than others and that policy integration does not always translate into equal implementation depth.

Second, data consistency remains a challenge. The action plan itself presents differing trends for some indicators depending on the source used, especially for stunting. While such discrepancies are common in public nutrition monitoring, they are analytically important because they affect target-setting, prioritization, and performance evaluation. If agencies rely on different data systems without strong harmonization mechanisms, governance coherence may be undermined. The document recognizes the need for integrated food and nutrition data systems, but the evidence suggests that this remains an ongoing institutional challenge rather than a fully resolved issue.

Third, some target trajectories raise questions about realism and policy coherence. For example, certain production and consumption trends are projected linearly despite observed fluctuations in climate, market conditions, and local production performance. Similarly, some climate-related and nutrition-sensitive interventions appear underdeveloped relative to the scale of the problems described in the situational analysis. This does not invalidate the planning effort, but it indicates that implementation may encounter adaptation problems if assumptions about institutional readiness, budget continuity, or local behavior change prove too optimistic.

Fourth, while institutional coordination is strongly emphasized, the plan still depends heavily on the uneven administrative capacities of sectoral agencies. Differences in data management, program maturity, and operational experience across offices could create bottlenecks in execution. In decentralized governance systems, formal coordination structures do not automatically guarantee effective collaboration. They must be supported by routine communication, shared data, aligned incentives, and administrative follow-through. The document recognizes these needs, but the existence of a formal structure should be interpreted as a necessary condition rather than a sufficient one.

Finally, the persistence of high nutrition problems despite improvements in food security indicators suggests that the governance system still faces a conversion gap: strong local food assets and partial administrative progress have not yet been transformed into equally strong nutritional outcomes. This is perhaps the central empirical finding of the study. The Grobogan action plan demonstrates that local government has begun to address this gap through multisectoral planning, but the success of that effort will depend on how effectively coordination, data integration, service delivery, and local food utilization are implemented over time.

## **Discussion**

### ***Food abundance does not automatically produce nutrition security***

The findings show that Grobogan Regency presents a classic but important development paradox: a territorially strong food-producing area still experiences persistent nutrition problems. This pattern reinforces a central argument in the food systems and food security literature, namely that food availability alone is insufficient to guarantee adequate nutrition outcomes (Barrett, 2010) ; (Capone et al., 2014). In Grobogan, the regional action plan documents substantial production of rice, maize, soybeans, vegetables, livestock products, and fisheries, as well as a generally surplus food-carrying capacity. It also reports improvement in average food consumption indicators such as the Food Consumption Pattern Score, energy adequacy, and protein adequacy. However, these gains coexist with continuing stunting, wasting, underweight, maternal chronic energy deficiency, and low birth weight risks (Government of Grobogan Regency, 2025b).

This mismatch suggests that the central issue is not simply food supply, but the governance of how food is accessed, distributed, utilized, and converted into nutritional well-being. This is consistent with broader scholarship that conceptualizes food security as a multidimensional condition involving availability, access, utilization, and stability rather than a narrow concern with production volume alone (Barrett, 2010). In practice, this means that

food-rich districts can still experience poor nutrition outcomes when households lack stable economic access, when maternal and child services are uneven, when care practices are weak, or when dietary diversity remains limited despite local production potential. The Grobogan case therefore illustrates why local governments need to move from an agricultural-output logic to a nutrition-sensitive governance logic.

The findings also suggest that aggregate food indicators may conceal intra-household or group-specific inequalities. Average improvements in dietary adequacy do not necessarily reflect the nutritional conditions of pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and poor households. This is particularly relevant because child nutrition is highly sensitive to care, feeding behavior, sanitation, maternal health, and early-life interventions, not merely the existence of food in local markets or district storage systems (Aminah et al., 2024);(Sun et al., 2017). Accordingly, the Grobogan action plan is strongest when it recognizes food and nutrition as interdependent yet distinct governance domains. Its analytical value lies precisely in showing that improving food security metrics is not the same as achieving nutrition justice.

### ***The Grobogan case supports a multisectoral understanding of local governance***

A second major implication of the findings is that local food and nutrition governance is fundamentally a multisectoral administrative task. The action plan's structure—covering food availability, affordability, utilization, and institutional strengthening—demonstrates a deliberate attempt to govern food and nutrition through interconnected policy domains. This aligns with the governance literature, which argues that complex public problems require collaborative and cross-sectoral arrangements rather than isolated departmental responses (Ansell et al., 2021); (Emerson et al., 2012). Food and nutrition are archetypal “joined-up” policy issues because they depend simultaneously on agricultural systems, health services, markets, water and sanitation, social protection, communication strategies, and local institutions.

In this respect, Grobogan's planning framework can be interpreted as an institutional response to policy fragmentation. Instead of treating food production, food safety, nutrition services, and climate resilience as separate agendas, the regional action plan places them within a single planning architecture. This reflects an important shift from sector-based administration to integrated governance. Such integration is particularly important in decentralized contexts such as Indonesia, where district governments are expected to translate national development priorities into territorially grounded interventions. The plan thus performs a “bridging” function: it localizes national food and nutrition goals while simultaneously adapting them to district-level conditions and capacities.

The significance of this should not be underestimated. Food security governance research has repeatedly shown that one of the biggest barriers to effective policy is fragmentation across sectors and levels of government (Candel, 2014). Where agencies operate with separate logics, indicators, and timelines, the result is often duplication, weak targeting, and implementation gaps. Grobogan's action plan attempts to address this by creating thematic working groups, assigning lead agencies, and linking strategic goals to specific action matrices. This is an important governance advance, even if the plan remains imperfect. It suggests that district-level policy design is moving toward a more coordinated model of public management.

However, the findings also indicate that formal multisectoral design does not automatically ensure substantive policy integration. Some policy areas in the plan are more operationally developed than others, and several strategic commitments still appear uneven in terms of budget detail, agency readiness, or implementation clarity. This supports the argument that multisectoral governance should be assessed not only by the number of sectors involved, but by the degree of functional coordination, shared accountability, and routine collaboration among them (Ansell & Gash, 2007);(Emerson et al., 2012). In other words, Grobogan's policy design is promising, but its success will depend on whether coordination becomes an ongoing administrative practice rather than a formal planning requirement.

### ***Nutrition outcomes reveal a conversion gap between food systems and human development***

One of the most analytically important findings is what may be called a conversion gap: the district's food production strength is not yet being consistently converted into improved nutrition outcomes. This matters because development planning often assumes that strong local food systems will naturally translate into better household diets and reduced malnutrition. The Grobogan evidence suggests otherwise. The persistence of high stunting and maternal malnutrition indicates that food system capacity and human nutrition outcomes are linked, but not automatically.

This is consistent with contemporary food systems thinking, which stresses that production, distribution, diet quality, health, and care practices are interconnected but mediated by institutions and social conditions(Galanakis, 2022). For example, a district may produce abundant staple crops, but if local households rely heavily on carbohydrate-dominant diets, if women lack nutritional support during pregnancy, or if complementary feeding practices are weak, undernutrition may remain entrenched. The decline in one complementary feeding indicator reported in the action plan is particularly revealing in this regard. It highlights how fragile the link between food availability and nutrition service performance can be.

This conversion gap also points to the need for more explicit nutrition-sensitive planning. In a nutrition-sensitive governance framework, the question is not only whether food is produced, but whether it is accessible, affordable, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate, and effectively integrated into maternal and child care systems. This is why the action plan's focus on local-food-based complementary feeding, food safety, sanitation, and maternal services is so important. These components recognize that malnutrition is produced at the intersection of food systems and social reproduction, not simply in fields or markets.

The persistence of maternal chronic energy deficiency is especially important from a public administration perspective. Maternal nutrition is a key upstream determinant of child growth, birth outcomes, and long-term developmental capacity (Sun et al., 2017). When maternal malnutrition remains high in a food-producing district, this indicates a policy failure not of agriculture alone, but of cross-sector coordination between food, health, social support, and behavioral communication systems. Thus, the Grobogan case strengthens the argument that local food governance must be evaluated by its capacity to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations, not just by its success in increasing supply or stabilizing prices.

***Local food diversification and climate resilience are strategically important, but still unevenly operationalized***

Another major contribution of the Grobogan action plan is its recognition that local food diversification and climate resilience are not peripheral concerns; they are central to sustainable food and nutrition governance. The plan does not frame food security solely in terms of rice availability. Instead, it identifies opportunities in maize, soybeans, fisheries, livestock, tubers, fruits, vegetables, and local food processing. This is a significant policy move because dietary diversity is a crucial foundation for improved nutrition, and local production diversity can help reduce dependence on narrow staple systems (Huang et al., 2024).

From a development governance standpoint, this orientation is highly relevant. Diverse local food systems create multiple public value pathways: they support dietary quality, generate livelihoods, reduce vulnerability to market disruption, and strengthen territorial resilience. In this sense, local food is not merely an agricultural category; it is a governance resource. The action plan's emphasis on backyard food use, fish consumption campaigns, food processing by UMKM, and diversification of local food products indicates an attempt to embed nutrition within the local economy and local culture, not only within administrative programming.

At the same time, the findings suggest that this agenda remains unevenly operationalized. Some diversification actions are backed by concrete activities and budgets, while others are more aspirational. Similarly, climate-resilience measures are present in the

policy narrative and some action lines, but several climate-related indicators remain underdeveloped. This matters because climate variability directly affects the stability of food production, water access, and local livelihoods, especially in agriculture-dependent districts. As recent literature emphasizes, sustainable food production increasingly requires adaptive strategies, technological adjustment, and climate-responsive governance (Stevic et al., 2025). Grobogan's planning framework acknowledges this, but the operational depth of its climate integration still appears uneven.

This unevenness should not be read simply as policy weakness; it may also reflect a broader institutional transition. Many local governments are now expected to integrate climate resilience, nutrition, food systems, and local economic development simultaneously, often under limited administrative and fiscal capacity. The Grobogan plan is therefore better understood as an evolving governance framework rather than a finished model. Its main achievement may lie in making these issues governable within one policy architecture, even if implementation tools remain incomplete.

***Coordination capacity, data integration, and implementation realism are decisive factors***

The findings strongly suggest that the long-term effectiveness of the action plan will depend less on its broad strategic vision and more on three practical governance capacities: coordination, data integration, and implementation realism.

First, coordination. The action plan's institutional structure is one of its strongest features, but collaborative governance literature reminds us that formal arrangements are only one part of the equation. Effective collaboration also requires trust, sustained interaction, leadership, and clarity of interdependence among actors (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). If agencies continue to operate through siloed data systems or budget routines, the formal architecture may not produce substantive integration. This is particularly important in food and nutrition policy because outcomes depend on synchronized interventions across health, agriculture, food security, social assistance, and community-level institutions.

Second, data integration. The discrepancy between different stunting data sources in the action plan is not a trivial technical issue; it is a governance issue. Divergent data can lead to different diagnoses, different target baselines, and different implementation priorities. Candel (2014) notes that food security governance is weakened when institutional actors lack shared diagnostic tools and coherent evidence systems (Candel, 2014). In Grobogan, the explicit commitment to strengthening integrated food and nutrition data is therefore highly significant. Better data harmonization could improve targeting, monitoring, and adaptive decision-making across agencies.

Third, implementation realism. Some target projections and strategic commitments in the plan appear ambitious relative to observed volatility in production, climate risks, and nutrition service performance. Ambition in planning is not inherently problematic, but overly linear projections may create implementation gaps when confronted with real administrative constraints. From a public administration standpoint, realistic planning matters because implementation failure can reduce institutional credibility and weaken cross-sector commitment. A more adaptive governance approach may therefore be needed—one that allows targets, indicators, and action priorities to be periodically adjusted based on evidence and operational feedback.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This article has examined food and nutrition governance at the local level through a policy analysis of Grobogan Regency's Regional Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Based on Local Resource Potential (RAD-PGBPSDL) 2025–2029. The findings show that Grobogan represents an important case of subnational governance in which strong agricultural and local food potential coexists with persistent nutrition challenges. The regency has substantial production capacity, relatively favorable food-carrying conditions, improving food consumption indicators, and a policy commitment to local resource-based development. However, these strengths have not yet been fully translated into consistent improvements in child and maternal nutrition outcomes, particularly in relation to stunting, wasting, underweight, and chronic energy deficiency among pregnant women.

A major contribution of the Grobogan action plan is its movement toward a multisectoral governance model. The document does not treat food and nutrition as isolated responsibilities of the agriculture or health sectors. Instead, it integrates food availability, affordability, utilization, institutional strengthening, climate resilience, and local food diversification into one district-level policy framework. This indicates an important shift toward policy integration and collaborative governance, both of which are widely recognized as necessary for addressing complex public problems. The inclusion of cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, thematic working groups, measurable indicators, and monitoring arrangements shows that Grobogan is attempting to institutionalize food and nutrition governance as a whole-of-government concern.

The article therefore argues that local food and nutrition governance should be conceptualized as an issue of public administration and development management, not merely as a technical sectoral issue. In decentralized settings such as Indonesia, district governments

play a decisive role in translating national priorities into territorially grounded interventions. Their effectiveness depends on their capacity to coordinate sectors, align budgets and targets, integrate data, and ensure that local food assets contribute directly to the well-being of vulnerable populations. From this perspective, the Grobogan case offers a valuable lesson: subnational food and nutrition policy is most effective when it links local production systems with nutrition services, social inclusion, climate adaptation, and institutional accountability within a coherent governance framework.

This study also contributes to the broader literature by showing that district-level policy documents can serve as important analytical windows into how governments define development problems and organize responses. Although this study focused on policy design rather than implementation outcomes, it highlights the importance of examining planning instruments as governance artifacts in their own right. Future research could extend this work by assessing implementation practices, stakeholder coordination, budgeting dynamics, or the experiences of frontline actors involved in carrying out the action plan.

In practical terms, the Grobogan experience suggests that strengthening food and nutrition governance in Indonesia requires at least four priorities: deeper integration of food and nutrition objectives across sectors, stronger local data systems, more operational support for nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient local food strategies, and greater attention to vulnerable groups as the primary measure of policy success.

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