

# Implementability Gaps in Papua Special Autonomy Governance: Regulatory Synchronization, Indigenous Peoples' Rights, and Sustainable Development

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Asymmetric Decentralization; Implementability; Indigenous Rights; Policy-Practice Gap; Special Autonomy Governance.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest Statement:</b> .</p> <p>Copyright © 2026 Vifada Assumption Journal of Law. All rights reserved.</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> This study examines implementability gaps in Papua Special Autonomy governance by focusing on the disconnection between formal legal mandates and their operational execution, particularly in relation to regulatory synchronization, indigenous peoples' rights, institutional accountability, and sustainable development.</p> <p><b>Research Design and Methodology:</b> This study employs a normative-empirical socio-legal approach combining doctrinal mapping of Papua Special Autonomy's legal framework with a synthesis of peer-reviewed empirical studies published mainly between 2021 and 2025.</p> <p><b>Findings and Discussion:</b> The findings show that governance underperformance in Papua is associated less with the absence of legal norms than with delayed delegated regulations, heterogeneous technical standards, weak coordination outputs, uneven district capacity, and participation procedures that are not consistently traceable to final policy choices.</p> <p><b>Implications:</b> This study offers a mechanism-based framework for assessing implementability gaps in special autonomy governance and proposes a staged reform pathway, supported by digital coordination, to strengthen accountability, improve traceable participation, and support more sustainable and rights-sensitive governance in Papua.</p>

## Introduction

Papua Special Autonomy is a differentiated governance arrangement designed to reconcile constitutional integration, the protection of indigenous peoples' rights, and equitable regional development. Its legal foundation is established in Law No. 21 of 2001, as amended by Law No. 2 of 2021, and further elaborated through Government Regulations No. 106 of 2021 and No. 107 of 2021.<sup>1</sup> Although this framework appears normatively extensive, governance outcomes remain uneven across districts and sectors. This indicates that the central problem lies not merely in legal design, but in the executability of delegated rules, inter-agency coordination, and accountability routines.<sup>2</sup>

Recent studies on Papua show that asymmetric decentralization has not consistently resolved implementation frictions,<sup>3</sup> that special autonomy funding has not always produced accountable

<sup>1</sup> Loisa Merlin Tegay, Taufiqurrohman Syahuri, and Mardi Candra, "Sinkronisasi Aturan Hukum Dalam Sistem Desentralisasi Regulasi Bagi Daerah Otonomi Khusus Papua," *SALAM: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-I* 9, no. 4 (July 22, 2022): 1167-78, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v9i4.27274>.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Jacob Paul Latupeirissa, I Putu Darma Wijaya, and I Made Yuda Suryawan, "Problematika Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Otonomi Khusus Kepada Daerah Papua Dan Papua Barat Dengan Perspektif Kebijakan Publik," *Sawala: Jurnal Administrasi Negara* 9, no. 2 (December 1, 2021): 168-78, <https://doi.org/10.30656/sawala.v9i2.3496>.

<sup>3</sup> Deni Angela and Harsanto Nursadi, "Implementation of Asymmetrical Decentralization In Papua: Relevance to Demands and Problems," *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 18, no. 4 (January 9, 2025): 373-406, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v18no4.3474>.

service delivery, and that indigenous representation has not always translated into substantive influence over policy outcomes.<sup>45</sup> In addition, land and development policies continue to reveal procedural weaknesses affecting the protection of indigenous communities.<sup>6</sup> These patterns suggest that the core problem of Papua Special Autonomy lies in the gap between formal legal mandates and operational execution.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, this article positions implementability gaps as a governance-law problem that directly affects indigenous peoples' rights protection and the realization of sustainable development in Papua.

While previous studies have documented political tension, fiscal dependence, and representational disputes in Papua, a research gap remains regarding implementability gaps, namely the disconnect between formal legal mandates and their operational execution.<sup>8</sup> This article argues that post-amendment legal uncertainty should be understood as a systemic governance failure rather than a narrow drafting problem. The central proposition is that legal validity, institutional capability, and accountability traceability must operate in a synchronized manner throughout the policy cycle.<sup>9</sup> Without such synchronization, legal certainty becomes symbolic, indigenous rights remain procedurally vulnerable, and sustainable development objectives are difficult to realize in a measurable way.

This study addresses three questions. First, how does the post-amendment legal framework allocate authority, accountability, and participation within Papua Special Autonomy governance? Second, which institutional mechanisms are most strongly associated with policy-practice gaps in implementation? Third, what reform design is legally coherent, operationally feasible, and capable of strengthening indigenous peoples' rights and sustainable development outcomes? These questions direct the analysis toward the relationship between legal validity, institutional capability, and accountability traceability across repeated policy cycles.

This study contributes in three respects. Conceptually, it explains implementability as the connecting point between legal validity and effective autonomy governance. Analytically, it clarifies that implementation gaps in Papua should be assessed through regulatory synchronization, institutional capability, and accountability traceability. Practically, it offers a governance-law perspective for evaluating whether autonomy arrangements can protect indigenous peoples' rights and support sustainable development through auditable policy execution.

The language strategy in this revised manuscript intentionally employs analytical verbs and hedging to avoid making deterministic claims. Instead of asserting absolute administrative failure, the argument states that available evidence indicates significant delays in issuing technical regulations and that these delays appear to hinder the operationalization of autonomy commitments. Such phrasing reflects a methodological discipline. In high-complexity governance settings, a cautious claim explicitly conditioned by evidence is more rigorous than a strong claim that ignores contextual moderators.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this article distinguishes patterned associations from deterministic causation and maintains analytic transparency regarding uncertainty and data limitations.

The discussion also places Papua within the context of comparative autonomy scholarship. In normative theory, asymmetrical autonomy should produce certainty for minority protection

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<sup>4</sup> Lily Bauw, "The Special Status of Papua in the New Format of Special Autonomy and the Concept of Regional Autonomy in the Perspective of Islamic Law," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (May 1, 2025): 429-42, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v10i1.12409>.

<sup>5</sup> Adolf Z. D. Siahay and Agustinus Salle, "Autonomy Without Accountability? The Governance Challenges of Papua's Special Fiscal Regime," *International Journal of Economics Development Research (IJEDR)* 6, no. 4 (June 30, 2025): 1635-47, <https://doi.org/10.37385/ijedr.v6i5.8895>.

<sup>6</sup> Arie Purnomo, Salmawati Salmawati, and Masni Banggu, "Political Representation of Indigenous Papuans in the Special Autonomy Era : Case Study of Local Democracy in Southwest Papua," *Journal of Contemporary Local Politics* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 70-80, <https://doi.org/10.46507/jclp.v4i1.714>.

<sup>7</sup> Bagus Yudha Prawira et al., "Implementation of the Food Estate in Merauke: Legal Review and Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights," *KRTHA BHAYANGKARA* 19, no. 2 (August 13, 2025): 605-20, <https://doi.org/10.31599/krtha.v19i2.4379>.

<sup>8</sup> Rosita Dewi, "The Paradox of Papuan Recognition after Two Decades of Special Autonomy: Racism, Violence, and Self-Determination," *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies* 17, no. 1 (2024): 25-44.

<sup>9</sup> Aldi Amirullah, "Politik Hukum Pembentukan Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2021 Tentang Perubahan Kedua Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 21 Tahun 2001 Tentang Otonomi Khusus Bagi Provinsi Papua," *Staatsrecht: Jurnal Hukum Kenegaraan Dan Politik Islam* 3, no. 2 (May 22, 2025): 167-85, <https://doi.org/10.14421/f55by168>.

<sup>10</sup> Kristof Van Assche et al., "Research Methods as Bridging Devices: Path and Context Mapping in Governance," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 34, no. 4 (September 16, 2021): 729-46, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-06-2019-0185>.

governance if legal and administrative institutions are coherently coupled.<sup>11</sup> However, the Papua trajectory exhibits a recurring pattern in which legal differentiation coexists with centralized procedural dependence and delayed implementation protocols, resembling what has been described as centralized decentralization in the context of developing states.<sup>12</sup> Similar tensions are observed in post-conflict Aceh and transition arrangements in Mindanao, while South Tyrol demonstrates that sustained legal-operational synchronization can stabilize autonomy performance.<sup>13</sup> This comparative lens helps to identify portable design lessons without erasing contextual differences.

To maintain analytical caution, this article treats legal provisions as guides to expected institutional behaviour and interprets the available evidence through a comparative and governance-oriented lens. Papua is therefore approached not only as a case of legal differentiation, but also as a case of whether autonomy commitments can be translated into coordinated, accountable, and rights-sensitive implementation. This orientation provides the basis for the following literature review, which situates the article within the wider scholarship on asymmetric decentralization, implementability gaps, indigenous peoples' rights, and sustainable development.

## Literature Review

Scholarship on asymmetric decentralization provides the principal conceptual basis for examining Papua's Special Autonomy as a differentiated governance arrangement. In this perspective, differentiated autonomy is intended to accommodate regional specificity, protect minority or indigenous interests, and maintain constitutional integration within a unitary state.<sup>14</sup> The legal significance of this arrangement lies not only in the formal transfer of authority, but also in whether devolved powers can be exercised through coherent institutional procedures.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, special autonomy governance should be assessed through both normative design and the capacity of institutions to operationalize delegated authority.

A second strand of literature concerns implementability and the policy-practice gap in public governance. Implementation studies consistently show that formally valid rules may produce weak outcomes when technical regulations are delayed, coordination outputs are non-binding, and administrative routines are not supported by clear accountability chains. This literature is directly relevant to Papua because many governance problems emerge not from the absence of legal norms, but from the incomplete translation of statutory mandates into executable procedures.<sup>16</sup> Thus, implementation gaps should be understood as legal-administrative disconnections that weaken the realization of special autonomy commitments in practice.

Studies on Papua's Special Autonomy further indicate that governance performance is shaped by recurring institutional constraints. Research has highlighted uneven synchronization of derivative regulations, weak inter-agency coordination, and regional capacity imbalances that affect planning, budgeting, supervision, and service delivery across districts.<sup>17</sup> These findings suggest that policy

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<sup>11</sup> Shane Joshua Barter and Hipolitus Ringgi Wangge, "Indonesian Autonomies: Explaining Divergent Self-Government Outcomes in Aceh and Papua," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 52, no. 1 (December 17, 2021): 55-81, <https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjab009>.

<sup>12</sup> Hedy Setiawan and Choirunnisa Choirunnisa, "The Paradox of Special Autonomy: Why Does Wealth Make Papua Poor?," *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan Dan Politik* 36, no. 3 (September 8, 2023): 408-20, <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V36i32023.408-420>.

<sup>13</sup> Kent Eaton and Sarah Shair-Rosenfield, "Autonomy in the Pursuit of Peace: Demarcation and Territorial Accommodation in Indonesia and the Philippines," *Peacebuilding* 12, no. 3 (July 2, 2024): 317-33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2023.2251284>.

<sup>14</sup> Askari Razak, "Konseptualisasi Otonomi Khusus Dalam Tinjauan Otonomi Daerah: Konstruksi Dan Formulasi," *Ajudikasi: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 7, no. 2 (December 30, 2023): 315-32, <https://doi.org/10.30656/ajudikasi.v7i2.7656>.

<sup>15</sup> Billy Muskitta Bastian Erlando et al., "Legal Review of Local Government Institutions in Papua under Government Regulation No. 106/2021," *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research* 3, no. 9 (September 30, 2025): 82-95, <https://doi.org/10.62504/jimr1368>.

<sup>16</sup> Stanny Terianus Rumaseb et al., "Governance In Transition: A Content Analysis Of The Papua Barat Daya Regional Parliament Secretariat," *Kajian Administrasi Publik Dan Ilmu Komunikasi* 2, no. 3 (August 20, 2025): 150-71, <https://doi.org/10.62383/kajian.v2i3.565>.

<sup>17</sup> Irasema Alcántara-Ayala, Gema Velásquez-Espinoza, and Adán Montes de Jesús, "From Mandates to Mechanisms: Institutional Vulnerability, Decentralized Governance, and the Challenges of Local Disaster Risk Reduction Implementation," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science* 16, no. 5 (October 7, 2025): 709-23, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13753-025-00673-y>.

underperformance is closely related to fragmented execution architecture rather than to a purely textual weakness of the legal framework. For that reason, the present study places implementation gaps at the center of analysis, especially in relation to regulatory timing, coordination enforceability, and differentiated institutional readiness.

Another important body of literature concerns indigenous peoples' rights and sustainable development in autonomous regions. Previous studies show that the protection of indigenous communities cannot be measured solely by symbolic recognition or descriptive representation, because substantive protection depends on participation, traceable influence, and fair access to development outcomes.<sup>18</sup> In Papua, this issue is particularly important because special autonomy is normatively linked to the protection of indigenous peoples while also being expected to support equitable and sustainable development.<sup>19</sup> This article's novelty lies in integrating asymmetric decentralization, implementability gaps, indigenous rights, and sustainable development into a single governance-law framework for assessing Papua's Special Autonomy.

## Research Design and Methodology

This study adopts a normative legal research design reinforced by socio-legal evidence synthesis.<sup>20</sup> The doctrinal analysis serves as the primary research position by examining the hierarchy and interaction of the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 21 of 2001, Law No. 2 of 2021, Government Regulation No. 106 of 2021, and Government Regulation No. 107 of 2021. The socio-legal layer is used to assess how those legal mandates operate in practice through peer-reviewed studies on implementation, indigenous rights, and special autonomy governance in Papua. These two methodological layers are integrated through mechanism tracing across planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and remedy stages.

Empirical literature was identified through accessible Scopus-indexed journals, and national accredited journal databases.<sup>21</sup> The search yielded 26 relevant journal articles published mainly between 2021 and 2025, from which 12 peer-reviewed articles were retained after screening for legal relevance, methodological transparency, empirical recency, and cross-context comparability. Primary legal sources were selected as the binding normative basis of Papua Special Autonomy governance, while eight foundational books were retained to anchor the analysis in implementation, decentralization, and socio-legal method.

The main analytical instrument is a four-dimensional implementability matrix that links the legal materials to the findings. Norm clarity assesses whether the legal framework identifies decision units, procedural steps, deadlines, and evidence standards. Coordination enforceability examines the binding force of inter-agency outputs and the existence of escalation routes for noncompliance, while capacity alignment evaluates whether district readiness matches differentiated implementation demands. Accountability traceability measures whether participation, grievance handling, and outcome indicators can be documented and audited across policy cycles.

To avoid monocausal inference, this study treats geographic remoteness, conflict legacy, market shocks, and national bureaucratic fragmentation as contextual moderators rather than excluded variables.<sup>22</sup> It therefore uses cautious causal language and treats legal provisions as hypotheses of expected institutional behaviour, assessed against available evidence on execution chains, while references to Aceh, Mindanao, and South Tyrol are used only as analytical comparisons rather than

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<sup>18</sup> Christopher L. Carter, "The Autonomy-Representation Dilemma: Indigenous Groups and Distributive Benefits in the Americas," *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 7, no. 2 (July 10, 2022): 294-315, <https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2021.25>.

<sup>19</sup> Marius Suprianto Sakmaf and Donny Edy Sam Karauwan, "Transformation Of Legal Policy Towards the Employment and Labour of Indigenous Papuans in The Era of Special Autonomy," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 11 (August 8, 2024): 5596-5603, <https://doi.org/10.61707/m2x85b36>.

<sup>20</sup> Dede Indraswara, "Rekonstruksi Metodologis Hukum: Diversifikasi Dan Integrasi Penelitian Hukum Normatif (Doktrinal), Empiris (Non-Doktrinal), Dan Studi Sosio-Legal: Legal Methodological Reconstruction: Diversification and Integration of Normative (Doctrinal), Empirical (Non-Doctrinal), and Socio-Legal Research," *IPMHI Law Journal* 5, no. 2 (2025): 205-46.

<sup>21</sup> Stefan Theil, "Carefully Tailored: Doctrinal Methods and Empirical Contributions," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 45, no. 4 (December 10, 2025): 1047-75, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojls/gqaf029>.

<sup>22</sup> Rebecca Johnson, Derek Beach, and Hareth Al-Janabi, "How Is Process Tracing Applied in Health Research? A Systematic Scoping Review," *Social Science & Medicine* 366 (February 2025): 117539, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117539>.

claims of direct equivalence. Methodological limitations remain because district-level datasets vary in granularity and some governance reports prioritize output counts over rights-sensitive outcomes, although mechanism-based synthesis remains suitable for explaining how legal norms, institutional procedures, and administrative capacities interact across implementation stages.

## Findings and Discussion

### Implementation Gaps in the Governance of Papua's Special Autonomy

Papua's Special Autonomy demonstrates that a legally differentiated governance arrangement does not automatically generate effective policy delivery. The findings indicate that the main constraint lies less in the absence of legal norms than in the incomplete executability of post-amendment governance arrangements.<sup>23</sup> This means that formal authority, accountability clauses, and participation mandates exist, yet their operational translation remains uneven across sectors and districts.

The legal framework of Papua's Special Autonomy is extensive and normatively ambitious. It is intended to reconcile constitutional integration, indigenous peoples' rights, and development acceleration within a special governance arrangement.<sup>24</sup> However, the existence of layered legal instruments does not itself guarantee implementation quality when delegated rules, procedural standards, and monitoring routines are not synchronized.

Implementation scholarship helps explain why this gap persists. A formally valid rule can still produce weak outcomes when decision chains are fragmented, verification duties are unclear, and compliance routines prioritize document completion over measurable results.<sup>25</sup> In autonomous settings such as Papua, this risk becomes stronger because differentiated authority creates multiple institutional interfaces that must operate in a coordinated manner.

The first major implementation gap concerns the translation of legal delegations into executable administrative sequences. Statutory commitments in Papua are broad and rights-oriented, but operational continuity depends on derivative rules, interoperable templates, deadlines, and auditable evidence standards.<sup>26</sup> When these instruments are incomplete or inconsistently issued, legal commitments lose practical traction at the district level.

A critical post-amendment problem lies in asynchronous rulemaking after the 2021 revision of the Papua Special Autonomy framework.<sup>27</sup> The findings suggest that technical regulation issuance remains uneven across sectors, which affects planning, procurement, supervision, and grievance pathways. As a consequence, agencies operate under different procedural assumptions even when they are implementing the same autonomy objectives.

This delay creates not only a temporal problem, but also a structural one. When one sector receives detailed technical guidance while another continues to rely on broad legal clauses, public institutions tend to adopt defensive interpretations in order to avoid legal and administrative risk. Such defensive administration may protect the institution, but it slows service delivery, weakens accountability, and reduces the substantive realization of rights.

The doctrinal review further shows that post-amendment autonomy governance suffers from an executability gap. Macro legal mandates at the constitutional and statutory levels are not always

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<sup>23</sup> Bizuneh Yimenu, "Measuring and Explaining de Facto Regional Policy Autonomy Variation in a Constitutionally Symmetrical Federation: The Case of Ethiopia, 1995-2020," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 53, no. 2 (April 11, 2023): 251-77, <https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjac039>.

<sup>24</sup> Fahri Bachmid, "Legal Standing of the Papua People's Assembly and Ratio Decidendi of the Constitutional Court: A Study of Court Decision," *SIGN Jurnal Hukum* 3, no. 2 (March 26, 2022): 187-200, <https://doi.org/10.37276/sjh.v3i2.225>.

<sup>25</sup> Joelle Evans and Susan S. Silbey, "Co-Opting Regulation: Professional Control Through Discretionary Mobilization of Legal Prescriptions and Expert Knowledge," *Organization Science* 33, no. 5 (September 2022): 2041-64, <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2021.1525>.

<sup>26</sup> Iim Abdul Hosim, Dwi Pratiwi Markus, and Hadi Tuasikal, "Commitment of the DPRD of the Province of West Papua in the Implementation of the Legislative Function of Forming Regional Regulations," *Justitia Jurnal Hukum* 9, no. 1 (April 12, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.30651/justitia.v8i2.25051>.

<sup>27</sup> Purwoko Aji Prabowo et al., "Special Autonomy Policy Evaluation to Improve Community Welfare in Papua Province Indonesia," *International Journal of Excellence in Government* 2, no. 1 (January 29, 2021): 24-40, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEG-06-2019-0011>.

followed by synchronized micro-rules that define workflow, document standards, deadlines, and review discipline.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the legal framework appears complete in formal terms, yet remains partially under-specified at the operational level.

This condition produces vertical inconsistency within the governance structure. Authority is recognized, but the path for exercising that authority is not always clear, equivalent, or enforceable across administrative units. The result is fragmented compliance behaviour, where institutions emphasize defensible paperwork rather than integrated service outcomes for local communities, including indigenous peoples.

The recurrent regulatory and operational gaps identified in this study are summarized in Table 1. The table shows that the policy-practice gap is not incidental, but patterned across several domains of governance. It also demonstrates that implementation failures in Papua's Special Autonomy are closely related to delayed derivative regulations, weak coordination, low participation traceability, and outcome-insensitive monitoring.

**Table 1.**  
 Indicative Post-Amendment Regulatory and Operational Gaps

Regulatory Domain	Observed Gap	Policy-Execution Effect	Risk Level
Sectoral technical regulation	Asynchronous issuance among sectors	Planning, procurement, and monitoring calendars become misaligned	High
Inter-agency SOP standards	Different evidence formats and validation tags	Cross-agency review becomes non-comparable; disputes increase	High
Participation procedures	Consultation recorded without influence traceability	Representation remains procedural, not outcome-shaping	Medium-High
Grievance and remedy protocol	Uneven deadlines and remedy routes	Delayed response and conflict uncertainty	High
Annual monitoring architecture	Compliance indicators dominate outcomes	Formal completion without measurable service improvement	Medium

*Source: Synthesized from Doctrinal Mapping and Peer-Reviewed Studies, 2021-2025.*

The legal implications of these gaps are substantial. When similarly situated districts follow different procedural interpretations because technical guidance is uneven, equality in administrative treatment becomes difficult to guarantee. At the same time, supervisory reviews become less reliable because institutions submit heterogeneous evidence that cannot be compared on a single verification scale.

The second major implementation gap concerns inter-agency coordination. Coordination forums are institutionally visible in Papua's Special Autonomy governance, but their outputs are often advisory, weakly binding, and not supported by clear escalation routes.<sup>29</sup> Under these conditions, the existence of meetings cannot be treated as evidence of execution quality.

Three recurring patterns explain why coordination underperforms. The first is rule asymmetry, where agencies use different technical standards and metadata. The second is mandate shadowing,

<sup>28</sup> Ivan Kurniawan Bassar et al., "Legal Analysis of Local Government Authority in Doctor Supervision Post Law No. 17/2023: Between Autonomy and Regulatory Vacuum," *Formosa Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 4, no. 8 (August 29, 2025): 3883-3902, <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjmr.v4i8.395>.

<sup>29</sup> Johni R. V. Korwa et al., "Assessing the Papuan Government's Policy for Tackling the Spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 24, no. 1 (January 12, 2021): 48, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.56157>.

where overlapping functions blur final decision authority. The third is accountability diffusion, where responsibility is nominally shared but not traceable to named executing units.

These conditions generate delays, blame shifting, and review uncertainty rather than corrective institutional action. The findings therefore suggest that coordination quality should be assessed not by frequency of consultation, but by enforceability, assignment clarity, deadline discipline, and verification requirements. Without such features, coordination remains a consultative ritual rather than an accountable execution architecture.

The third implementation gap concerns participation architecture. In Papua's Special Autonomy, participation by indigenous communities is institutionally present, but policy influence at decisive stages remains uneven.<sup>30</sup> In rights-sensitive areas such as land governance, livelihoods, and social services, consultation that lacks influence traceability may satisfy procedural appearance while failing to produce substantive fairness.<sup>31</sup>

Participation should therefore be assessed by influence, not attendance. Meaningful participation requires early agenda access, traceable treatment of community proposals, and clear avenues for remedy when participation defects occur.<sup>32</sup> Without these elements, representation remains descriptive and symbolic, while the protection of indigenous peoples' rights remains procedurally fragile.

The findings also show that participation reform cannot be isolated from budgeting and monitoring. When evidence of participation is limited to attendance lists or consultation minutes, the pathway from community input to final policy is not visible. By contrast, when participation records are linked to budget justification, monitoring reports, and annual evaluations, institutions face stronger incentives to demonstrate actual responsiveness.

A fourth implementation gap lies in regional capacity asymmetry. Districts differ in staffing quality, legal drafting support, data systems, and monitoring capability, yet they often face similar procedural demands. This creates unequal compliance burdens, because high-capacity districts are better able to absorb complexity, while low-capacity districts become more vulnerable to delay, audit exposure, and weak service conversion.

This asymmetry also reveals a fiscal-governance mismatch. Increased autonomy funding does not automatically produce equitable outcomes when monitoring systems prioritize expenditure and output counts rather than rights-sensitive results. For that reason, the findings indicate that the problem is not simply the availability of funds, but the absence of a synchronized institutional design capable of converting fiscal resources into accountable and territorially balanced performance.

Comparative reflection sharpens this diagnosis. Papua confirms that asymmetric decentralization can remain normatively ambitious yet operationally fragile when delegated rules, coordination enforceability, participation traceability, and district readiness are poorly synchronized. These findings indicate that Papua's Special Autonomy requires more urgent governance reform, not because its legal foundation is absent, but because its implementation architecture remains insufficiently synchronized, insufficiently enforceable, and insufficiently responsive to indigenous rights protection and territorially balanced development.

### **SDGs-Based Reform Model for Papua's Special Autonomy Governance**

The formulation of an SDGs based reform model must begin from the finding that Papua's Special Autonomy does not primarily suffer from a lack of legal norms, but from weak legal operational synchronization. For that reason, the reform agenda should not be directed toward constitutional redesign at the outset. This approach is consistent with the article's concern with implementability

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<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Bayu Ismoyo, Yudha Pratama, and Ahmad Irianto, "The Study of Policy Implementation: Does Special Autonomy Represent the Papuans Aspiration?," *Bestuurskunde: Journal of Governmental Studies* 2, no. 2 (November 2022): 103-115, <https://doi.org/10.53013/bestuurskunde.2.2.103-115>.

<sup>31</sup> Bambang Tri Sasongko Adi, "Empowering Communities Through Effective Participation in Environmental and Social Impact Assessments," *Applied Sciences Research Periodicals* 4, no. 01 (February 6, 2026): 202-21, <https://doi.org/10.63002/asrp.401.1228>.

<sup>32</sup> Muhammad Darlis Pattalongi, Aullia Vivi Yulianingrum, and Elviandri Elviandri, "Meaningful Participation in the Formation of Regional Legal Products: An Ideal Model of Local Regulation In the Implementation of Regional Autonomy," *Pena Justitia: Media Komunikasi Dan Kajian Hukum* 23, no. 2 (December 24, 2024): 8205-17, <https://doi.org/10.31941/pj.v23i3.5574>.

gaps and repeated policy-cycle failures, while also clarifying that SDGs-based reform is required to strengthen indigenous peoples' rights protection and the long-term sustainability of Papua's governance.

In this article, an SDGs based reform model refers to a governance design that links legal certainty, indigenous peoples' rights, institutional accountability, and measurable development outcomes. Sustainable Development in Papua cannot be reduced to budget absorption or descriptive representation. It must be understood as a governance condition in which legal promises become procedurally reachable and substantively verifiable.<sup>33</sup> This definition keeps the reform model closely aligned with the article's title and analytical direction.

The first premise of the reform model is that implementation quality depends on legal operational harmonization. Broad legal mandates are insufficient when they are not accompanied by clear procedural packages, evidence standards, and verification timelines. The findings indicate that delays in delegated regulations remain one of the most significant sources of policy underperformance. Therefore, synchronization of derivative rules is the first operational priority of reform.

This harmonization should begin with sectoral procedural packages that define actor roles, procedural steps, deadlines, required evidence, and supervisory pathways. Such packages are necessary to connect macro legal mandates with district level execution routines.<sup>34</sup> Without them, institutions continue to rely on fragmented interpretations that generate delay and review inconsistency. In this sense, harmonization is not merely technical drafting, but an executability requirement.

A practical starting point is a delegated rule inventory completed jointly by central ministries and Papuan provincial institutions. The inventory should classify each derivative rule as enacted, draft, pending consultation, or blocked by inter agency dependency.<sup>35</sup> This mapping would create a transparent baseline for identifying where implementation actually stalls. It would also allow reform to target delayed sectors before those delays cascade into wider governance disruption.

Regulatory synchronization must also include alignment between rule issuance calendars and planning, procurement, and budget cycles. Many implementation failures occur because legal guidance arrives after administrative deadlines have already passed. Under such conditions, local institutions improvise compliance behaviour rather than follow a stable execution sequence.<sup>36</sup> A synchronized calendar is therefore necessary to convert formal authority into predictable administrative action.

The second premise of the reform model is that inter agency coordination must move from consultation to enforceability. The original findings show that many coordination outputs remain advisory and are not supported by clear deadlines or escalation routes. This weakens institutional responsibility and turns coordination into a symbolic routine rather than an execution architecture. For that reason, reform must clarify the legal status of coordination outputs.

A mandatory, conditional, and advisory classification should be applied to all inter agency outputs. Mandatory outputs require immediate execution and can be directly monitored. Conditional outputs specify prerequisite actions and validation order. Advisory outputs may guide policy direction, but they cannot substitute legally required action.

This classification would improve legal certainty in Papua's Special Autonomy governance. Institutions would know which decision must be implemented, which one depends on prior

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<sup>33</sup> Mohammad A. Musaád, "Contextualizing Asymmetric Decentralization in Papua in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals," *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review* 5, no. 1 (January 22, 2025): e04705, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n01.pe04705>.

<sup>34</sup> Azad Singh Bali et al., "Procedural Policy Tools in Theory and Practice," *Policy and Society* 40, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 295-311, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2021.1965379>.

<sup>35</sup> Handika Dwi Ardiansyah Pelu et al., "The Papuan People's Council and the Governor's Legislative Authority: A Study on the Harmonization of Special Regional Regulation Formulation," *Jurnal Hukum Volkgeist* 10, no. 1 SE-Articles (December 31, 2025): 99-106, <https://doi.org/10.35326/volkgeist.v10i1.7941>.

<sup>36</sup> Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen et al., "Implementing European Case Law at the Bureaucratic Frontline: How Domestic Signalling Influences the Outcomes of EU Law," *Public Administration* 97, no. 4 (December 16, 2019): 814-28, <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12603>.

verification, and which one only provides guidance.<sup>37</sup> The clarification would reduce interpretive conflict and shorten review chains. More importantly, it would shift coordination from deliberative visibility to accountable execution.

The escalation ladder should begin with a corrective notice that identifies the defect, the responsible institution, and the remedy timeline. If compliance remains weak, the next stage should involve supervised remediation with technical assistance and progress disclosure. Repeated failure without a justified constraint may then trigger leadership review or conditional budget consequences under applicable law. Where available evidence indicates deliberate misuse or rights harming conduct, legal referral becomes justified.

The third premise of the reform model concerns incentive architecture. Institutions often respond more strongly to reporting deadlines than to substantive outcomes related to service quality or rights realization. A reform agenda based only on sanctions would therefore remain incomplete. It must also reconfigure incentives so that compliance integrity and substantive performance are treated together.

This means that temporal compliance should remain important, but it must be complemented by outcome sensitive indicators. Such indicators may include grievance resolution quality, inclusion of vulnerable groups in service access, correction speed for verified procedural defects, and measurable improvement in service responsiveness. Incentives should also reflect district readiness so that structurally constrained units are not penalized without support. This makes the reform model more equitable and more consistent with implementation theory.

The fourth premise of the reform model is that indigenous peoples' participation must be made traceable, not merely visible. The original findings already show that representation without influence traceability produces only procedural inclusion. In Papua, this is a serious weakness because policy domains such as land, livelihoods, and social services directly affect indigenous communities over the long term.<sup>38</sup> A sustainable reform model must therefore legalize participation as a documented influence pathway.

A participation trace protocol is the most relevant instrument for this purpose. Each community proposal should receive an identifier, and each decision document should record whether that proposal was accepted, modified, deferred, or rejected for legal reasons. This procedure makes participation empirically inspectable rather than rhetorically claimed.<sup>39</sup> It also improves the quality of judicial and supervisory review because procedural fairness can be examined through documentary evidence.

Participation reform should not stop at consultation procedure alone. It must be integrated into budget justification, annual monitoring, and grievance administration. When participation evidence appears only in minutes of consultation, the influence path remains obscure. When it is tied to budget choice and implementation review, institutions face stronger pressure to demonstrate actual responsiveness.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, traceable participation is not only a procedural safeguard, but also a governance requirement for protecting indigenous peoples' rights and ensuring that sustainable development in Papua is built on accountable and socially grounded decision-making.

The fifth premise of the reform model concerns capacity differentiation. Papua's districts do not begin from equal staffing quality, legal drafting support, data infrastructure, or monitoring capability. Yet they are often expected to meet similar procedural burdens. This mismatch reproduces territorial inequality in compliance and weakens the substantive protection of rights.

For this reason, reform support must be stratified by district readiness. Low readiness districts require foundational support in legal drafting, document interoperability, grievance administration,

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<sup>37</sup> Akbar Silo, "Develop Papua with Flakes of Spirit: Special Autonomy Authority," *Journal of Social and Development Sciences* 7, no. 1 (April 15, 2016): 63-72, <https://doi.org/10.22610/jsds.v7i1.1236>.

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Alfonso Antoh, "Institutional Conflict in Forest Governance in the Land of Papua: In Review," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS* 07, no. 06 (June 28, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v7-i06-68>.

<sup>39</sup> Alexander Love, "Hearing, Not Heeding: Procedural Acknowledgment and Substantive Influence in Rulemaking," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2026): 219-33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muag003>.

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Fox, "Contested Terrain: International Development Projects and Countervailing Power for the Excluded," *World Development* 133 (September 2020): 104978, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.104978>.

and procedural compliance. Mid readiness districts require stronger cross sector integration and outcome based monitoring. High readiness districts require innovation incentives tied to verified improvements in governance quality and rights protection.

Annual Special Autonomy evaluations should also be redesigned through dual track indicators. The first track should measure compliance completion, including rule issuance, deadline observance, and documentation quality. The second track should measure rights sensitive and development related outcomes, including remedy accessibility, participation influence, and equitable improvement in public service delivery.<sup>41</sup> This dual approach would prevent formal completion from being confused with substantive success.

At this stage, norm conflict mapping becomes essential to reform operationalization. It is relevant to retain this substance because it identifies where legal and administrative implementation repeatedly breaks down.<sup>42</sup> However, it is better integrated within the SDGs based reform model than retained as a separate subheading. In that integrated form, norm conflict mapping functions as the bridge between reform design and executable policy sequencing.

The first type of norm conflict is vertical latency. This occurs when statutory mandates are formally active, but derivative regulations remain incomplete or unevenly synchronized across sectors.<sup>43</sup> The second type is horizontal variance, where institutions at the same administrative level use different evidence formats, definitions, and verification thresholds. Both patterns weaken legal certainty because similarly situated administrative actions are processed through non equivalent procedural baselines.

A third type is procedural inversion, namely when implementation begins before technical guidance is finalized. In such situations, district institutions are forced to create their own compliance logic, which increases uncertainty and review vulnerability. A fourth type is review asymmetry, in which auditors and supervisors evaluate institutions using non equivalent documentary expectations. Mapping these conflict types allows reform to address precise legal administrative failure points rather than rely on generalized institutional exhortation.<sup>44</sup>

To respond to those norm conflicts, a single metadata dictionary for autonomous governance should be introduced. Every inter agency document should use standardized fields such as legal basis, decision class, responsible unit, completion deadline, evidence requirement, and remedy path. This would increase interoperability, speed up escalation, and improve annual evaluation reliability. The legal value of metadata governance lies in its ability to convert diffuse administrative practices into auditable legal operational traces.

Reform operationalization should also be sequenced over time. In the first ninety days, institutions should complete the delegated rule inventory and identify blocked dependencies. Within one year, high impact procedural standards in procurement verification, service targeting, and grievance redress should be harmonized. Within two years, performance linked coordination should be established so that budget access and supervisory review reflect execution quality rather than reporting timeliness alone.

Another important distinction is between normative completion and functional completion. Normative completion occurs when a rule formally exists in the legal hierarchy. Functional completion occurs when that rule can actually operate in ordinary institutional workflows through equivalent evidence standards and executable responsibilities. Papua's Special Autonomy often satisfies the first threshold more easily than the second, which is why the reform model must insist on implementation annexes and sequenced operational discipline.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Marta Schaaf et al., "‘We All Have the Same Right to Have Health Services’: A Case Study of Namati’s Legal Empowerment Program in Mozambique," *BMC Public Health* 20, no. 1 (December 10, 2020): 1084, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09190-7>.

<sup>42</sup> CHRISTIAN KREUDER-SONNEN and MICHAEL ZÜRN, "After Fragmentation: Norm Collisions, Interface Conflicts, and Conflict Management," *Global Constitutionalism* 9, no. 2 (July 1, 2020): 241-67, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045381719000315>.

<sup>43</sup> Tyler Girard and Nicole McMahon, "Theorizing Norm Stagnation and the Evolution of Domestic Norm Compliance," *International Studies Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (September 11, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaf086>.

<sup>44</sup> Prabowo et al., "Special Autonomy Policy Evaluation to Improve Community Welfare in Papua Province Indonesia."

<sup>45</sup> Yakob Kareh, Sukri, and Muh Akmal Ibrahim, "Normative Mechanisms in the Papua Special Autonomy Policy Implementation Network," *KnE Social Sciences* 10, no. 18 (September 2, 2025): 1616-30, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v10i18.19589>.

A digital coordination model can then serve as the infrastructure that links all of these reform components. Its purpose is not merely technological modernization, but legal operational integration across central and regional institutions. By connecting regulatory calendars, document standards, verification routines, and escalation mechanisms, digital coordination makes institutional responsibility more visible and auditable. In this way, the SDGs-based reform model links regulatory synchronization, institutional accountability, and traceable participation to the substantive protection of indigenous peoples' rights and to the long-term sustainability of Papua's governance.

## Conclusion

This article concludes that the main problem in Papua's Special Autonomy governance lies in implementability gaps rather than in the absence of legal norms. Post-amendment governance remains vulnerable to delayed derivative regulations, weak coordination, regional capacity imbalances, and participation procedures whose influence is not consistently traceable in final policy decisions. These interacting conditions explain why strong legal commitments may coexist with uneven policy outcomes across sectors and districts. Accordingly, the challenge of Papua's Special Autonomy is not merely normative design, but the ability to translate legal mandates into coherent and accountable execution.

The principal contribution of this study is to show that Papua's Special Autonomy should be assessed through regulatory synchronization, institutional accountability, and the substantive protection of indigenous peoples' rights within a sustainable development framework. In this regard, sustainable development in Papua depends on governance arrangements that are legally coherent, operationally auditable, and responsive to unequal regional capacities and participatory justice. Papua's Special Autonomy will remain fragile unless regulatory synchronization, enforceable coordination, traceable participation, and differentiated implementation support are strengthened so that legal recognition is followed by measurable indigenous rights protection and more sustainable governance outcomes.

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