



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Implementation of the Bengkulu–Taba Penanjung Toll Road Development

Bando Amin C Kader<sup>1)</sup>, Harius Eko Saputra<sup>2)</sup>, Tuti Handayani IS<sup>3)</sup>, Meli Satri<sup>4)</sup>

Published online: 15 May 2022

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of land acquisition policy in the construction of the Bengkulu–Taba Penanjung toll road using George C. Edward III's policy implementation model, which includes the dimensions of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that although the policy implementation followed formal regulations such as Presidential Regulation No. 148 of 2015 and Government Regulation No. 19 of 2021, practical challenges remain in the field. One-way communication, limited resources, rigid implementers, and suboptimal interagency coordination were identified as major barriers. Resistance from the affected communities was observed, largely due to compensation perceived as below market value and lacking recognition of the land's emotional significance. These findings highlight the need for participatory approaches and two-way communication in the implementation of land-based public policies.

**Keyword:** Policy Implementation, Land Acquisition, Toll Road, Edward III, Policy Communication.

## Introduction

Infrastructure development is a vital strategy in boosting economic growth and improving connectivity between regions. The Indonesian government continues to accelerate infrastructure development, including toll roads, ports, and other public facilities. One of these strategic projects is the construction of the Lubuk Linggau–Curup–Bengkulu Toll Road, which is part of the Trans Sumatra Toll Road network. This toll road is designed to support population mobility, logistics distribution, and reduce disparities in development between regions. The implementation of the toll road construction project in Bengkulu, especially the Bengkulu–Taba Penanjung section, cannot be separated from the need for large-scale land acquisition. The main challenge arises when the land needed is land owned by residents who have high emotional and economic value. Although this project is intended for the public interest, the land acquisition process often triggers community resistance, especially when the compensation offered is considered unfair or below expectations. As regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 148 of 2015 and reinforced by PP Number 19 of 2021 concerning land acquisition, this project should be carried out with the principles of justice and transparency. However, in practice, various social, legal, and communication dynamics emerge in the negotiation process between the government and residents. The success of implementing this policy is greatly influenced by how well communication is built and the extent to which the policy is implemented consistently. Based on field observations, the land acquisition process on the Bengkulu–Taba Penanjung section involved around 2.7 million square meters of land, covering

various types of land, including settlements, rice fields, and gardens. Several residents rejected the compensation value set by the Public Appraisal Service Office (KJPP) team, considering that the price per square meter did not reflect the fair value expected by the community. This situation reflects the tension between the legal aspects of the policy and the social realities faced by the affected community. Therefore, a study on the implementation of this land acquisition policy is important to examine the extent to which existing regulations are implemented effectively, as well as to see how the interaction between the government and the community in the negotiation and compensation process. This study seeks to explore the implementation of the Bengkulu toll road construction within the theoretical framework of public policy implementation. The approach used refers to the George Edward III model, which includes four main variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. These four aspects are used to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation in the field. The formulation of the problem in this study is: How is the implementation of the Bengkulu Toll Road development? This question is the main basis for delving deeper into the practices of policy implementation based on law and social interaction. The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the process of implementing the toll road development in Bengkulu, especially in the aspects of land acquisition, policy communication, and the dynamics of the relationship between the government as the policy implementer and the community as the affected party. This study also aims to examine the obstacles that arise and the supporting factors that play a role in the success of the implementation. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions in the development of public policy studies, especially in the context of land acquisition. In addition, from a practical perspective, this study can be a reference for related agencies in improving communication strategies and social approaches in future infrastructure development. Thus, this study is relevant to fill the gap between theory and practice of policy implementation, especially in national strategic projects that have a direct impact on the community. Through an in-depth qualitative approach, it is hoped that a more holistic understanding of the existing

Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu

*\*) corresponding author*

Bando Amin C Kader

Email: [bandoamin@unived.ac.id](mailto:bandoamin@unived.ac.id)

problems and possible solutions to improve the land acquisition system in Indonesia will be found.

## Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to explore the policy implementation process in depth in a complex social context, especially in the case of land acquisition for toll road construction. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the meaning constructed by individuals or groups towards a social problem or policy. The focus of this study is to observe how the implementation of Presidential Regulation Number 148 of 2015 is carried out in the context of the construction of the Lubuk Linggau-Curup-Bengkulu Toll Road, Bengkulu-Taba Penanjung segment. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to understand the field situation directly, while in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants who had a substantial understanding of the land acquisition process, namely officials from the Bengkulu Province National Land Agency (BPN) Regional Office and communities affected by development. Documentation includes official archives, decrees, location maps, and photos of relevant activities. The informant selection technique used a purposive sampling method with certain criteria such as direct involvement in the land acquisition process, understanding of the regulations used, and willingness to be interviewed (Sugiyono, 2016). Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data reduction is carried out to filter relevant information, then presented in the form of descriptive narratives and summary tables. Drawing conclusions is carried out in stages during the research process, with cross-verification from various sources to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Validation is carried out through triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure that the information obtained is unbiased and represents the social reality being studied.

## Results and Discussion

The results of the study show that the implementation of land acquisition for the construction of the Bengkulu-Taba Penanjung Toll Road has formally referred to the applicable regulations, namely Presidential Regulation Number 148 of 2015 and Government Regulation Number 19 of 2021. Although administratively the procedures have been carried out, practices in the field still leave various challenges, especially in terms of communication between the government and affected communities. Ineffectiveness in information transmission can be seen from the fact that many residents still do not understand the substance of the policy and the process that must be gone through to obtain compensation rights.

The socialization process carried out by the government has actually been quite intensive, marked by the holding of several meetings and the distribution of notification letters. However, the effectiveness of communication is not only determined by frequency, but also by clarity, appropriateness of language, and citizen participation in understanding the contents of the policy. Some residents, especially those with low levels of education, experience confusion when they have to adjust documents or interpret administrative procedures. This shows that policy implementers have not been fully able to adjust communication methods to the social characteristics of the target residents.

The implementing resources, in this case personnel from the National Land Agency (BPN) and local governments, generally have adequate capacity in the legal-formal aspects. However, the number of officers is limited compared to the area and the number of affected residents who must be served. This shortage has an impact on the slow process of land verification, data collection of affected residents (WTP), to the stage of assessment and payment of compensation. In addition, the compensation

value assessed by the Public Appraisal Services Office (KJPP) often does not match community expectations, causing resistance and delaying the process of releasing land rights.

The disposition or attitude of policy implementers in this study is classified as cooperative and procedural. Officers from the BPN showed good faith in carrying out each stage according to the rules. However, technical implementation in the field still faces problems in bridging the gap between the formal value determined and the subjective value felt by the community. Residents demand compensation that is in accordance with market value or even more, due to emotional factors and the use value of the land for their livelihoods. This difference in orientation shows a gap between the state's legal framework and the socio-economic reality of residents.

The bureaucratic structure that is the framework for policy implementation has run through regulated stages, starting from public consultation to determining the location and providing compensation. However, coordination between implementing agencies, both from the center and regions, is not always in sync. For example, in the process of re-public consultation and clarification of residents' objections, there are often delays or overlapping authorities between the central and regional teams. This shows that the ideal bureaucratic structure on paper may not necessarily run effectively at the local level. The gap in understanding between the government and the community is also caused by the weak deliberation approach that is ideally carried out as a dispute resolution mechanism. Although meetings are held, residents feel that they are given more information than given space to negotiate. This one-way approach causes most residents to feel disempowered in the decision-making process. As a result, the land acquisition process is not only an administrative issue, but also develops into an issue of social trust in the state. The process of implementing the toll road development policy shows that success is not solely determined by the existence of comprehensive regulations, but also by how the policy is implemented in a way that touches the social and psychological aspects of the community. If the communication and disposition dimensions of the implementers are not improved, then social resistance will continue to occur, even when the project has significant long-term economic benefits. This is an important lesson for other infrastructure projects not to rely only on legality, but also on social sensitivity. Referring to the Edward III model, it can be concluded that the implementation of the land acquisition policy in Bengkulu has not been optimal because the four main indicators—communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure—still face challenges at the implementation level. Further policy interventions need to be focused on improving public communication strategies, training field officers, and actively involving the community in the deliberation process as a prerequisite for the success of sustainable development.

## Discussion

The implementation of the Bengkulu-Taba Penanjung toll road development policy has basically been carried out in accordance with applicable regulations, namely Presidential Regulation Number 148 of 2015 and PP Number 19 of 2021 concerning Land Acquisition for Public Interest. However, implementation in the field has not run completely smoothly. Various obstacles were found, both administrative, social, and technical, which affected the effectiveness of policy implementation. This shows that the success of implementation does not only depend on the availability of regulations, but also on the extent to which policy actors are able to bridge the formal interests of the state with the social realities of society. In terms of communication, the results of the study show that socialization to the community has been carried out formally through notification letters and meetings involving village heads and affected residents. However, the effectiveness of this communication is still questionable. Some residents do not understand the substance of the policy, especially regarding the mechanism and conditions for receiving compensation. In the George C. Edward

III model, the communication aspect includes transmission, clarity, and consistency of information. All three have not been fully met, especially in simplifying legal language so that it can be understood by the general public. Ineffective communication has an impact on the emergence of resistance from residents who feel they are not fully involved in the decision-making process. Residents who feel their aspirations are not understood show rejection of the compensation value that has been set. In fact, one of the main requirements for the success of public policy is the legitimacy of the affected parties. When communication is unable to bridge the interests between the state and society, resistance becomes a form of social correction against policies that are considered impartial. In terms of resources, policy implementation is supported by officers from the Bengkulu Province National Land Agency (BPN) and the Public Appraisal Services Office (KJPP) Team. However, limited personnel and time pressures cause technical implementation to be uneven. Several areas experience delays in land verification or do not receive adequate explanations regarding the compensation mechanism. Limited human resources and logistics are real obstacles in the implementation of large-scale policies that involve many stakeholders and community land. The attitude of policy implementers (disposition) generally shows loyalty to the rules. BPN officers carry out applicable orders and procedures according to operational standards. However, on the other hand, field implementers often act rigidly because they are attached to a hierarchical bureaucratic system. This condition reduces flexibility in responding to the social dynamics of society. The overly administrative disposition of the implementer causes a humanist approach to the affected residents to be weak, whereas in the context of land acquisition, a social approach is much more decisive in determining the acceptance of residents. The bureaucratic structure applied is formal and based on layers of stages, starting from location determination, public consultation, deliberation, compensation assessment, to release of rights. However, this structure also creates new complexities, especially when coordination between agencies does not run synergistically. For example, there is a time lag between socialization by the local government and technical implementation by the BPN. This lack of synchronization causes information reaching the community to be inconsistent. In this case, the ideal bureaucratic structure model according to Edward III has not been fully realized due to obstacles to coordination and gaps in roles between implementing units. Conflicts in land acquisition are basically not only caused by the nominal compensation, but also by the perception of injustice in the process. Residents' rejection of the compensation value set by the KJPP shows a difference in assessment between the formal aspects of the state and the emotional value of the community for their land. Land is not only seen as an economic asset, but also a symbol of heritage, identity, and livelihood. In this context, the role of communication and deliberation becomes very crucial so that development policies are not only legal, but also legitimate in the eyes of the community. Based on the findings and analysis above, it can be concluded that the implementation of toll road construction in Bengkulu has not been fully effective. The communication aspect is still top-down, the implementing resources are not optimal, the disposition of bureaucrats is too administrative, and the bureaucratic structure is too rigid in adjusting to social dynamics. A more participatory, collaborative, and responsive approach is needed in the implementation of land acquisition policies so that national strategic projects such as toll road construction can be socially accepted and run without significant obstacles.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This study shows that the implementation of land acquisition policies in the construction of the Bengkulu-Taba Penanjung Toll Road has not been optimal, even though it has formally followed the provisions of applicable laws and regulations, especially Presidential Regulation Number 148 of 2015 and PP Number 19 of 2021. The implementation process is

faced with a number of obstacles, both technical, administrative, and social, which significantly affect the effectiveness of policies at the field level.

Communication between implementers and the community is still one-way, with information dominated by the government without active involvement of residents in the deliberation process. This causes the community to not understand the compensation mechanism and other administrative procedures. Meanwhile, limited human resources, budget, and logistics are technical obstacles that slow down the process of land identification and compensation payments.

The attitude of policy implementers tends to be rigid and administrative, so they are less able to respond to the social dynamics that develop in the community. The bureaucratic structure that should support policy implementation has actually become an obstacle due to weak coordination between agencies and delays in decision-making at the local level. The conflict between formal price assessments and residents' emotional values for their land is the main source of resistance that hinders the land acquisition process.

Based on the four indicators of George C. Edward III's policy implementation model—communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure—it can be concluded that the success of implementing toll road construction does not only depend on the existence of adequate regulations, but also on the sensitivity of the implementers in understanding the social conditions of the affected communities.

### Suggestions

#### 1) Improving Communication Quality

The government and policy implementers need to improve their public communication strategy with a more participatory, transparent, and adaptive approach to the social conditions of citizens. Information on rights, procedures, and compensation values must be delivered in easy-to-understand language and facilitated through open and inclusive deliberation forums.

#### 2) Strengthening Implementer Resources and Capacity

The central and regional governments need to increase the number of officers in the field and provide intensive training on social approaches and empathetic communication so that policy implementers are able to manage interactions with the community in a humane and solution-oriented manner.

#### 3) Optimizing Deliberation Mechanisms

Deliberations should not only be a formality, but rather a substantive space to listen to community aspirations. Fair, open, and field-data-based negotiation mechanisms must be strengthened so that the resulting decisions truly represent the interests of both parties.

#### 4) Simplifying Bureaucratic Structures and Cross-Sector Coordination

A more responsive and flexible coordination mechanism is needed between agencies, especially between regional governments, BPN, and implementing contractors. Simplification of administrative procedures is also important so that the implementation process can run quickly without sacrificing legal aspects.

#### 5) Adjustment of Compensation Value Realistically

Determination of compensation prices needs to consider actual market value, emotional value, and socio-economic impacts on affected residents. The involvement of independent parties such as academics or social institutions can help the mediation process and maintain the objectivity of the assessment.

## References

- Agustino, L. (2006). *Dasar-dasar kebijakan publik*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Edward III, G. C. (1980). *Implementing public policy*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Iskandar. (2010). *Pengadaan tanah untuk kepentingan umum*. Jakarta: Mitra Hukum.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Ritzer, G. (2012). *Teori sosiologi: Dari teori sosiologi klasik sampai perkembangan mutakhir teori sosial postmodern*. Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana.
- Santoso, U. (2012). *Hukum agraria: Perspektif dan praktik*. Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media.
- Sugiyono. (2016). *Metode penelitian pendidikan: Pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sumardjono, M. S. W. (2009). *Tanah dalam perspektif hak ekonomi, sosial dan budaya*. Yogyakarta: UII Press.
- Winarno, B. (2014). *Kebijakan publik: Teori, proses dan studi kasus*. Yogyakarta: CAPS.