

Implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on The Protection of Sustainable Food Agricultural Land in Sorong Regency

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history Received 17 - July - 2025 Revised 19 - July - 2025 Accepted 20 - August - 2025 Published 25 - August - 2025 Keywords policy implementation pl2pb sustainable agriculture land conversion  License by CC-BY-SA Copyright © 2025, The Author(s).	Agricultural land is one of the most strategic resources in supporting food security at both the national and regional levels. However, the rapid expansion of urbanization and economic development often leads to the conversion of productive agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. This study examines the implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 concerning the Protection of Sustainable Food Agricultural Land (PLP2B) in Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua Province, Indonesia. The research employs Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation model, which emphasizes six variables: policy standards and objectives, policy resources, inter-organizational communication and enforcement, characteristics of implementing agencies, attitudes of implementers, and socio-economic and political conditions. A qualitative descriptive approach was used, supported by survey data. A total of 111 farmers, 5 village officials, and 8 representatives from key government agencies (Department of Agriculture, Bappeda, Environmental Agency, and DPMPTSP) participated in the study through proportional random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and direct observations. The results indicate that although most farmers (76%) support maintaining agricultural land despite economic pressures, the implementation of PLP2B remains suboptimal. Limited financial resources, weak coordination among agencies, lack of public awareness, and socio-economic pressures such as high land prices and urbanization are the primary obstacles. The study concludes that stronger institutional capacity, effective communication, consistent spatial planning integration, and farmer-oriented economic incentives are urgently required to safeguard agricultural land and ensure regional food security.
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INTRODUCTION

Sorong Regency represents one of the most strategic areas for supporting food security in Southwest Papua Province. Over the past five years, agriculture has made a substantial contribution to the regional economy, with the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at current prices in 2020 recorded at IDR 1,102.9 billion, or about 10.2% of the total GRDP (BPS Sorong, 2021). Several districts, such as Aimas, Mayamuk, and Klaso, serve as vital agricultural hubs, with Aimas in particular experiencing rapid demographic expansion from 19,911 inhabitants in 2010 to 42,014 in 2020. This demographic pressure has created increasing challenges for the availability and quality of agricultural land. Despite the crucial role of agriculture, Sorong Regency faces severe challenges in ensuring the sustainability of its food-producing lands. Data from the PLP2B planning document for Southwest Papua Province in 2020 shows that out of 19,709.5 hectares of land with agricultural potential, only 718 hectares—or about 3.7%—have been optimally utilized (Kandami, 2023). This significant underutilization reflects a sharp gap between potential and actual use. The problem is compounded by the rapid conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses such as housing, offices, and commercial zones, particularly in urban areas (Halim & Adianto, 2021; Palilu, 2021). The lack of synergy between spatial planning, regulatory frameworks, and development agendas has weakened the effectiveness of agricultural land protection.

In response to this situation, the Sorong Regency Government enacted Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on the Protection of Sustainable Food Agricultural Land (PLP2B). The regulation is intended to ensure the long-term availability of farmland, prevent uncontrolled land conversion, and promote regional food independence, resilience, and sovereignty. It also aims to secure agricultural land for future generations, establish regulatory and institutional support mechanisms, and increase community awareness and participation in land protection. Beyond its economic benefits, the regulation carries ecological significance, such as preserving environmental functions, reducing ecological risks from land degradation, and providing legal certainty for farmers in managing their land. Nevertheless, the implementation of this regulation has not produced optimal results, as reports indicate that land conversion continues, often without proper legal procedures (Hamdi, 2014; Rachman et al, 2013).

The challenges of policy implementation manifest across multiple dimensions. From a sociocultural perspective, limited public awareness and low compliance levels among both landowners and technical implementers hinder the effectiveness of PLP2B. Surveys show that only about 28% of farmers are familiar with the regulation, while most have never received direct socialization. Since its enactment, only 30% of villages in Sorong have participated in official outreach activities organized by the Agriculture Department, and development forums indicate that merely 4% of community proposals relate to land protection. These findings suggest that weak communication strategies and low levels of community involvement severely constrain the effectiveness of policy implementation. From an institutional perspective, problems also arise from the weak integration of LP2B data into spatial planning documents such as the RTRW and RDTR. In 2023, only 54% of the designated LP2B areas were consistently incorporated into these planning documents, which complicates inter-agency coordination. The absence of a dedicated LP2B management institution and discrepancies in land data between government agencies further illustrate institutional weaknesses. Moreover, at a broader policy level, inconsistencies undermine the authority of the regulation. While 3,245 hectares have been designated as LP2B, the local government has simultaneously issued permits for the conversion of productive farmland to residential and industrial use, covering approximately 289 hectares between 2020 and 2023. Planned revisions to the RTRW (2021–2041) further indicate potential reclassification of LP2B areas for urban and industrial expansion, raising concerns about large-scale land conversion (Abidin, 2012; Zamroni et al., 2015)

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to critically examine the implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on PLP2B in Sorong Regency, both from the perspective of landowners and technical implementers. At the same time, it aims to identify the main obstacles that have hindered the effectiveness of the policy. The study therefore has two primary objectives: first, to analyze the implementation of PLP2B in Sorong Regency with a focus on farmers' attitudes and willingness to preserve farmland, and second, to identify the institutional, social, and policy-related barriers that constrain the realization of sustainable agricultural land protection at the local level.

METHOD

This study applied a qualitative descriptive design to explore the implementation of Local Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on the Protection of Sustainable Food Agricultural Land (PLP2B) in Sorong Regency. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because land conversion is not only an administrative matter but also involves social, economic, and political dimensions. Through this approach, the research sought to capture the perspectives of both landowners and government actors, while also examining the institutional and regulatory mechanisms shaping policy outcomes.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Informants included farmers, village officials, and representatives from key government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, Bappeda, the Environmental Agency, and the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Service Office

(DPMPTSP). Farmers were selected using proportional random and purposive sampling to ensure both representativeness and relevance, while government officials were chosen through purposive and snowball techniques to reach individuals with substantive involvement in land-use planning and policy implementation. Interviews focused on themes such as knowledge of the regulation, attitudes toward land protection, participation in planning processes, institutional coordination, and administrative barriers. These were complemented with analysis of legal documents, spatial planning records, and statistical data on agricultural land use.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Interview transcripts were coded and grouped into themes such as farmer participation, institutional constraints, policy communication, and inter-agency coordination. These themes were then interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework of Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation model. The fieldwork was conducted in Sorong Regency, which was selected due to its strategic role in regional food security and its current vulnerability to agricultural land conversion.

RESULTS

Based on the findings from the field, this discussion is structured using the six policy implementation variables proposed by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), which simultaneously address the two research questions. Data were obtained through surveys with farmers, village officials, the Agriculture Office, Bappeda, the Environmental Agency, and the DPMPTSP, representing the data sources in this study. Thus, this chapter serves as an essential foundation for evaluating the implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 and the factors hindering its implementation concerning Sustainable Food Agricultural Land Protection (PLP2B) in Sorong Regency.

1. Policy Standards and Objectives

Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on Sustainable Food Agricultural Land Protection (PLP2B) sets the objective of safeguarding agricultural land so that it continues to function as a source of food. However, at the level of implementers and landowners, understanding of these objectives varied. Some farmers understood the general purpose of land protection, but they were unaware of the specific targets regarding land size, designated LP2B areas, and legal sanctions for violations. As one farmer stated:

"We know we should not sell all the land, but how much must be preserved, or what the rules are if it is sold—we never received a clear explanation." (Farmer A, Village X)

This indicates a communication and socialization gap that prevents the policy's standards and objectives from being optimally conveyed. According to Van Meter and Van Horn, the alignment between policy objectives and the understanding of implementers in the field is a key determinant of successful implementation.

2. Policy Resources

Policy resources include funding, facilities, and incentives for the actors involved. The study revealed that operational funds for PLP2B socialization were limited, extension activities were irregular, and there were no special incentives for farmers who preserved their land. One village official explained:

"Socialization usually happens only once or twice a year. But if there is no budget, then nothing happens." (Village Official B)

These resource limitations made it difficult to consistently carry out land protection programs. Within Van Meter and Van Horn's framework, a lack of resources obstructs the achievement of policy objectives even when the policy standards are clear.

3. Communication and Inter-Organizational Activities

The implementation of PLP2B requires coordination across agencies, particularly the Agriculture Office, Bappeda, DPMPTSP, and the Environmental Agency. However, findings indicated that coordination was not optimal. For instance, location permits for construction were sometimes issued without referring to the LP2B maps, and village officials often received information belatedly. As one agriculture officer noted:

"Sometimes we at the agriculture office only find out that a location permit has been issued after heavy machinery is already operating on site. Coordination is indeed weak." (Agriculture Officer C)

This condition demonstrates that weak inter-organizational communication mechanisms lead to overlapping policies and unmonitored land conversion.

4. Characteristics of Implementing Agencies

Technical implementers such as agricultural extension workers and village officials had knowledge of local conditions, but their numbers were limited. In many cases, one extension worker was responsible for several villages, making effective monitoring impossible. Training specific to PLP2B was also rarely conducted. As one extension officer stated:

"I am responsible for five villages, so it is impossible to monitor each one. Sometimes land conversion has already occurred before we even know about it." (Extension Worker D)

From a theoretical perspective, the capacity and competence of implementers directly influence the effectiveness of implementation. The shortage of personnel compared to the vast area of responsibility posed a significant barrier.

5. Disposition and Attitudes of Implementers

The attitudes of implementers were influenced by their understanding of the policy as well as external pressures. Some officials demonstrated strong commitment to farmland protection, while others were more permissive toward violations, often due to economic factors or social relationships with land sellers. A village official admitted:

"If a family wants to sell land to pay for their children's schooling, it is hard to stop them. We know the policy, but we also understand people's needs." (Village Official E)

Van Meter and Van Horn emphasize that positive implementer attitudes strengthen policy implementation, whereas permissive attitudes can weaken it, even when resources are adequate.

6. Social, Political, and Economic Conditions

External factors posed major challenges to the implementation of PLP2B. Rising land prices tempted many farmers to sell their land. Urbanization and the shift of younger generations from agriculture to service-sector jobs further threatened farmland sustainability. Additionally, changes in local political leadership affected policy priorities. As one farmer observed:

“Young people nowadays do not want to farm anymore. If someone offers a high price for the land, then it is sold.” (Farmer F, Village Y)

These socio-economic factors are difficult to address through policy instruments alone, highlighting the need for complementary strategies such as providing incentives and strengthening cultural values associated with farming.

To present the findings more systematically, the discussion is summarized in the form of a matrix that links the six variables of policy implementation according to Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) with field findings and their implications for the implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on Sustainable Food Agricultural Land Protection (PLP2B) in Sorong Regency.

Table 4.1. Matrix of PLP2B Implementation in Sorong Regency Based on Van Meter & Van Horn’s Variables

No.	Implementation Variable (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975)	Field Findings (Interviews & Observations)	Implications for Implementation
1	Policy Standards and Objectives	Farmers and village officials understood the general aim of farmland protection but lacked detailed knowledge of specific targets, such as designated LP2B areas, required land size, and legal sanctions.	Limited understanding of policy details hinders alignment between implementation practices and intended policy outcomes.
2	Policy Resources	Operational budgets were limited; socialization activities were rare and dependent on available funds; farmers received no financial incentives for preserving farmland; monitoring facilities were inadequate.	Insufficient resources reduce the consistency and effectiveness of implementation and discourage farmer participation.
3	Communication and Inter-Organizational Activities	Coordination among agencies was weak; permits for development were sometimes issued without reference to LP2B maps; village officials often received late information.	Poor coordination fosters policy overlap, weak monitoring, and unregulated land conversion.
4	Characteristics of Implementing Agencies	Extension workers and village officials knew local conditions but were few in number; one extension officer often covered multiple	Limited capacity and lack of specialized training reduced supervision intensity and the effectiveness of policy delivery.

		villages; PLP2B-specific training was rarely provided.	
5	Disposition and Attitudes of Implementers	Some officials were highly committed, while others were permissive toward land conversion, especially when influenced by economic or social considerations.	Commitment strengthens implementation, but permissive attitudes create loopholes that undermine policy enforcement.
6	Social, Political, and Economic Conditions	Rising land prices encouraged land sales; youth showed declining interest in farming; leadership changes in local government shifted policy priorities.	External socio-economic factors weakened policy implementation and could not be addressed by regulation alone, requiring complementary strategies such as incentives and cultural reinforcement.

Based on the findings presented in the table, it becomes evident that the implementation of the PLP2B Regulation in Sorong Regency has not yet reached its full potential. In terms of policy standards and objectives, community understanding of the policy goals remains limited. Government-led socialization efforts have not been evenly distributed, leaving many landowners unaware of the importance of farmland protection. With regard to policy resources, implementation is still constrained by budget limitations and the lack of sufficient incentives for farmers. These shortcomings have led to inconsistent mentoring, monitoring, and control of land-use conversion in practice.

Furthermore, communication and inter-organizational activities remain weak, as cross-agency coordination has not been fully integrated. This is particularly evident in the management of land-use permits, where overlapping authority often occurs. From the perspective of implementing agencies, the number of technical staff is insufficient, and capacity-building training has not been carried out optimally. This situation diminishes the ability of local officials to effectively monitor and disseminate the policy to farmers.

In addition, the attitudes of implementers reveal a degree of permissiveness toward land conversion, often influenced by economic pressures or social considerations. Such attitudes, coupled with the low commitment of some technical implementers, undermine the consistency of policy enforcement. Finally, broader social, political, and economic conditions exacerbate these challenges. The increasing value of land and the declining interest of younger generations in agriculture have further accelerated land-use conversion. These external factors significantly weaken government efforts to safeguard sustainable agricultural land.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on the Protection of Sustainable Agricultural Land (PLP2B) in Sorong Regency reveals notable gaps between policy design and field practice. Using Van Meter and Van Horn's (1975) six-variable framework, this study highlights both the strengths and persistent barriers that influence policy effectiveness. First, regarding policy standards and objectives, the regulation establishes a clear goal: preventing massive farmland conversion to maintain food security. However, research findings indicate that landowners and many village officials only partially understand these objectives. Most recognize the general importance of land preservation, but lack knowledge of specific targets such as designated LP2B boundaries or legal sanctions. Limited socialization and inaccessible technical documents exacerbate this knowledge gap, resulting in weak compliance. This finding aligns with Hidayah

(2020), who observed that PLP2B goals often remain unmet due to insufficient public understanding, and with Putri and Wibisono (2022), who note frequent mismatches between normative policy goals and actual implementation.

Second, resources remain a significant obstacle. Budget allocations for PLP2B are limited, with funding prioritized for physical development projects over awareness and monitoring activities. Technical personnel are insufficient in both number and expertise, and no special incentives exist for farmers to retain agricultural land. These constraints reduce motivation among landowners, who often view land conversion as more profitable. Similar findings have been reported by Hidayah (2022) and Putri and Wibisono (2022), both of whom identify financial and human resource shortages as major impediments to farmland protection. Third, communication and inter-organizational coordination are weak. Agencies such as the Agriculture Office, Bappeda, DPMPTSP, and the Environmental Agency lack strong synergy, with information exchange occurring slowly. Location permits are sometimes issued without reference to LP2B maps, while village officials often learn of land conversion only after it has occurred. This mirrors Hidayah's (2022) observation of cross-sectoral overlap and weak policy integration, and it underscores how fragmented communication undermines consistent enforcement.

Fourth, the characteristics of implementing agents, particularly agricultural extension workers and village officials, also limit effectiveness. Many have not received specific training on PLP2B, and the number of personnel is far below the scale of monitoring required. As Hidayah (2022) and Lukman (2012) emphasize, limited technical competence and personnel shortages constrain enforcement capacity. This reflects Van Meter and Van Horn's point that the skills and resources of implementers directly shape policy success. Fifth, the disposition of implementers reveals a tendency toward permissiveness. While some show strong commitment to farmland protection, others tolerate land sales due to socio-economic pressures within their communities. Local officials often prioritize residents' immediate needs, such as paying school fees, over policy compliance. This finding is consistent with Putri and Wibisono (2022), who argue that permissive attitudes among implementers weaken the enforcement of farmland protection policies. Van Meter and Van Horn's framework underscores that implementer commitment is a critical determinant of successful implementation.

Finally, external socio-economic and political conditions significantly influence implementation outcomes. Rising land prices encourage landowners to sell farmland for housing and commercial use, while younger generations show declining interest in agriculture. Political priorities also tend to emphasize infrastructure and investment rather than farmland protection. Hidayah (2022) and Putri and Wibisono (2022) both confirm that economic pressures, particularly high land prices, are strong drivers of farmland conversion. These external pressures are beyond the direct control of local implementers but have a decisive effect on the sustainability of farmland protection policies. Overall, the findings suggest that the implementation of PLP2B in Sorong Regency remains suboptimal. Landowners generally provide limited support due to low understanding and weak economic incentives. Technical implementers face human resource constraints, weak institutional coordination, and inconsistent attitudes. External factors, such as economic pressures and shifting political priorities, further complicate enforcement. Taken together, these internal and external dynamics illustrate the gap between legal norms and practical realities.

To strengthen implementation, both internal and external dimensions must be addressed. Internally, this requires increased budget allocations, more systematic training for implementers, and stronger inter-agency coordination. Externally, greater political commitment and economic incentives for farmers are necessary to counterbalance market pressures and sustain farmland protection. Ultimately, the case of Sorong demonstrates that effective policy implementation depends not only on clear regulations but also on the alignment of resources, institutional capacity, and socio-economic support systems.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the implementation of Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on the Protection of Sustainable Agricultural Land (PLP2B) in Sorong Regency, focusing on two key questions: how the regulation has been implemented from the perspectives of landowners and technical implementers, and what factors have hindered its effectiveness. The findings reveal that implementation remains partial and inconsistent. From the perspective of landowners, limited understanding of policy standards and the absence of meaningful economic incentives have reduced support for farmland protection. From the perspective of technical implementers, the shortage of resources, weak inter-agency coordination, and a permissive disposition toward land conversion undermine enforcement efforts. These gaps illustrate that the regulation's objectives are not fully translated into practice. Several factors have been identified as barriers: inadequate funding, insufficient human resources, limited training for local officials, weak communication across institutions, and the absence of structured incentives for farmers. Moreover, external pressures, particularly rising land values, urbanization, declining youth interest in farming, and shifting political priorities, further erode the sustainability of farmland protection. Taken together, these findings highlight the gap between normative policy goals and practical realities. Strengthening implementation will require a combination of internal reforms, greater budget allocation, enhanced institutional coordination, and capacity building, and external measures such as political commitment and farmer-oriented economic incentives. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring that farmland protection contributes effectively to regional food security and long-term sustainability.

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