

Network Governance for Integrated Maritime Transportation Planning in Southwest Papua: A Qualitative Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The development of integrated maritime transportation in Southwest Papua is essential for improving regional connectivity and supporting equitable regional development. However, fragmented institutional responsibilities and limited inter-organizational coordination continue to hinder the realization of an integrated maritime transportation system. This study examines how network governance influences maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua using a qualitative single-case study. Data were collected between August to September 2025 through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected informants representing the Southwest Papua Provincial Transportation Office, the Class III Teminabuan Port Authority Office, the Class I Sorong Navigation District, the Papuan People's Assembly, customary leaders, and local communities. Additional informants were identified through snowball sampling. Field observations and policy documents complemented the interview data. Data were analyzed using thematic coding based on four dimensions of network governance: trust, network participation, network goal consensus, and network-level competencies. Credibility was ensured through methodological and source triangulation and member checking. The findings indicate that collaboration has been institutionalized; however, coordination remains dependent on informal relationships, resulting in inconsistent stakeholder participation and weak consensus on shared development priorities. These findings extend the network governance perspective by demonstrating that institutional coordination alone is insufficient in geographically fragmented regions without sustained trust-building and network-level leadership. Strengthening collaborative capacity and shared strategic commitment is therefore critical to achieving integrated and sustainable maritime transportation in Southwest Papua.

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Introduction

Maritime transportation plays a fundamental role in connecting geographically dispersed regions, facilitating the movement of people and goods, and promoting balanced

regional development. For archipelagic countries, an efficient maritime transport system is not merely an infrastructure issue but also a governance challenge that requires coordination among multiple organizations operating at different administrative levels. The increasing complexity of public service delivery has shifted attention from hierarchical government arrangements toward collaborative forms of governance in which public institutions, private organizations, and local communities jointly contribute to policy implementation (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson et al., 2015).

Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic nation, relies heavily on maritime transportation to strengthen national connectivity and reduce regional disparities. Nevertheless, significant differences in infrastructure quality, accessibility, and public service provision remain evident, particularly in eastern Indonesia. Southwest Papua represents one of the regions where maritime transportation is indispensable because many coastal and island communities depend almost entirely on sea transport for mobility, access to public services, and economic activities. Despite continuous government investment in ports and maritime infrastructure, transportation services in the region have yet to provide integrated connectivity capable of supporting sustainable regional development. Limited institutional coordination, fragmented planning, and uneven distribution of responsibilities continue to constrain policy implementation. These conditions indicate that the effectiveness of maritime transportation depends not only on physical infrastructure but also on the quality of governance arrangements established among relevant stakeholders.

The governance of maritime transportation involves numerous organizations with different institutional mandates, administrative authorities, and operational priorities. Government ministries, provincial governments, district administrations, port authorities, transportation operators, indigenous communities, and other local stakeholders all influence planning and implementation processes. Such diversity creates interdependence among organizations while simultaneously increasing the need for coordination, communication, and collective decision-making. Conventional bureaucratic approaches often struggle to accommodate these complex relationships because decision-making authority is dispersed across institutions rather than concentrated within a single organization (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

Network governance has consequently emerged as an appropriate analytical perspective for understanding how multiple organizations collaborate in delivering public services. Rather than emphasizing hierarchical control, network governance focuses on inter-organizational relationships that enable actors to exchange resources, negotiate common interests, and coordinate collective action. The effectiveness of governance networks depends on several interconnected conditions, including mutual trust among participating organizations, active stakeholder participation, agreement on common objectives, and organizational capabilities to manage collaborative relationships. These elements determine whether a governance network functions as a coordinated system or

remains a collection of institutions pursuing individual organizational interests (Provan & Kenis, 2008).

Previous studies have demonstrated that collaborative governance networks contribute positively to public policy implementation in situations characterized by institutional complexity and interdependence. Collaborative arrangements improve resource sharing, increase policy legitimacy, and strengthen institutional learning when participating organizations maintain effective communication and shared commitment (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Similar evidence has been reported in infrastructure governance, where cross-sector collaboration enhances policy coordination and service integration, particularly when multiple government agencies and non-governmental organizations are involved (Bryson et al., 2015; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2017). However, previous studies have largely focused on collaborative governance in general public administration or infrastructure development, while relatively limited attention has been given to maritime transportation governance in remote archipelagic regions characterized by fragmented institutional authority and geographical isolation.

The case of Southwest Papua presents a distinctive governance context. Maritime transportation development is influenced not only by geographical constraints but also by overlapping institutional responsibilities, differences in organizational priorities, limited stakeholder engagement, and varying administrative capacities across government levels. Existing studies predominantly discuss maritime transportation from technical, economic, or infrastructure perspectives, whereas governance processes underlying inter-organizational collaboration remain insufficiently explored. Consequently, limited empirical evidence is available regarding how governance networks function in supporting integrated maritime transportation systems within remote island regions.

This study addresses that gap by examining the governance network underlying maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua. Rather than focusing on infrastructure performance alone, the study investigates how relationships among participating organizations influence collaborative governance outcomes. Four dimensions are used to assess network effectiveness: trust, network participation, network goal consensus, and the need for network-level competencies. Examining these dimensions provides a deeper understanding of how governance networks facilitate or constrain integrated maritime transportation development in geographically complex regions.

The findings are expected to contribute to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study extends the application of network governance within the context of maritime transportation in archipelagic regions, an area that remains relatively underexplored in public administration research. Practically, the study offers evidence-based recommendations for strengthening collaborative governance among government institutions and other stakeholders responsible for maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua. Ultimately, improving governance networks is expected to support more integrated,

efficient, and sustainable maritime transportation services capable of enhancing regional connectivity and reducing development disparities

Method

This study employed an exploratory qualitative single-case study to examine network governance in the development of integrated maritime transportation in Southwest Papua, Indonesia. The case was bounded geographically to Southwest Papua Province, particularly Sorong City and Teminabuan Port, and institutionally to the inter-organizational governance network responsible for maritime transportation planning and implementation. The unit of analysis was the collaborative governance network involving government agencies, maritime authorities, customary institutions, and local communities. Data were collected between August and September 2025 through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in maritime transportation governance, including representatives from the Southwest Papua Provincial Transportation Office, the Class III Teminabuan Port Authority Office, the Class I Sorong Navigation District, the Papuan People's Assembly, customary leaders, and local community representatives. Snowball sampling was subsequently applied to identify additional participants and was concluded when no substantial new information emerged, indicating data saturation. Interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and were supported by government regulations, planning documents, institutional reports, and other official documents related to maritime transportation development.

The interview guide was developed based on four dimensions of network governance proposed by Provan and Kenis: trust, network participation, network goal consensus, and network-level competencies. Interview recordings, field notes, observation records, and documentary evidence were transcribed and organized for analysis. Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Throughout the analysis, information obtained from different sources was continuously compared to identify patterns, relationships, and differences across stakeholder perspectives. Evidence that differed from the dominant findings was retained and considered in the interpretation to enhance analytical rigor and avoid premature conclusions.

The trustworthiness of the findings was enhanced through methodological and source triangulation by comparing evidence from interviews, observations, and documentary sources as well as perspectives from government agencies, maritime authorities, customary institutions, and local communities. Preliminary findings were discussed with several key informants to verify the accuracy of the interpretations. All participants voluntarily provided informed consent before the interviews, and their identities were anonymized to protect confidentiality. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant institutions in Southwest Papua. The study followed established qualitative research

principles to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2018).

Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings obtained from in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis concerning the governance of integrated maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua. The analysis focuses on understanding how inter-organizational relationships shape collaborative governance among institutions responsible for planning, regulating, and implementing maritime transportation policies. Rather than examining each organization independently, the findings emphasize the interaction patterns that emerge among government agencies, port authorities, transportation operators, customary institutions, and local communities.

The analytical process involved coding and categorizing qualitative data according to four dimensions of network governance: trust, network participation, network goal consensus, and the need for network-level competencies. These dimensions were used to identify recurring themes and explain how collaborative relationships influence the effectiveness of maritime transportation governance. Data from multiple sources were continuously compared throughout the analysis to ensure consistency and to capture different institutional perspectives regarding governance practices.

The findings indicate that although collaborative arrangements have gradually developed among the organizations involved, the governance network continues to face several institutional challenges that influence the integration of maritime transportation services. Variations in organizational commitment, coordination mechanisms, communication patterns, and institutional capacity affect the performance of the governance network. A summary of the main findings obtained from the data reduction process is presented in Table 1 before each dimension is discussed in detail.

Network Governance Dimension	Core Findings
Trust	Collaborative relationships among central, provincial, and district governments have been established; however, trust remains largely institutional and procedural rather than relational. Local governments continue to depend on central government decisions regarding ports, shipping routes, and maritime infrastructure, limiting mutual confidence in decentralized decision-making. Indigenous communities are consulted, yet their role remains advisory rather than strategic.
Network Participation	Stakeholder participation involves provincial and district governments, port authorities, navigation agencies, customary institutions, and coastal communities. Participation mainly occurs during consultation and planning stages, while strategic decisions remain concentrated within government institutions, resulting in uneven stakeholder influence.

Network Goal Consensus	All organizations share the objective of improving regional connectivity and maritime accessibility. However, differences in institutional mandates, budget priorities, and administrative authority create inconsistencies in program implementation and reduce coordination across government levels.
Need for Network-Level Competencies	Effective collaboration requires collective competencies in intergovernmental coordination, strategic planning, information sharing, adaptive leadership, and institutional learning. Existing coordination mechanisms remain fragmented, while integrated planning and knowledge exchange have not yet been institutionalized across participating organizations.

Source: Data reduction, 2025

Trust in Integrated Maritime Transportation Development in Southwest Papua

The findings indicate that trust among organizations involved in integrated maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua has gradually developed through continuous institutional interaction. Collaboration among the central government, provincial government, district governments, port authorities, navigation agencies, and customary institutions has been facilitated through formal administrative arrangements and statutory responsibilities. These institutional mechanisms have enabled routine coordination in planning, licensing, navigation safety, and infrastructure development. However, strategic decision-making remains highly centralized within the national government, while provincial and district governments primarily coordinate regional proposals and provide administrative support. Consequently, collaboration remains procedural, and mutual trust has not yet evolved into reciprocal decision-making or shared governance. The consultative involvement of customary institutions in discussions concerning customary land, port locations, and community interests has improved communication between government agencies and local communities, although their influence on strategic policy decisions remains limited.

These findings suggest that trust within the governance network is predominantly institutional rather than relational. Although formal coordination has strengthened communication and reduced administrative fragmentation, the concentration of strategic authority within the central government constrains the development of reciprocal trust among participating organizations. This finding supports the proposition that trust is a fundamental mechanism for reducing uncertainty and facilitating collaboration among autonomous organizations, but it also demonstrates that trust alone is insufficient when governance remains highly hierarchical (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Rather than reflecting a fully collaborative governance network, the empirical evidence indicates characteristics of a lead-organization network, in which the central government retains primary decision-making authority while regional institutions mainly perform coordinating and supporting functions.

The findings are consistent with previous studies showing that governance networks become more effective when trust is developed through repeated interaction, transparent communication, and collaborative experience rather than through formal institutional arrangements alone (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Likewise, governance networks require reciprocal relationships, resource exchange, and shared authority to function effectively rather than relying predominantly on hierarchical control (Rhodes, 1996; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). In the context of Southwest Papua, strengthening relational trust through greater transparency, joint planning, more balanced authority distribution, and broader participation of customary institutions is therefore essential for developing an integrated, adaptive, and sustainable maritime transportation governance system.

Network Participation in Integrated Maritime Transportation Development in Southwest Papua

The findings indicate that stakeholder participation in integrated maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua extends beyond government institutions to include port authorities, navigation agencies, customary institutions, and local communities. Participation is primarily facilitated through public consultations, development planning forums (*Musrenbang*), and inter-agency coordination meetings, providing opportunities for stakeholders to communicate local needs related to port development, transportation accessibility, and coastal connectivity. District governments play a key role in translating community aspirations into development proposals, while provincial governments coordinate regional priorities and the central government evaluates technical feasibility and regulatory compliance before approving infrastructure projects. This multilevel arrangement demonstrates that maritime transportation development relies on collaboration among organizations with complementary responsibilities rather than isolated institutional actions.

Despite these collaborative mechanisms, stakeholder participation remains uneven across the governance network. Strategic decisions concerning infrastructure investment, shipping routes, budget allocation, and policy implementation continue to be concentrated within the central government, whereas customary institutions and local communities primarily contribute local knowledge regarding customary land, geographical conditions, and transportation needs. Their participation, however, remains largely consultative, with limited influence on final policy decisions. Likewise, coordination among government agencies often occurs after development proposals have been formulated, reducing opportunities for collaborative problem-solving during the early stages of planning. These findings indicate that participation has been institutionalized procedurally but has not yet developed into an inclusive governance process characterized by balanced influence among participating actors.

From a network governance perspective, these findings demonstrate that participation has not yet evolved into collaborative decision-making despite the existence of formal coordination mechanisms. Effective governance networks require participating

organizations to contribute actively to planning, coordination, and decision-making rather than functioning solely as providers of information (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The limited influence of non-government actors suggests that valuable local knowledge has not been fully incorporated into strategic policy processes. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that meaningful stakeholder participation enhances policy legitimacy, institutional commitment, and implementation effectiveness when stakeholders perceive that their contributions genuinely influence collective decisions (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). It also supports the collaborative governance framework, which emphasizes principled engagement and shared motivation as essential conditions for sustaining inter-organizational collaboration (Emerson et al., 2012). Therefore, strengthening stakeholder participation through shared planning, joint evaluation, and more balanced decision-making authority is essential for improving the responsiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of maritime transportation governance in Southwest Papua.

Network Goal Consensus in Integrated Maritime Transportation Development in Southwest Papua

The findings indicate that organizations involved in maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua share a common commitment to improving regional connectivity, expanding access to public services, and supporting regional economic development. This shared vision has encouraged coordination among the central government, provincial and district governments, and maritime authorities in planning port development, improving shipping services, and expanding transportation accessibility. However, consensus remains stronger at the strategic level than at the operational level because each organization operates under different institutional mandates, planning priorities, and budgetary responsibilities. The Ministry of Transportation prioritizes national transportation standards, navigation safety, and strategic infrastructure, whereas provincial governments emphasize inter-district connectivity, and district governments focus on addressing local transportation needs in isolated coastal and island communities. As a result, development programs are frequently implemented according to sectoral priorities rather than through an integrated governance strategy.

The findings further reveal that differences in planning cycles, administrative procedures, and resource allocation constrain the achievement of shared organizational goals. Although maritime transportation is widely recognized as a strategic priority for regional development, the utilization of Special Autonomy Funds (*Otonomi Khusus*—OTSUS) has not consistently supported this objective, with a larger proportion of funding continuing to be directed toward land infrastructure. Consequently, several maritime infrastructure projects remain delayed or dependent on decisions made by higher levels of government. Furthermore, district development proposals require synchronization at the provincial level before receiving approval from the central government, often resulting in adjustments due to regulatory requirements, fiscal constraints, or changes in national priorities. These conditions indicate that coordination mechanisms remain predominantly

administrative, limiting opportunities for collaborative priority setting and collective decision-making.

From a network governance perspective, these findings demonstrate that goal consensus has not yet translated into coherent policy implementation across participating organizations. Governance networks require a high degree of shared objectives because autonomous organizations must coordinate their resources and actions to achieve collective outcomes (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The fragmented operational priorities observed in Southwest Papua reduce policy coherence and weaken collaborative capacity despite agreement on overarching development goals. Similar findings have been reported in studies showing that effective cross-sector collaboration depends on a shared vision, clearly defined institutional roles, and continuous negotiation among stakeholders (Bryson et al., 2015; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Moreover, governance networks require strategic management to reconcile competing organizational interests and minimize policy fragmentation (Kickert et al., 1997). Therefore, strengthening collaborative strategic planning, harmonizing institutional priorities, and aligning budget allocation with shared development objectives are essential for improving network goal consensus and achieving integrated maritime transportation governance in Southwest Papua.

Need for Network-Level Competencies in Integrated Maritime Transportation Development in Southwest Papua

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of integrated maritime transportation governance in Southwest Papua depends not only on the technical capacity of individual organizations but also on the collective competencies of the governance network. Although government agencies, port authorities, navigation institutions, and local governments possess sector-specific expertise, collaboration remains constrained by limited inter-organizational coordination, fragmented information systems, and insufficient mechanisms for continuous collaboration. Coordination is generally concentrated during planning and budgeting processes rather than being supported by permanent institutional arrangements, reducing opportunities for joint problem-solving and policy adaptation. Likewise, transportation planning continues to rely on fragmented data on passenger movements, logistics demand, port utilization, and regional accessibility, limiting the ability of participating organizations to formulate integrated and evidence-based policies.

The study also highlights collaborative leadership and organizational learning as essential network-level competencies. Provincial governments play an important coordinating role by facilitating communication between national and district governments; however, leadership remains predominantly administrative rather than facilitative. Existing coordination mechanisms have not yet promoted joint innovation, conflict resolution, or continuous institutional learning. Furthermore, the geographical characteristics of Southwest Papua, including dispersed islands, uneven infrastructure, and limited fiscal capacity, require governance arrangements that are adaptive and responsive to changing regional conditions.

Nevertheless, existing governance practices remain largely procedural, reducing the network's capacity to respond effectively to emerging transportation challenges.

From a network governance perspective, these findings demonstrate that sustainable collaboration requires competencies that extend beyond the authority of individual organizations. Effective governance networks depend on coordination, communication, facilitative leadership, conflict management, and organizational learning to sustain collaboration among autonomous actors (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The limited collaborative capacity identified in this study indicates that governance remains more reactive than adaptive in addressing complex maritime transportation issues. Similar conclusions have been reported by Agranoff and McGuire (2003), who emphasize the importance of network management skills in addressing inter-organizational challenges, and by Klijn and Koppenjan (2016), who highlight collaborative leadership as a critical factor for building trust and facilitating organizational learning. Moreover, effective governance networks generate greater public value when participating organizations develop shared accountability, continuous learning, and adaptive coordination mechanisms (Milward & Provan, 2006). This perspective is further supported by polycentric governance theory, which argues that complex public problems are addressed more effectively through multiple interacting institutions capable of learning and adapting over time (Ostrom, 2010). Therefore, strengthening permanent coordination mechanisms, integrated information systems, collaborative leadership, and institutional learning should become strategic priorities for enhancing the adaptive capacity and long-term effectiveness of maritime transportation governance in Southwest Papua.

Conclusion

This study examined network governance in the development of integrated maritime transportation in Southwest Papua by focusing on four dimensions: trust, network participation, network goal consensus, and network-level competencies. The findings demonstrate that maritime transportation governance has evolved into an inter-organizational network involving central, provincial, and district governments, port authorities, navigation agencies, customary institutions, and local communities. However, the governance network has not yet achieved the level of collaboration required to support an integrated maritime transportation system. Institutional trust remains largely dependent on formal administrative arrangements, stakeholder participation is uneven across organizations, consensus on shared objectives is constrained by differences in institutional priorities, and collaborative competencies required to coordinate complex inter-organizational relationships remain insufficient. These conditions continue to limit policy integration and reduce the effectiveness of maritime transportation development in Southwest Papua.

The study contributes to the network governance literature by demonstrating that collaborative governance in geographically dispersed island regions depends not only on

institutional coordination but also on the quality of relationships among network members. The four dimensions of network governance provide a useful framework for explaining how inter-organizational collaboration influences public service delivery in the maritime transportation sector. From a practical perspective, strengthening mutual trust, expanding meaningful stakeholder participation, aligning institutional objectives, and enhancing network-level competencies through integrated coordination mechanisms, collaborative leadership, and information sharing are essential to improving governance performance. Strengthening these dimensions will support the development of a more adaptive, integrated, and sustainable maritime transportation system capable of improving regional connectivity and promoting equitable development across Southwest Papua

Declarations

Author Contributions: Didik Iskandar contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research supervision, and critical revision of the manuscript. Muhammad Irvan Nur' Iva contributed to the research design, methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of the findings. Muhammad Luthfi Siraj contributed to the validation of the research, manuscript review, and editing.

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