RESEARCH PAPER

Understanding the Policy Stream in Local Food Policy: Explaining the Declining Rice Production in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze policy change in the regional food sector by applying the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) within the context of food development in Sidenreng Rappang Regency (Sidrap). Policy change in the food sector has become a critical issue amid growing challenges to regional food security. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Research informants included government officials, legislators, farmer organizations, and local stakeholders, complemented by interviews with farmer groups involved in the formulation and implementation of regional food policies. The findings indicate that policy change occurred through the interaction of Kingdon's three streams: the problem stream (climate change and production fluctuations), the policy stream (reform of food security programs and product diversification), and the political stream (political support and regional development agendas). These interactions opened a policy window that enabled the reformulation of local food policy. This study contributes to strengthening theoretical understanding of regional policy change and provides practical recommendations for improving sustainable food governance at the local level. In addition, technical feasibility and value compatibility with government preferences are found to be crucial factors in filtering policy alternatives, allowing only feasible and government-aligned ideas to advance onto the policy agenda.

Keywords: *Policy Change, Regional Food Policy, MSF, Policy Networks, Policy Momentum*

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INTRODUCTION

Public policy is essentially a government-driven process that aims to address social problems through regulation and management. As articulated by Thomas Dye, public policy encompasses how the government responds to public issues, as highlighted in the classic definition of public policy (Demir, 2021).

In a system of government that adheres to the principle of decentralization, regional public policy plays a crucial role as an instrument for managing various government affairs in accordance with local needs and potential. Regional autonomy, as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014, grants full authority to regional governments to regulate and manage government affairs. This delegation of authority enables regions to make more relevant, adaptive, and contextual policy changes, including in strategic sectors such as food. The food sector holds a vital position because it is directly related to national food security and sovereignty, as well as the welfare of local communities. Solving problems and meeting public needs is not an easy matter, as environmental changes are very rapid and difficult to predict, and community demands are increasingly complex (Alwi, 2022). One of the strategic sectors that requires the most policy attention at the regional level is the food sector. In this context, Sidenreng Rappang Regency is a relevant area for study.

Sidenreng Rappang (Sidrap) in South Sulawesi province is known as one of the national food barns, contributing significantly through rice and secondary crop production. However, the region's staple food supply remains heavily dependent on rice production, which accounts for the largest proportion of total agricultural output. This dependency poses significant challenges, particularly in the face of changing consumption patterns and the risk of crop failure.

The development of paddy production in Sidenreng Rappang Regency can be seen in table 1 below:

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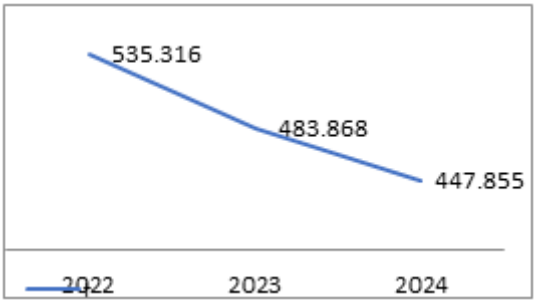
Figure 1. Rice Crop Production in Sidenreng Rappang Regency 2022-2024



Source: Central Statistics Agency of Sidrap Regency (2025)

Table 1 shows that rice production levels in Sidenreng Rappang Regency fluctuate. There was a decline in production from 2017 to 2020, followed by an increase in 2021 and 2022. However, rice production again experienced a significant decline in 2023 and 2024. This situation indicates the need for policy adjustments by the local government to respond more adaptively and sustainably to the dynamics of agricultural productivity.

Based on the results of the researcher's preliminary study, the decline in rice production in Sidenreng Rappang Regency is caused by several factors, including:

1. Inappropriate distribution of subsidized fertilizer,
2. Minimal agricultural modernization, with the majority of farmers still relying on traditional methods, resulting in stagnant land productivity,
3. Stable food prices are also a challenge. This situation is exacerbated by poorly managed local food reserves, leaving village-level food security vulnerable to production fluctuations due to natural disasters or seasonal changes.
4. The impacts of climate change, such as erratic rainfall intensity and prolonged dry seasons, have led to crop failures in several regions.
5. Furthermore, the conversion of productive land to non-agricultural uses continues to increase, reducing strategic agricultural areas.

These five factors reinforce the need for more adaptive and responsive policies to maintain regional food security. Furthermore, local food reserves at the village level are still not optimally managed, making food security in Sidrap vulnerable to production fluctuations caused by external factors. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Sidenreng Rappang Regency (2024), harvested land area decreased by 2.85% from 89,088.44 hectares to 86,548.69 hectares in the past two years. These conditions reinforce the urgency for the local government to adjust policies to maintain local food security.

Table 1. Rice Planting Area in Sidenreng Rappang Regency in 2022-2024

No	Year	Hectare (Ha)
1.	2022	90.652
2.	2023	89.088
3.	2024	86.548

Source: Central Statistics Agency of Sidrap Regency (2025)

Table 2 shows that the harvested rice area in Sidenreng Rappang Regency has significantly decreased. In 2020, the harvested rice area was 88,296 hectares, and in 2022 it increased to 90,652 hectares. This decrease continued in 2023 and 2024, leaving only 86,548 hectares. This decrease is due to the conversion of productive agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, such as residential buildings, public facilities, and industry. Land conversion, particularly in rice paddies, has led to a decline in food production capacity. This decline not only reflects technical challenges in agricultural management but also demands a more adaptive policy response to maintain regional food potential.

This issue requires adaptive policies that support food development. However, collaboration between the government, farmers, the private sector, and communities in food management has not been optimal, resulting in policy innovations often being hampered. Given these challenges, revising Regional Regulation No. 9 of 2015 concerning the Protection of Sustainable Food Agricultural Land is crucial. With more adaptive policies, it is hoped that regional food security will be maintained and the agricultural sector can develop sustainably. To systematically design these policy changes, in-depth studies are needed that can scientifically explain the policy change process. Policy change is the process by which governments or organizations modify, adapt, or update existing policies to respond to social, economic, political, or environmental dynamics. This process reflects a response to evolving societal needs and aims to increase the effectiveness and relevance of implemented policies.

Based on a literature search, no research with a title identical to the author's study was found. However, previous studies provide a relevant overview of policy change, which serves as a reference in identifying the novelty and originality of this research. By referencing several related journals, the author can emphasize the unique contribution of the research being conducted and ensure that this study does not replicate previous research but rather offers a new perspective in the field of policy change.

Research on policy change has been extensively conducted in various sectors, from education and the environment to migration. However, research specifically examining changes in food management policies at the regional level remains limited. As stated in Leiza Brumat's research article, this study adopts the Ideational Theory developed by Schmidt (2008), which highlights three dimensions: programmatic ideas, policy proposals, and public philosophy. Through this framework, ideational theory analyzes the process of formulating policy change (Brumat & Vera Espinoza, 2024). However, this study offers novelty by adopting the policy window theory as the primary approach in analyzing policy change. This theory provides a different perspective by emphasizing the importance of momentum in the policy change process. According to Kingdon (1995), a window of opportunity (policy window) opens when three main elements meet: the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream.

By understanding the interaction of these three streams in the context of Sidenreng Rappang Regency, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of policy change in the regional food management sector. Seizing the right policy momentum is key to creating more adaptive and sustainable policies. This perspective has not been widely discussed in previous research, thus this study can enrich the literature on policy change processes, particularly at the regional level. The focus of this research is policy changes related to regulations that influence food development in Sidenreng Rappang Regency. Various current phenomena indicate food issues that require serious attention from the regional government. One such indication is the results of the Food Coordination Meeting (Rakor) in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, which emphasized the need to strengthen community welfare programs through more comprehensive food policies.

In light of this, regional governments are required to formulate effective regulations for managing the food system to make it more sustainable and in favor of the community's interests. With appropriate and responsive policies, it is hoped that community welfare, particularly farmers, will improve and regional food security can be optimally maintained. Thus, this research has strong relevance in providing practical contributions to local governments, while also adding a theoretical perspective to public policy studies, particularly those related to regional food management. This demonstrates the urgency of this research. Therefore, the primary focus of this study is how policy changes occur when the three Multi-Stream streams converge.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach, focusing on analyzing the policy change in food policy in Sidrap Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The research design used is a case study. In the analysis process, the researcher utilized the policy change theory proposed by Kingdon (1995) by focusing on the flow of problems in the food management process through policies issued by the government in Sidrap Regency.

Data collection was conducted through observations and interviews with several informants, including the Head of the Sidenreng Rappang Regency Agriculture Service, Commission II for Agriculture of the Sidenreng Rappang Regency DPRD, Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Sidenreng Rappang Regency Farmers' Association, the Sidenreng Rappang Regency Food Crops, Horticulture, Plantation and Food Security Service. In addition, the researcher also collected various documents, including research results and other relevant documents, to enrich the analysis. The collected data were then analyzed using data analysis techniques proposed by Creswell (2018): Organizing and Preparing Data, Reading Through All Data, Coding the Data, and Interpreting the Meaning of Themes/Descriptions.

Results and Discussion

Problem streams, within the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), are understood as the initial stage in the policy change process, highlighting how various issues in the food sector in Sidenreng Rappang Regency are recognized, defined, and elevated to public policy. Researchers examine these variables to identify the sources and forms of problems that trigger the need for policy change. These issues include declining rice production, shrinking agricultural land area, inaccurate distribution of subsidized fertilizer, low agricultural modernization, and fluctuating grain prices. These issues prompted a shift in government attention, thus entering the formal policy agenda.

The concept of a problem in the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) is not simply about the occurrence of a problem but rather its perception as significant enough to warrant government intervention. This perception is shaped by empirical data, technical reports, public pressure, and the experiences of policy actors. The MSF, developed by John Kingdon, provides a lens for understanding how problems are framed and prioritized in policymaking. A similar point was made by Capano et al. (2025), who explained that within the problem stream, the problem stream functions not only as a source of ideas but also as an intermediary, framing public issues to attract the attention of policymakers and create opportunities for the issue to enter the political agenda. In the context of Sidenreng Rappang Regency, problem framing becomes stronger when field data shows negative trends and public pressure increases.

In line with the Multiple Streams Framework, identifying social or economic issues is crucial because it forms a problem stream, which must be recognized for policy change to occur. When focused events or feedback highlight these issues, they become perceived

as problematic by policymakers, creating opportunities for policy entrepreneurs to merge the problem stream with the political and policy streams. This coupling can lead to the opening of policy windows, facilitating the introduction and formulation of government policies that address the identified problems.

Based on research conducted in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, researchers found that policy changes in the food sector were initiated by various food-related issues. This was due not only to public pressure but also to political pressure, such as the change of regional head. This combination of public pressure and political momentum amplified the problem stream enough to trigger policy change, according to MSF.

Decline in rice production

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Sidenreng Rappang Regency shows that paddy rice production has decreased from 535,316 tons in 2022 to 483,868 tons in 2024. This information is supported by an interview with the Head of the Food Crops, Horticulture, Plantation and Food Security Service of Sidenreng Rappang Regency. To clarify the pattern of changes in production, the following graph of rice production development is presented as a visual illustration that shows a consistent decline over the past three years.

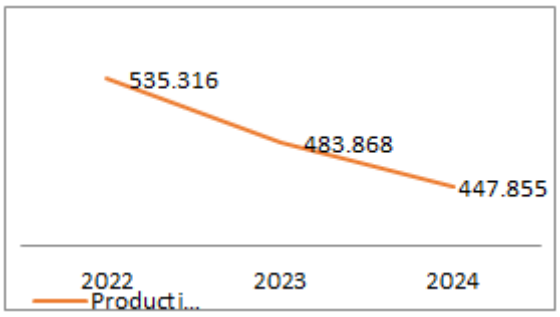


Figure 2. Rice Production Development (2022-2024)

Source: Central Statistics Agency of Sidrap Regency (2025)

These findings were reinforced by an interview with the Head of the Sidrap Regency Food Crops, Horticulture, Plantation, and Food Security Service, which indicated that climate change and development expansion have reduced the capacity of productive land. The problem stream views this situation as a significant concern in the food sector and can provide the basis for regional government policy changes. Informant IM - Head of the Sidrap Regency Food Security Service:

"Several factors causing a decline in rice production over the past three years due to climate change include a prolonged dry season, flooding in several areas, land conversion to housing, which has reduced agricultural land, and pest attacks in recent years." (November 3, 2025)

This aligns with research findings (Revayanti, 2025), which stated that climate change and the conversion of agricultural land into built-up areas significantly threaten agricultural productivity in Bekasi Regency. This situation is a critical concern for food security because it impacts food availability and sustainability. These findings can provide input for local governments as a basis for policy changes to improve food security and address challenges posed by environmental pollution and land-use change. Informant FQ – Bulo Village Farmer say:

"The decline in production over the past three years was caused by a prolonged dry season, flooding in several areas, and pest attacks, which resulted in significant losses. These conditions even made it difficult to recoup our capital." (November 4, 2025).

As stated by the informant, this situation indicates that the community is directly impacted by the decline in rice production, as the reduced harvest not only affects their income but also hinders farmers' ability to meet their farming needs in the following planting season. This raises concerns about the sustainability of production, especially for farmers who rely heavily on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods.

From a problem stream perspective within MSF, this decline in rice production is an indicator It is clear that serious disruptions have occurred in the food sector. Repeated and consistent declines in production indicate that previous policies have not been able to respond to changing environmental and socioeconomic dynamics. Therefore, this event increases the urgency for the government to evaluate and update its food policies.

LAND CONVERSION

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the harvested area of rice decreased from 90,652 hectares in 2022 to 89,088 hectares in 2023, and again to 86,548 hectares in 2024, a decrease of approximately 4.5% over two years. One of the main problems emerging in the agricultural sector in Sidenreng Rappang Regency is the increasing conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use. To clarify the pattern of changes in the planted area, a graph of the development of the rice planted area is presented in Figure 3.2 as a visual illustration showing a consistent downward trend over the past three years.

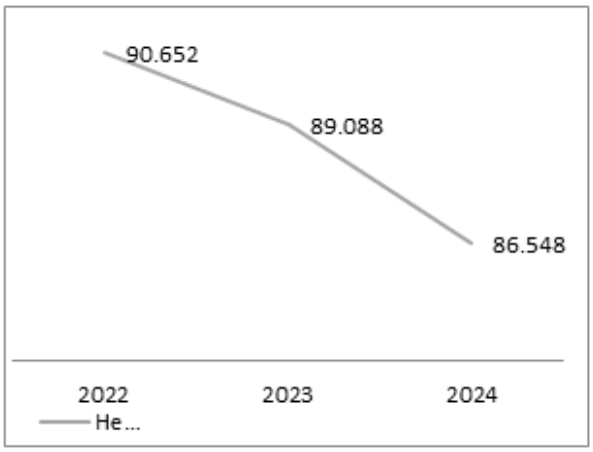


Figure 3. Rice Planting Area in Sidrap Regency

Source: Central Statistics Agency of Sidrap Regency (2025)

The decline in land area has resulted in significant land conversion. The primary cause of this land conversion is the increasing need for housing and public facilities, which has prompted some farmers to sell their agricultural land. This situation directly threatens the sustainability of regional food production and impacts long-term food security. Informant IM - Head of the Sidrap Regency Food Security Office

"In addition to land conversion for housing development, land reduction is also caused by flooding in several areas. As a preventative measure, we have attempted to add wetlands to help address this problem." (November 3, 2025)

An interview with the Head of the Sidrap Regency Food Security Office explained that the decline in production is not only caused by land conversion for housing development, but also by natural disasters such as frequent flooding in several areas. The local government's efforts to create and add wetlands are one response to this challenge. This measure aims to maintain agricultural production capacity and minimize the impact of the loss of productive land. However, this policy has not been fully effective in reducing the rate of land conversion, which continues to increase annually.

These findings align with the results of in-depth interviews with farmers in Maritenggae District. In Maritenggae, the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses has worsened production conditions. This is reinforced by the statement of one farmer who explained. Informant MT – Farmer, Kadidi Village

"Unlike other districts, the main problem we face is the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural areas." (November 5, 2025)

This reduction not only reduces the area of land available for agriculture but also impacts farmers' welfare and food security in the area. In line with the previous statement, the Agricultural Land Management Agency (BPP) also emphasized that land conversion not only reduces the area of productive land but also triggers changes in environmental conditions that directly impact agricultural activities. This was emphasized by the BPP, who stated. Informant HD – Sub-district BPP

"Land conversion, especially to built-up areas, changes the local hydrological structure. This condition causes flooding in some rice fields, while drought occurs in other areas." (November 5, 2025)

These findings indicate that unplanned non-agricultural development has disrupted the water balance in agricultural areas. Changes in surface water flow and reduced infiltration areas have resulted in some areas being inundated during the rainy season, while other areas no longer receive sufficient water supplies during the planting season. These hydrological impacts ultimately reduce productivity, hinder cropping patterns, and increase farmers' vulnerability to climate change and production uncertainty.

Similar findings have been found in various international studies, for example, in the Yangtze River Delta Urban Agglomeration (YRDUA), as shown by Duan et al., 2021. The impact of agricultural land degradation has resulted in a growing deficit, with a significant shortfall of 0.44 million hectares in 2000, which has worsened in subsequent years. Maintaining agricultural land is crucial to ensuring food self-sufficiency and promoting regional sustainability in this urban area. Therefore, efforts to protect and sustainably manage agricultural land are crucial in addressing this challenge, especially in areas experiencing rapid land conversion.

This phenomenon has attracted public and regional stakeholders' attention, as it concerns the sustainability of food resources and the well-being of farmers. Within the context of the multiple streams framework, this situation can be a significant event that can open a policy window and encourage policymakers to take immediate strategic action. Therefore, strong regulations, strict oversight, and sustained political commitment are needed to prevent uncontrolled land conversion in Sidenreng Rappang Regency.

Distribution of subsidized fertilizer is uneven and not on target

One important issue requiring attention in regional food management is the uneven and mistargeted distribution of subsidized fertilizer. The uneven and mistargeted distribution of subsidized fertilizer is a significant problem in regional food management, as it impacts agricultural productivity and economic equality. This phenomenon indicates inefficiencies in fertilizer utilization by farmers, which ultimately leads to low agricultural productivity. This problem is not solely a technical one, but is also closely related to policy

governance and distribution oversight systems at the regional level.

Rahmayanti (2023) found that the Farmer Card program in Sidenreng Rappang Regency has not been effective because its implementation has not been well-targeted, resulting in the subsidized fertilizer distribution mechanism not being implemented properly. Interviews with farmers and local NGOs revealed that misuse of subsidized fertilizer distribution remains common due to weak oversight of the Heads of Direct Retail Groups (KPL). Informant MT - Farmer from Kadidi Village

"Many farmers who are entitled to it are still not receiving fertilizer, while some are receiving more than the stipulated quota. The heads of Direct Retail Groups (KPL) sometimes operate unilaterally due to weak oversight from relevant agencies." (November 5, 2025)

Furthermore, the Head of the Food Security Division of Sidenreng Rappang Regency has taken steps to address this through monitoring and taking firm action against violators. Informant IM - Head of the Sidrap Regency Food Security Office:

"Regarding the uneven and inaccurate distribution of subsidized fertilizer, we have frequently conducted direct monitoring in the field, particularly at KPLs. We have also imposed sanctions in the form of dismissal on KPLs found to have abused their positions to prevent similar violations in the future." (November 3, 2025)

This statement demonstrates the local government's awareness and corrective actions to improve the governance of subsidized fertilizer distribution. However, the effectiveness of these monitoring policies still needs to be improved to ensure fair and targeted fertilizer distribution throughout Sidenreng Rappang Regency. Strong regulations and increased collaboration between local governments and communities are also needed to ensure transparency and accountability in the subsidized fertilizer distribution process. This collaboration will help create a more transparent and accountable system, ensuring better access to subsidized fertilizer for farmers. In line with Rahman et al.'s (2024) findings, subsidized fertilizer distribution in South Sulawesi faces challenges such as ineffective coordination, inadequate logistics, and weak oversight. To improve governance, it is crucial for local governments to enhance coordination among stakeholders, strengthen oversight and law enforcement, and improve logistics infrastructure. These corrective measures, along with intensive outreach and the use of information technology for monitoring, are crucial to ensuring equitable and targeted fertilizer distribution, especially in areas like Sidenreng Rappang Regency.

From the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) perspective, the issue of uneven and poorly targeted distribution of subsidized fertilizer is a strong indicator of a problem stream. This condition indicates the failure of previous policies to ensure equitable access to fertilizer for farmers, thus creating pressure on local governments to review instruments for changing existing policies.

Rice Price Fluctuations

Another challenge to food development in Sidenreng Rappang Regency is the unstable price fluctuations of unhusked rice throughout the planting season. Field findings indicate that unhusked rice prices are often unstable and tend to decline during the peak harvest season, while production and labor costs incurred by farmers continue to rise. This situation leads to declining profit margins and even frequent losses. The lack of government intervention, particularly in the form of binding regulations to maintain stable unhusked rice prices, whether through strengthening supporting institutions like Bulog or regional food reserve policies, leaves farmers in a vulnerable position in the market chain. Informant JM – Bulo Village Farmer

"The price of unhusked rice often experiences a significant drop during the main harvest. We are forced to sell quickly because we lack storage space, while fertilizer and labor costs are increasingly expensive. Often, the harvest is not enough to cover our capital." (November 4, 2025)

This statement illustrates that fluctuating unhusked rice prices are a serious problem faced by farmers in Sidenreng Rappang Regency. Price instability severely weakens farmers' bargaining power, often incurring losses even when production is running smoothly. In line with the view of Bunyamin et al., 2023, price instability undermines farmers' bargaining power, causing significant losses even when production is successful, but can also reduce their welfare. From an agricultural economic perspective, significant price fluctuations without stabilization measures can hinder the sustainability of agricultural enterprises and reduce farmers' motivation to engage in production in subsequent seasons. This indicates that price issues not only impact farmers' incomes but also affect their household food security. Therefore, a consistent pricing policy is needed to prevent price-fixing practices that are detrimental to farmers by traders and rice millers.

For regional food security, prices Unpredictable agricultural production can disrupt farmers' access to food resources, both directly through the use of their own harvests and indirectly through reduced purchasing power. Consequently, price fluctuations have the potential to exacerbate socio-economic disparities in rural areas. The lack of government intervention in maintaining stable grain prices indicates that food issues in Sidenreng Rappang Regency are not solely related to production, but also to distribution, marketing, and pricing policies. Therefore, grain price fluctuations can be positioned as a crucial component of the problem stream, requiring more comprehensive and long-term policies.

However, several key issues in the problem stream have not been addressed in Regent Regulation Number 17 of 2025. This indicates that the regulation only partially addresses the existing problems. In the context of Multiple According to the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), this situation reflects the importance of aligning the problem stream and the policy stream, where the issue of fluctuating grain prices must be addressed through robust policy solutions.

The existence of strong regulations can ensure the sustainability of collaboration between local governments and the private sector. Furthermore, these regulations can serve as a legal framework for price intervention mechanisms, such as establishing a floor price for grain or a price subsidy scheme, which aims to maintain a balance between farmer interests and local market stability. These regulations serve as a bridge for sustainable cooperation between local governments and the private sector and ensure stable grain prices at the farm level. With an integrated policy approach, it is hoped that the issue of fluctuating grain prices in Sidenreng Rappang Regency can be managed more effectively, thereby supporting overall regional food security.

Therefore, after the issue of fluctuating grain prices in Sidenreng Rappang Regency is recognized as part of the problem stream, the next step in the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) is to analyze alternative solutions emerging within the policy stream.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the food sector faces significant pressure due to a series of interrelated issues. The consistent decline in rice production is caused by prolonged drought, flooding, pest attacks, and the increasingly widespread conversion of agricultural land to residential areas. The distribution of subsidized fertilizer also shows inaccurate targeting due to weak KPL (Ministry of Agriculture) oversight, while limited infrastructure and low agricultural modernization worsen productivity. Furthermore, unstable rice prices place farmers in a weak bargaining position and increase economic vulnerability. These issues form a strong problem stream and confirm that previous policies are no longer able to address the dynamics on the ground.

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