INCLUSIVENESS OF ACTORS IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) AGENDA: THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of the West Java Provincial Government in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as a form of inclusiveness of actors within the framework promoted by this agenda. The issue raised in this study is how subnational actors, particularly provincial governments, can contribute to bridging global interests with local needs, as well as how their institutional capacity influences this process. To answer this question, the study uses a global governance framework to analyse the dynamics of subnational actors' involvement in SDG implementation, examining it through a governance activity matrix. Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis, drawing on literature studies and reviews of policy documents related to the implementation of the SDGs in West Java. The findings show that through the global governance perspective, subnational actors possess the capacity to actively participate and make significant contributions to achieving the SDGs through policy integration that reflects both global and national sustainability interests, while also being relevant to the local context. However, the dispersed nature of the relationship between levels has created several gaps, particularly in certain SDG goals, reflecting the complexity of coordination and the challenges in implementation.

Keywords: Global Governance; Indonesia; SDGs; Subnational; West Java;

Introduction

Since its launch by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda has become an ambitious global framework for promoting sustainable development. As an international organisation with coordinating capacity and normative legitimacy, the UN plays a central role in coordinating various actors with a shared goal orientation. In this context, the UN has become a focal point for connecting multiple actors involved in global governance, including states, international and regional organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), epistemic communities, and businesses (Thakur & Weiss, 2009).

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs not only affirm 17 interrelated goals but also explicitly highlight the importance of governance aspects, accompanied by more comprehensive implementation mechanisms (Alisjahbana & Murniningtyas, 2018). The challenge of implementing sustainable development, which involves various levels of governance, has been highlighted in Agenda 21, the outcome of the 1992 Earth Summit, because each level faces specific issues that require different approaches (Rydz-Żbikowska, 2012). These multi-level governance challenges remain relevant to the SDGs agenda, where universal global goals still require adjustments in their implementation.

The SDGs framework presents a new form of adjustment by promoting global governance through goals that emphasize four essential characteristics. First, the SDGs are non-legally binding, meaning there is no legal obligation to incorporate these goals into national legal systems. Second, the SDGs are governed by weak institutional arrangements at the international level. This refers to the absence of legal authority, formal UN status, dispute resolution, or enforcement of rules. Third, the SDGs are inclusive, involving a number of state and non-state actors in the formulation and implementation of the goals. Finally, the SDGs offer governments flexibility in interpreting and implementing their goals, providing a level of leeway (Biermann et al., 2017; Vijge et al., 2020).

Through these characteristics, the paradigm shift in the global development agenda provides more room for flexibility in implementing the SDGs, not only by adopting global goals but also by translating them into relevant action plans through the identification of challenges and priorities. This is crucial in the context of current global challenges, where

no issue can be resolved with a one-size-fits-all or top-down approach. Instead, this shift towards a bottom-up approach is the result of a refinement process of the previous, more centralistic MDGs agenda.

In this regard, Keohane & Nye (2000) offer a concept, in the form of a nine-cell matrix, to look at governance activities that operate as part of a network. Actors, through their activities, help create the spread of power, transparency, and deadlock that plague international organizations. Through this concept, concrete actions related to the SDGs at various levels—global, national, and local—can be more clearly identified in an actor-focused analysis. This foundation opens up space for broader analysis of how SDGs are studied in an academic context.

In International Relations studies, previous studies related to SDGs have been reviewed from various perspectives. Through the use of a matrix, Morita et al. (2020) analyzed national and local governance systems in relation to the SDGs in general, with case studies in Japan and Indonesia. The interrelationships between levels of governance affect the differences in the implementation of SDGs in the two countries. Agussalim et al. (2018 state in their research that the implementation of the SDGs in Indonesia is on track, in the sense that the process is running in line with global goals. He states that SDGs are best viewed as a multi-level development process that takes place at the local, national, and global levels.

Alisjahbana (2018) examines the readiness of Provincial Governments in Indonesia in realizing the SDGs. Through the assumption of a "*business-as-usual*" scenario, the strengths and weaknesses of each province can be identified, referring to the targets and indicators set by the SDGs. The successful implementation of the SDGs at the national level is highly dependent on the extent to which local governments can integrate this global agenda. In this regard, local governments are key actors in the SDGs framework. Furthermore, Rizki et al. (2022) conducted research on the Regional Action Plan (RAD) in West Nusa Tenggara Province in light of the human security concept. The study highlighted how regional development planning can integrate a human security approach.

These previous studies have provided significant direction in understanding various aspects of the SDGs. However, there are still research gaps that can be addressed for further analysis. In the view of Biermann et al. (2017), the SDGs approach that emphasizes governance through goals raises critical questions about how these goals are

incorporated and integrated into existing global governance structures. This approach also encourages questions about the impact of these goals on other governance systems. Furthermore, Llanos et al. (2022 state that there is still a limited understanding of the real impact of the SDGs on national and subnational socio-political systems.

From the perspective of global governance, provincial governments are positioned as key actors in the network of collective SDG efforts. To understand this, one must first comprehend the dynamics among actors in the network—both those embedded within the government and those outside it—as they interact within a context of rapidly changing norms (Keohane & Nye, 2000). Practical governance activities at the subnational level can lead to transformative change, raising awareness and demonstrating the importance of the SDGs to local communities. This level also serves as a liaison with national authorities while establishing relationships with civil society organizations, the private sector (including micro, small, and medium enterprises), and academic institutions in the process of implementing the SDGs(Global Taskforce, 2016). Therefore, the SDGs approach that emphasizes multi-level integration places local governments as participatory actors, but also as strategic actors who directly face various challenges.

In this article, the selection of West Java Province, Indonesia, as a case study is considered relevant for examining how the global agenda interacts with local dynamics. The focus on the subnational level is based on two primary considerations. First, within the framework of global governance, the implementation of global agendas, such as the SDGs, requires connectivity between global agendas, national policies, and local government capacities. Provincial governments will act as coordinators for each city in their region. Second, Indonesia's decentralization system grants broad autonomy to local governments, including in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies.

Departing from the strategic role of the subnational level as a manifestation of the SDGs' principle of inclusiveness, this level requires special attention. This position raises significant research questions about how the process of localizing the SDGs takes place, particularly in terms of policy formulation and implementation. Furthermore, how institutional capacity gaps can affect the effectiveness of this agenda. Thus, an examination of the dynamics of the SDGs at this level is essential to assess the extent to

which the principle of inclusiveness is operationalized within the framework of global collective efforts.

The process of localizing the SDGs cannot be separated from the specific context inherent in their objectives. Further exploration of specific SDG goals can illustrate how the global agenda is translated into local priorities and capacities. In this case, the author will examine how Goal 12, which promotes responsible consumption and production practices, is implemented. At the same time, the operationalization of the global governance framework inherent in the SDGs can be observed more concretely through the dynamics that occur.

As a descriptive and analytical framework, the concept of global governance opens up research opportunities on the processes and strategies of collective action that continue to evolve in character. Studies on these patterns of governance help explain the dynamics of political structures (Sugiono, 2005). This connection is relevant to the SDGs, where global norms are interpreted and adapted by actors with different capacities, resources, and interests. Therefore, its novelty lies in how SDG studies can reveal new patterns of governance that are more inclusive and multi-level than those found in previous global governance frameworks.

Theoretical Framework
Global Governance

As a concept, the uniqueness of global governance lies in its perspective that emphasizes cross-level interconnectedness as a lens for understanding global interactions. What happens at one level can have a broad impact on other levels (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2023). Unlike the era of statism, which placed the state as the sole dominant actor, contemporary global governance occurs at various levels—global, regional, national, provincial, and local—that interact with one another (Sugiono, 2005). Within the framework of the SDGs, this dynamic is reflected in the role of subnational governments, such as West Java Province, which is connected to Indonesia's national policies. Before discussing this role further, it is essential first to examine the concept of global governance as a foundation.

The concept of global governance becomes increasingly relevant as a means to create a common solution, especially in light of the global dynamics that today reflect the complexity of a world that is becoming increasingly connected and interdependent. The

term 'global' refers to everything that happens around the world, in contrast to the word 'international', which has a limited scope (Weiss, 2013). Meanwhile, 'governance' refers to a form of social regulatory mechanism that does not necessarily rely on hierarchical structures and orders, but instead on horizontal self-organization and negotiation. In this case, negotiations occur within a social system that involves multiple levels (Bainus & Rachman, 2022).

By definition, global governance is a collective effort to recognize, understand, or address global problems that individual countries cannot solve. In other words, global governance encompasses a combination of values, rules, norms, procedures, practices, policies, and organizations that are both informal and formal, aimed at creating desired order, stability, and predictability at the global level (Weiss, 2013). Meanwhile, Karns et al. (2015 state that global governance is sometimes used as another term for international organizations. However, the term is more often used to describe the complexity and changing nature of various joint efforts by states and various non-state actors to identify, understand, and solve multiple problems in today's unpredictable world.

According to Weiss & Wilkinson (2023), global governance, in terms of scale, encompasses all the formal and informal ways in which the world is managed. The growing recognition of transnational challenges that constrain state capacity, combined with the increasing involvement of non-state actors in addressing national gaps, is prompting new approaches. This shift encourages alternative strategies to address global challenges. Related to this explanation, it reflects new ways of managing international relations that do not only rely on states as the leading actors, but also involve various other stakeholders, such as non-state actors. Therefore, global governance encompasses not only its various forms but also the numerous actors involved.

Basically, the various actors in global governance are interconnected, not isolated. They have different roles, levels of power, authority, and effectiveness. This condition leads to complementary cooperation in achieving common goals. However, on the other hand, there is also competition for influence for legitimacy (Karns et al., 2015). The development of a global governance system that is post-national is governance that takes place in various layers at multiple levels, ranging from local to provincial, national, regional, and international. Each of these levels is interconnected with its own

perspectives and logics (Sugiono, 2005). Thus, understanding each actor in global governance depends on how governance activities are carried out at each level.

Figure 1 - *Governance* activities

	Private	Governmental	Third sector
Supranational	TNCs	IGOs	NGOs
National	Firms	Central	Nonprofits
Subnational	Local	Local	Local

Source: Keohane & Nye (2000).

In this regard, Keohane & Nye (2000) created a matrix to illustrate how various actors in global governance operate at different levels —supranational, national, and subnational—as well as in three main sectors: private, governmental, and third sector (civil). These actors can help create or exacerbate problems with the spread of power, transparency, and gridlock in international organisations. However, they can play a key role in governance, often working as part of a network. Particularly on the governmental side, government subunits can also take on independent or semi-independent roles.

Within this framework, the West Java provincial government acts as a subnational actor in the governmental sector, serving as an important link between the global agenda and local implementation. As part of Indonesia's decentralised system, provincial governments have strategic authority to adapt national policies in line with global commitments, including the SDGs. Thus, the SDG mechanism is not centralised in a single authority, but operates among various actors to enable collective action with adjustments according to the local context. This confirms that the subnational level is a crucial arena for global governance focused on sustainable development.

As global issues become increasingly complex and interdependent, public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships have emerged as a new governance mechanism, driven by the hope of overcoming collective action failures amid rapid changes in the Earth's systems and society. The term "partnership" can encompass various possible forms of arrangements among initiatives from the public, private, and civil society sectors (Andonova et al., 2022). This concept has long been used in domestic affairs, but has only recently gained attention at the international level, particularly with the increasing role of non-state actors, who in the literature of international relations are seen as potential

partners of governments within the framework of global governance. Some authors argue that private actors can help find solutions and encourage public actors to be more open to dialogue and consensus (Korab-Karpowicz, 2020).

The use of the general term 'partnership' allows us to analyze governance arrangements involving actors from at least two different scales and sectors (Andonova et al., 2022). According to Jullia Steets, partnerships in global governance can be more or less institutionalised (Hamchi & Rebiai, 2014). This means that alliances do not always take a rigid form, but can be flexible depending on the issues raised. This flexibility not only enables innovation in governance mechanisms but also facilitates more involvement for a variety of actors with diverse interests.

Methods

This research employs qualitative methods to understand how subnational positions influence the implementation of the SDGs, drawing on a review of the concept of global governance. With this approach, the researcher aims to explore the flows that influence the implementation of the SDGs in Indonesia at the subnational level in West Java, with a focus on the interrelated framework of their governance activities. In this article, the author employs a qualitative research method that is tailored to the suitability of the topic at hand. This method aims to understand social activities and processes, focusing on the meaning and understanding of the surrounding world, particularly in international relations, through in-depth study of specific events, phenomena, regions, countries, organizations, or individuals (Bakry, 2019).

Strategies for collecting qualitative data in International Relations studies include several ways. The data collection in this article is conducted using the research technique of document analysis, specifically, external documents. These documents include official information materials produced by institutions, which include publications, reports, and news content (Moleong, 2019). These documents include policy decision letters, action plan publications, and annual reports on their impact related to the SDGs. This data collection is conducted through mapping of various sources, focusing on institutions or agencies that have the authority to implement the SDGs.

At the national level, data were obtained from institutions such as the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), which compiles policy frameworks and

national achievement reports. Meanwhile, at the subnational level in West Java Province, similar data were obtained from the Provincial Development Planning Agency (Bappeda). Based on this, the author triangulated the data by checking other sources as an effort to verify the data that had been collected. This source triangulation technique aims to re-examine the degree of trustworthiness of the information obtained (Moleong, 2019). Moreover, the development of data is very dynamic, often undergoing frequent updates.

Results and Discussion

As a continuation of the MDGs previously launched in 2000, the SDGs aim to cover all dimensions of sustainable development. The MDGs themselves are considered less comprehensive because they do not cover all dimensions of sustainable development and are more focused on achieving sectoral targets without considering inter-sectoral linkages. Fukuda-Parr (2023 states that the SDGs are the first agenda to establish sustainability and inclusiveness as the primary goals of development. Meanwhile, its implementation is designed to be multi-stakeholder and decentralized, marking a significant shift from previous UN agendas that were more state-centered in the context of post-colonial global governance.

In this regard, the global governance, characterized by goal-setting, of the SDGs is not specific to a particular type of governance. It is therefore viewed as a new approach to steering and a distinct institutional arrangement (Biermann et al., 2017). The four characteristics of the SDGs —non-legally binding, weak institutional arrangements, inclusiveness, and national leeway —also indirectly influence the role of the subnational level in the implementation process of this development agenda. In short, each level has complementary roles and contributions—the global level drives multilateral policies and frameworks, the national level translates them into strategies and policies, while the local level spearheads implementation and innovation on the ground.

In the study of International Relations, SDGs can be viewed through the concept of global governance. Unlike the concept of international regimes, the scope of global governance is not centered on just one level, namely the state. Still, it encompasses various levels — from global to local — which are interconnected and interacting. This reflects a global political order that is multi-level or multi-layered governance, which

involves actors outside the public sector as well. Therefore, actions taken at any level can have reverberating effects in other areas or levels (Sugiono, 2004, 2005; Weiss & Wilkinson, 2023).

In this context, there are two essential aspects to the concept of global governance: first, as a mechanism that provides guidance for the global development agenda through its characteristics, and second, as an analytical review of the dynamics and interactions between actors involved in decision-making processes related to global issues. In international relations studies, global governance is understood as both a descriptive and analytical framework, although the conflation of the two terms 'global' and 'governance' is not always evident; they form a powerful practical tool as well as a theoretical model (Bainus & Rachman, 2022; Sugiono, 2004).

Agussalim et al. (2018)noted that the characteristics of the multi-level approach inherent in the SDGs can also be applied to the decentralization process experienced by Indonesia since 1998. This decentralization policy has provided a significant role for local governments in the process of formulating and implementing development policies. In relation to this view, the legal basis for decentralization can be traced back to Law No. 22/1999 on Regional Government, which was amended by Law No. 23 of 2014. The provisions of this law complement the implementation of SDGs at the subnational level.

Returning to the concept of global governance, the dynamics that occur between each level provide space for involvement in the institutionalization of the SDGs, which in turn offers the opportunity to develop local adaptive capacity. Therefore, the implementation of the SDGs is not only a top-down process, but also involves variations in national and subnational contexts, incorporating global goals into development planning (Agussalim et al., 2018). In this context, development planning becomes an effort that emphasizes integration with one another by paying attention to the interconnectedness between levels, so that the implementation of the SDGs can be adjusted to local needs and capacities without ignoring global commitments.

The central government acts as a general policy maker and technical support provider. In contrast, local governments have the autonomy to adjust the implementation of SDGs programs to local needs and priorities. This process reflects one of the characteristics of the SDGs, namely national leeway, which provides flexibility for each country to adjust to its respective capacities and needs. A global development agenda that

overlooks national contexts can lead to inequitable outcomes. As highlighted by several researchers, standardized performance benchmarks can disadvantage countries with different levels of development. The experience with the MDGs is a reminder that without adapting goals to local conditions, the effectiveness of global initiatives can be compromised (Vijge et al., 2020).

Implementation at the Subnational Level (West Java)

The involvement and position of subnational in the global governance framework have been previously discussed, particularly in relation to the matrix presented by Keohane & Nye. However, their role as part of a collective effort remains incompletely described. In Weiss & Wilkinson's (2023) view, the global governance framework encompasses more than just interactions between states — although these remain a key component. Global governance also encompasses how global policy decisions are shaped and implemented at the local level, how local actions influence global dynamics, and the complex relationships among the various institutions, stakeholders, and mechanisms that operate at all levels.

Although states are traditionally seen as the leading actors in global governance, this perspective is increasingly challenged by the active participation of subnational entities such as provincial, state, and local governments. Their ability to operate independently highlights the growing complexity and multi-layered nature of global governance (Karns et al., 2015). The participation of local governments shows that responsibility for managing global issues is not limited to national governments or international organizations. Therefore, local governments are an integral part of an increasingly decentralized and inclusive global governance architecture.

The role at the subnational level is inseparable from the dynamics and policy directions at the previous levels, namely the national and global levels. These levels are interconnected in a complex governance network, where decisions and policies at the global level can influence national strategies, which are then translated and implemented at the subnational level. In this regard, the implementation in West Java cannot be separated from the processes that occur at the national level, which originate from the policy direction set by the central government. This process illustrates how global agendas, such as the SDGs, are gradually being integrated.

As a follow-up to the Presidential Regulation on implementing the SDGs, implementing the agenda at the subnational level is a strategic step in ensuring the success of the sustainable development agenda at the local level. Local governments play a crucial role in designing policies and programs that are tailored to the region's characteristics and the needs of local communities. The West Java Provincial Government responded by issuing the Governor Regulation (Pergub) of West Java Province Number 18 of 2018 concerning the Regional Action Plan (RAD) of West Java Province Regional SDGs 2018-2023. Related to the flow of development planning that runs at various levels, it is important to ensure integration between planning at the national and regional levels.

Through the regulation, the West Java Provincial Government established the SDGs Implementation Coordination Team. This team consists of three components, namely the steering team, the implementation team, and the working group. The governor, as the highest leader at the provincial level, acts as the chair of the steering committee. At the same time, the head of the West Java Provincial Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) leads the implementation team. Furthermore, working groups are formed based on the SDG development pillars and are led by department heads and secretaries within the Bappeda of West Java Province (Pemprov Jabar, 2018). This process is referred to as localizing the SDGs, which opens up space for the implementation of the SDGs from the bottom (Global Taskforce, 2016).

Related to the flow of development planning that runs at various levels, it is essential to ensure integration between planning at the national and subnational levels. In the West Java RAD SDGs, the points of alignment between Nawa Cita, SDGs, and the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) are presented. For information, Nawa Cita is a national development priority agenda for the 2014-2019 period, which also coincides with the adoption of SDGs in Indonesia. Regarding Nawa Cita, the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), and the SDGs, there are no significant contradictions in the substantive dimension; however, there are minor differences in the technical dimension, particularly related to the categorization of issues and sectoral focus (UNDP Indonesia, 2015).

Furthermore, there is a strong convergence between the SDGs and Nawa Cita, indicating that the 2030 Agenda is not just a foreign goal, but is aligned with and even reinforces national development priorities. This allows for easier and more effective

integration of the SDGs into the national development agenda (UNDP Indonesia, 2015). The linkage between the two levels will serve as a reference for provincial governments in formulating regional development priorities, ensuring their implementation runs synergistically from the central to the local level. Subnational or provincial governments, which have a semi-independent role in the global governance framework, can adjust the agenda to the level above.

To determine the alignment between Nawa Cita, the SDGs, RPJMD, and West Java's development priorities, the following can be observed.

Figure 2 - Global, National and Subnational Development Agendas

No	SDGs	Nawa Cita	RPJMD	Calon Prioritas Pembangunan 2018-2023
1	Tujuan 3,10,16 dan 17	Nawa Cita 1	Common Goals 9	Prioritas 1
2	Tujuan 16	Nawa Cita 2	Common Goals 10	Prioritas 8
3	Tujuan 1-11	Nawa Cita 3	Common Goals 3, 9 dan 10	Prioritas 1,2,3,5 dan 6
4	Tujuan 16	Nawa Cita 4	Common Goals 10	Prioritas 8
5	Tujuan 1-6	Nawa Cita 5	Common Goals 1, 2, 8 dan 9	Prioritas 5 dan 6
6	Tujuan 1-7	Nawa Cita 6	Common Goals 5	Prioritas 3 dan 4
7	Tujuan 1–4, 8, 9 dan 12	Nawa Cita 7	Common Goals 3, 4, dan 6	Prioritas 3 dan 4
8	Tujuan 3,4 dan 11	Nawa Cita 8	Common Goals 7	Prioritas 7
9	Tujuan 5, 10, 16 dan 17	Nawa Cita 9	Common Goals 7	Prioritas 7

Source: Pemprov Jabar (2018).

To align with the SDGs, local priorities should be set by reviewing existing programs, identifying key needs, and ensuring that they are locally owned and inclusive of all stakeholders, including minority and vulnerable groups (Global Taskforce, 2016). In line with this explanation, West Java's prospective development priorities for the 2018-2023 period have been aligned with pre-existing global, national, and subnational agendas in an effort to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, the direction of regional development policies is not only aligned with national interests but can also support the achievement of global targets. The four agendas then become strategic guidelines in the process of integrating SDGs in development at the subnational level.

During the 2018–2023 period, in accordance with the West Java RAD SDGs, the Provincial Government has routinely compiled annual reports on the progress of SDGs implementation. These reports contain developments on all SDG goals, reviews of indicator status data, and brief explanations based on the provisions of the RAD SDGs. Furthermore, the West Java Provincial Government also conveys policy directions for achieving the SDG goals based on development pillars, along with strategies to be implemented. The development of these reports reflects a bottom-up approach, in which achievements and challenges at the subnational level serve as the basis for formulating recommendations and future policy adjustments.

Although the policy review indicates alignment between the various levels, some issues impact the effectiveness of achieving the SDG targets. The adoption of SDG targets from the global to the local level shows a tendency to decrease in intensity or coverage at each level. For example, in Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), of the eleven global targets, six can be implemented at the national level. In contrast, at the subnational level, particularly in West Java, only three targets can be implemented (Bappeda West Java, 2019). The phenomenon of reduced SDG coverage suggests adjustments and improvements in institutional capacity among actors.

Regarding the achievement of each SDG goal, referring to the SDG implementation report for West Java for the 2018–2023 period, it shows that the data on the achievement of specific targets is not yet complete (blank). The situation needs to be viewed in a contextual manner, especially since each SDG goal has its own implementation mechanism and data collection method. For example, the absence of data on Goal 12 in the West Java annual report reflects a problem of synchronization in the management of sustainable development information. Nationally, target 12.4 is under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), which is the main party responsible for implementing Goal 12. However, at the provincial level, this authority lies with the West Java Environment Agency (DLH), which has an operational mandate for data collection and reporting.

Progress toward this goal has yielded specific achievements, but the division of authority has created gaps that reflect the characteristics of global governance, which extends across various levels. The risk of neglecting aspects such as data synchronization, coordination barriers, and capacity limitations is inevitable. Technocratically, this issue

has actually been anticipated through policies and institutional instruments that have been developed. However, practices in the field often show a gap between planning and actual implementation, especially in relation to the supporting capacity of provincial governments. In addition, it should also be emphasized that each SDG goal has its own characteristics, in terms of the complexity of the issues, achievement indicators, and the involvement of different regional agencies.

As Goal 12 emphasizes the importance of sustainable consumption and production patterns, its implementation does not only depend on the governmental sector. Still, it is also closely related to the activities of the private sector. This requires a genuine commitment and active involvement from the business world, particularly companies operating in sectors with significant environmental impacts. Corporate participation is crucial because companies play a substantial role as actors in the field, directly determining production, distribution, and consumption practices. As a result, their strategic decisions can either accelerate or hinder the achievement of sustainability targets. At this point, the alignment between the social, economic, and environmental dimensions promoted by the SDGs is put to the test.

This pattern of horizontal interaction is still sporadic. When non-state actors implement initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs, these efforts are not yet aligned with the development priorities of the regions where governance activities occur. This synchronization is essential so that programs do not merely follow the global framework normatively, but must also be able to adapt to real local needs. Thus, the involvement of non-state actors not only strengthens the legitimacy of the SDG implementation process but also ensures that the resulting impact is more relevant to the specific context of the region.

Local governments have more scope to build relationships with various actors. In this context, partnerships, especially international ones, are an important instrument that can strengthen local capacity. Partnerships are a strategic means for local governments to access resources and knowledge relevant to sustainable development needs in their regions. The question of the extent to which these partnerships can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs at the subnational level is an interesting aspect to explore in greater depth.

Within the framework of global governance, partnerships for sustainability are understood as voluntary agreements involving public actors, including national, local, and regional governments, as well as non-state actors. This direct collaboration is aimed at achieving common goals that are clearly oriented toward the public interest. Partnerships can also influence existing complex systems while being influenced by them simultaneously (Andonova et al., 2022). In practice, partnerships can be formed in specific sectors such as the economy, education, and the environment, as well as in various fields simultaneously. Thus, partnerships have the potential to be responsive to the challenges of sustainable development and to strengthen more inclusive global governance.

One of the partnerships run by the West Java Provincial Government is a collaboration with Monash University from Australia through the Citarum Action Research Program (CARP). This partnership focuses on sustainable management and restoration of the environmental quality of the Citarum River, involving epistemic communities, local communities, and other organizations to integrate research, policy, and field action. This partnership is one of eight foreign institutions that have established relationships with the province of West Java. In short, this partnership covers research, capacity building, human resources, and technology development for the revitalization of the Citarum River Basin in West Java (Pemprov Jabar, 2018).

This partnership began with the virtual signing of a Letter of Intent (LoI) between Ridwan Kamil, Governor of West Java, and Abid Khan, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Global Engagement) of Monash University. Abid Khan emphasized that Monash's transdisciplinary research experience in social and environmental transformation, supported by the commitment of the Indonesian government and academics, will encourage the creation of innovative solutions to sustainable development challenges (Citarum Harum, 2021; Monash University, 2021a). The next stage of the process was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was carried out officially, witnessed directly by representatives of Monash University, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Chair of Commission I of the West Java Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) (Citarum Harum, 2023).

Regarding Goal 12, the CARP program is listed in Monash University's 2020 Progress Report on the Sustainable Development Goals under the Engagement category.

Throughout 2020, the team focused on mapping challenges in the Citarum river basin, establishing partnerships with the government, academics, and local communities, while also preparing funding proposals to implement the program (Monash University, 2021). On one occasion, the author received an explanation from the Bappeda of West Java Province that the partnership was not explicitly aimed at supporting the achievement of the SDGs, as it was not directly bound by the targets and indicators set by the West Java Provincial Government. However, it was also emphasized that such initiatives could still be viewed as supportive efforts, as they contributed to the creation of a collaborative ecosystem and strengthened regional capacity in responding to sustainable development challenges.

This opens up the possibility that existing partnerships have different perceptions of the SDG framework. These differences are understandable given the diversity of actors in global governance, whose interests and orientations are not always aligned in detail. Referring to this dynamic, it can also be seen that the achievement of Goal 12 in general through these partnerships is indeed real, although it is not formally recorded. When this is not integrated, these achievements can still be included as additional contributions, for example, through the West Java SDGs annual implementation report, so that they are still recognized as part of collective efforts towards sustainable development. In this case, the West Java DLH, as the leading authority responsible for Goal 12, has a role to ensure that each of these achievements is documented and linked to the official agenda of the local government.

However, the partnership between the West Java Provincial Government and Monash University indirectly opens up opportunities for broader involvement. The Victorian Government of Australia provided a grant through the Study Melbourne Research Partnerships program run by VESKI to support CARP in establishing a living lab to address pollution in the Citarum River in West Java. This grant is part of $2.8 million in funding to strengthen international research collaboration (Monash University, 2021b). The involvement of the Australian state government can be seen as an effort to establish relations with Southeast Asia, which is considered vital to Victoria's growth and prosperity. Tim Pallas, Treasurer of Victoria Minister for Economic Growth, stated that Southeast Asia is our closest neighbor, largest trading partner, and most important relationship (Global Victoria, 2024).

According to Andonova et al. (2022), the success of a partnership can expand the scope of cooperation through a process of learning by doing and adjusting the beliefs and interests of the actors involved. In line with this statement, the partnership process is dynamic and constantly evolving, even though it initially involved only two parties. The presence of the Victorian State Government shows that partnerships are capable of attracting the involvement of additional international actors. Additionally, this can indirectly serve as a gateway for the development of paradiplomacy practices on a broader scale, with a direct link to the West Java Provincial Government. The latest developments in the relationship between these two subnational governments are still in the process of moving towards further cooperation.

Since October 2021, the Sister Province cooperation between Victoria and West Java has remained in the exploratory stage, with one of the important developments in this cooperation is the partnership between Monash University and West Java (Kemlu RI, 2021). Furthermore, Victoria continues to strengthen regional relations through formal partnerships via LoI with West Java, which focuses on people-to-people connections and increased support for businesses and institutions in various sectors (Global Victoria, 2024). This step demonstrates that the partnership with Monash is a strategic starting point in building a broader and more sustainable framework for cooperation between Victoria and West Java.

The West Java DPRD aims to have the MoU with the Victorian Government signed before August 2025 (Republika, 2025). This process is part of the paradiplomacy stages regulated in Government Regulation (PP) No. 28 of 2018 concerning Regional Cooperation. In Mukti's (2020) view, the DPRD's oversight of international cooperation in the region is necessary because the new authority of autonomous areas has altered the pattern of international relations in Indonesia. In addition, this oversight not only ensures compliance with agreements by foreign parties but also prevents regional cooperation that is potentially harmful or illegal.

The involvement of subnational governments in partnerships can serve as a concrete example that the progress achieved may not always be directly aligned with SDG targets due to differences in context, priorities, and capacity among parties. However, the process of knowledge transfer, resource optimization, and improvement of the effectiveness of local development programs continues to take place. Additionally, this involvement also

presents other strategic opportunities, such as expanding international networks. Ultimately, the active participation of subnational governments in partnerships can create a double impact: strengthening the position of regions within the global governance framework while delivering tangible benefits to local communities.

In line with governance activities, vertical flows within the governmental sector remain the dominant channel for implementing the SDGs, particularly at the national-subnational level. The characteristics of national leeway within the framework of global governance, as reflected in goals, are evident in the processes occurring in West Java. With the flexibility provided through this mechanism, other characteristics of global governance, such as non-binding goals, also influence the interpretation and implementation. Although there are clear benefits to this approach, it also implies issues related to integration (Biermann et al., 2017; Vijge et al., 2020).

Since the launch of the RAD SDGs 2018-2023, West Java Province has demonstrated significant progress in implementing the SDGs at the subnational level. For its commitment, the province received Indonesia's SDGs Action Award 2024 from the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, which was presented by Vice President Ma'ruf Amin and Minister of National Development Planning Suharso Monoarfa at the SDG Annual Conference 2024. The award recognizes stakeholders who support the implementation of the SDGs, with the hope that good practices can be expanded to accelerate the achievement of the "*Decade of Action*" targets. West Java Province is one of the best recipients in the Provincial Government category, based on an assessment of commitment and best practices (Bappenas, 2024; CNBC Indonesia, 2024).

With this achievement, the West Java Provincial Government has reinforced its role as a subnational actor capable of bridging the global agenda with local needs in a contextual manner. This award should not be viewed as an end in itself, but rather as a starting point for expanding the scale of good practices and strengthening SDG implementation mechanisms. The achievements of the West Java Provincial Government are also expected to serve as an example for other provinces in consistently and innovatively integrating SDG targets into regional policies. In addition, this step also reinforces Indonesia's position in realizing its global commitment to sustainable development by strengthening the role of subnational actors.

With five years left to achieve the global development agenda, the implementation of SDGs at the subnational level reveals complexities that deserve attention. The spectrum of implementation at this level is broader, as provincial governments not only align policies with national directives but also exercise a relatively independent role in the context of global governance. The institutional capacity of provincial governments is a key factor in navigating these dynamics, including the ability to coordinate, adapt, and encourage the participation of various actors. This confirms that global governance is an increasingly complex and multi-layered process, where the involvement of diverse actors is a crucial prerequisite for achieving sustainable development goals.

Conclusion

Overall, if effectiveness is understood exclusively in procedural terms, then mechanisms in the government sector—from supranational to subnational levels—can be said to have functioned well. However, the global governance perspective opens up space to see gaps that are often overlooked, especially regarding the multi-level nature of implementation. The absence of data in annual reports and the complexity of non-state actor participation in specific SDGs goals indicate that implementation effectiveness is not a final condition, but rather an ongoing process. In this sense, global governance is more normative in nature, serving as a direction rather than a fully established order within definitive boundaries.

In practical terms, strengthening mechanisms in the governmental sector is the most crucial aspect to consider. Precise coordination will directly affect the inclusiveness of actors, both at the national and subnational levels. Thus, the space for participation offered by the SDGs can be integrated more harmoniously with regional priorities, rather than being sporadic or partial. At the subnational level, this means that regional agencies, as part of the provincial government, responsible for each goal, need to play a more proactive role in building sustainable collaboration with all stakeholders.

For further research, it is essential to conduct an analysis that emphasizes horizontal interactions between actors at the subnational level, to assess the extent to which these dynamics contribute to achieving the SDGs. Thus, research should not only highlight the issue of effectiveness, but also enrich our understanding of how the SDGs, as a global governance framework through global goals, relate to the immediate reality at the local

level, not just to the construction of ideas at the worldwide level. This focus on the interplay between global and local dynamics highlights a fundamental difference between global governance and international regimes.

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