



Analysis of the Development Level of Rural-Border Areas in Belu and Malaka Regencies

¹ ULUL HIDAYAH*, ² FARISA MAULINAM AMO,
³ ANGELINA DELVIANA KLAU, ⁴ SANDRA ANDREA GIRI

¹ Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia*,

² Department of Regional Economic, Faculty of Economic and Business, Universitas Timor, Indonesia

Correspondance author: ulul-hidayah@ecampus.ut.ac.id*

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Abstract

Border areas became a development priority in the Nawacita era, so many programs were carried out to support the acceleration of development in these areas. Belu and Malaka regencies are one of the border areas in the Indonesia Republic that borders the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL). The aim is to see changes in the level of development of rural borders in the Belu and Malaka Regencies. The data used in this research is the Rural Development Index (IDM). The data that has been collected is then carried out with descriptive statistical analysis using a spatial approach. The results of this research explain that the level of development of rural borders in Belu Regency has experienced positive changes. However, rural borders in Malaka Regency have yet to undergo significant changes in the level of village development. It is because of the differences in the two regions' initial years of border development interventions. Belu Regency has priority in border area development compared to Malaka Regency. Belu Regency has a special program and budget from presidential instructions to accelerate border development. The case studies of the two districts suggest that the government should allocate a special budget to support policy implementation.

Keywords: Rural; Borders; Level Of Development.

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Introduction

Many problems still need to be solved in implementing national development, including poverty, regional disparity, and other development problems. The border area is one region whose development needs to catch up compared to other regions. Border areas have been identified as rural, peripheral, undeveloped, or poor areas that tend to be marginalized. The economic development approach perceived by people in border areas has emphasized border areas as areas far from the center of government, causing regional disparity (Taena et al., 2010). One of the principles of good development is that regional development is carried out from the periphery by strengthening borders and rural areas within the framework of a unitary state (Yudha & Dina, 2020). Development problems at the border are related not only to demarcation and boundary delineation, politi-

cal, legal, and security aspects but also to regional disparity with other regions in Indonesia and neighboring countries. Border areas act as the homepage of a country because they can be a reflection of themselves that can be seen directly by people in neighboring countries. Apart from that, border areas can also be a benchmark for development. The government can be generally considered to have succeeded in leveling development if the conditions in border areas are developed, considering the conditions in border areas are far from the center of government (Sari & Rahman, 2019).

There are various strategic problems in border areas, namely: (1) defense and security problems and law enforcement, (2) lack of adequate infrastructure in border areas, (3) low quality of human resources so that natural resource potential cannot be managed properly (Kennedy et al., 2018). Due to their low access to Indonesian government offices, some border communities receive administrative facilities, public services, and access to communication and information from neighboring countries. Border area development has always prioritized a security approach in its management; this has neglected aspects of socio-economic development (Maliatja et al., 2019). Border areas also require appropriate strategies such as restrictions, paying attention to the implications of certain programs, and maximizing the use of essential resources (Sasauw et al., 2020). A strategy for developing border areas is needed to increase local economic productivity. An economic growth center is an alternative strategy to mobilize and spur development to increase people's income. When the center of economic growth is directed at areas with regional potential and facilities, it will accelerate economic progress because indirectly, regional progress will make people look for a more decent life in their area (Sugiyanto & Sukesu, 2010).

The existence of Nawacita policies, one of which is regional development from the outskirts, has become an important momentum and has a huge influence on the development of border areas. Indonesia has border areas consisting of land and sea borders with several countries. One of Indonesia's national borders is the Province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), which borders the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL) and Australia. Belu and Malaka Regency are districts that directly border Timor Leste. Malaka Regency was expanded from Belu Regency on January 11, 2013, by the mandate of Law Number 3 of 2013 concerning the Establishment of Malaka Regency in East Nusa Tenggara Province. Belu and Malaka Regency has land or direct borders with the State of Timor Leste. Determining the border area as the center of the national strategic area (PKSN) has strategic advantages for regional development. The border area was made the front porch and center of suburban growth by constructing the Mountain State Cross Border Post (PLBN) in Belu Regency and the Motamasin PLBN in Malaka Regency. Supporting infrastructure in border areas, the government built a 179.99 km long NTT and Timor Leste border road, the Red Belt's eastern sector. It is built from the Belu Regency to the Malacca Regency, which can create a multiplier effect.

Developing border areas is about the areas directly bordering neighboring countries that are rural areas. As a development priority area in the Nawacita era, many programs were carried out in rural border areas to achieve these development goals. It is interesting to carry out studies related to the level of development of villages on the border in the Belu and Malaka Regencies. From the results of this study, information will be obtained as to whether there has been a change in the level of rural development in border areas. Where are the villages starting to experience changes in the level of development, and where are the village areas that still need to experience significant development? It can be the basis for the local government to determine priority areas that still need development intervention.

Research Method

This research was conducted on the land border between Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste in rural areas of Belu and Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Primary data was collected, including rural development index (IDM) data from the Community and Rural Empowerment Service of Belu and Malaka Regencies, and village potential data from the Central Statistics Agency. The data analysis technique used was descriptive statistical analysis with a spatial approach, which focuses on describing fundamental facts without drawing broad inferences or generalizations. The research followed steps such as data tabulation, reduction, presentation, and conclusion, with initial conclusions being temporary if strong supporting evidence is not found at the next stage of data collection.

Results & Discussion

Characteristics of Indonesia-RDTL Border Villages in Malaka and Belu Regencies

East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT) is a province located on Nusa Tenggara Island together with West Nusa Tenggara Province. Astronomically, East Nusa Tenggara Province is situated between 80 South Latitude – 120 South Latitude and 1180 East Longitude – 1250 East Longitude. NTT Province is also a border area. NTT shares land borders with Timor Leste and sea borders with Australia. Belu Regency and Malaka Regency are regencies directly bordering the State of Timor Leste. The areas

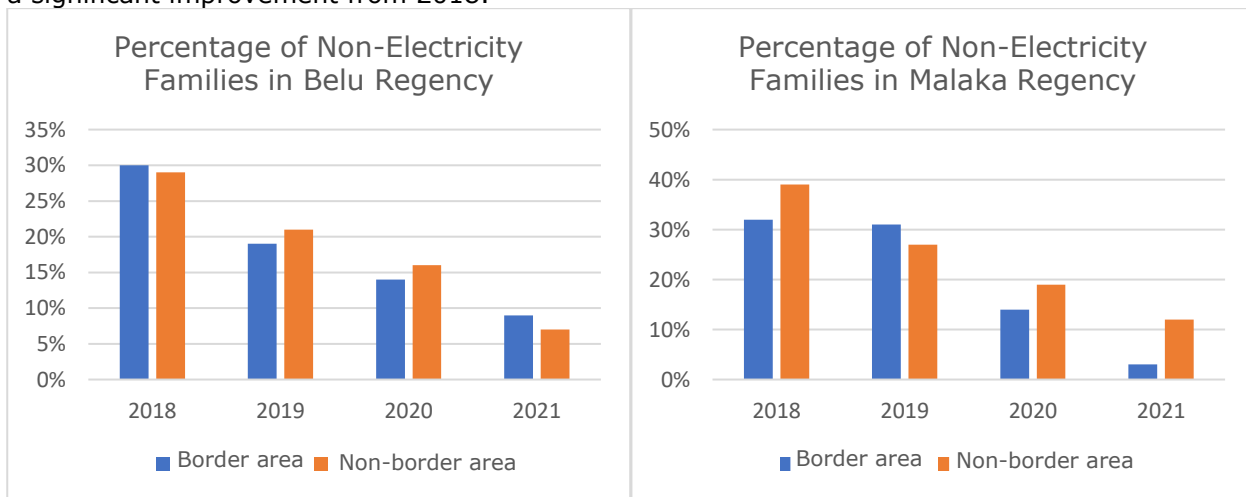
directly bordering is the area that has rural characteristic and administratively rural. The following are the characteristics of rural borders in the Belu and Malaka Regencies. Belu Regency is one of the districts that connect directly with the State of Timor Leste. Belu Regency is divided into 12 sub-districts with 69 villages, of which 26 are border villages. Meanwhile, Malaka Regency has an area of 1,160.63 km², divided into 12 sub-districts and 127 villages, where four villages are border villages with Timor Leste.

In border development, infrastructure development is important. Infrastructure in border areas has been built to accommodate community needs to facilitate activities and expand movement. Infrastructure development built in border areas includes roads, electricity, health, education, and economic infrastructure. Even though infrastructure development is being carried out quite massively, areas located on the border must be able to maintain their shape spatially because adjacent and interacting areas will influence each other spatially and have the possibility of sprawl occurring in one of the areas (Tutuko & Shen, 2016). Implementing infrastructure development at the border can be carried out through collaboration between regional government agencies (Rusfiana & Madjid, 2017).

a. Availability of Electricity Infrastructure in Rural Borders

Village development delays can be attributed to a lack of supporting infrastructure, which affects border areas and the gap between rural and urban areas (Firdaus, 2020). Infrastructure development is crucial to increase rural competitiveness and accept diverse development concepts. It can also serve as a buffer for economic access, stimulating fiscal and village-level improvement (Muazir et al., 2020). Access to energy, particularly electricity, is essential for daily life in both urban and rural areas. The development and implementation of electricity in rural areas significantly impact regional development, particularly economically and socially. The impact of electricity development in rural areas includes increased income, education, and religion. Therefore, infrastructure development is essential for promoting economic growth and community welfare (Kayupa, 2015). The impact of electricity development in rural areas is that there has been an increase in income, education, and religion (Prakoso et al., 2016).

The government's efforts to provide basic electricity facilities have shown positive changes, with a decrease in the percentage of families without electricity each year. In Belu Regency, 2768 out of 9374 families lived on the border in 2018, with improvements expected until 2021 when 551 families out of 10,108 families have electricity services. Rural borders in Belu Regency primarily receive electricity from PLN, while East Tasifeto District's border villages use lighting sources like batteries and generators. In Malaka Regency, 33% of 1831 families will not have access to electricity in 2021, a significant improvement from 2018.



a.

b.

Figure 1. Percentage of Non-Electricity Families in Belu (a) and Malaka (b) Regencies.

b. Availability of Road and Transportation Infrastructure in Rural Borders

Infrastructure and facilities are important in improving the community's economy and regional development, influencing community welfare and disparities between regions (Priyadi & Atmadji, 2017). The regional unit that has the type and number of public facilities that are relatively complete compared to the other areas will be the center or have the highest hierarchy. On the other hand, if

an area has a low number and type of public facilities, it is a hinterland area for other regional units. The availability of supporting facilities, such as communication networks, modes of transportation, economic facilities, education, and health, plays a role in regional development. The increasing growth of the region demands an increase in supporting facilities. With the availability of supporting facilities, economic development will accelerate and, therefore, can encourage the creation of regional growth centers.

Rural borders in Belu Regency have improved road and transportation infrastructure, with access to these borders via land and asphalt or concrete pavement. Village governments construct these roads using village funds. However, some villages in Belu Regency still have gravel road pavement. Malaka Regency villages have better road conditions due to being on the Red Belt route, an alternative route to Malaka-Belu. Most roads in rural borders are passable by four-wheeled vehicles, but two villages, Lutha Rato and Makir Village, may experience closures due to landslides or floods.

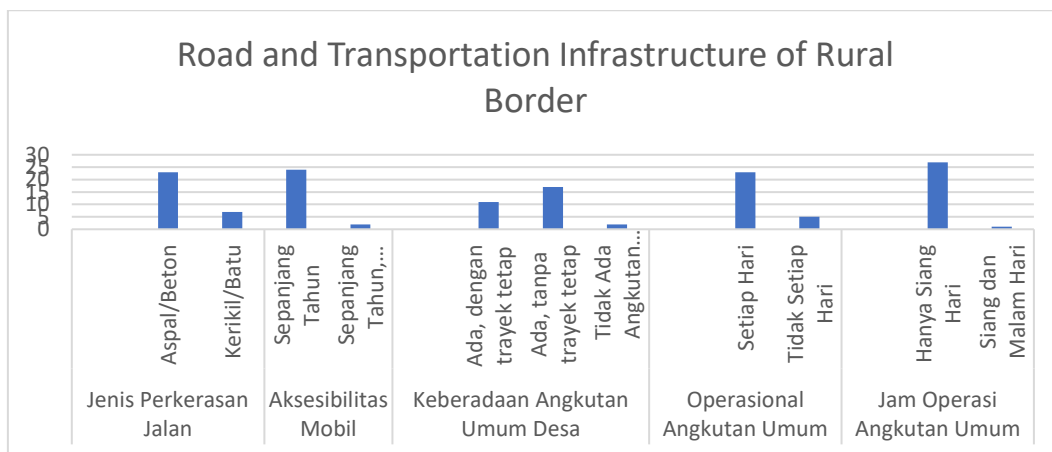


Figure 2. Accessibility Road and Transportation of Rural Border

Access to rural borders has also been supported by rural public transportation. Only two villages cannot access public transport, namely Kewar Village in Lamaknen District and Takirin Village in East Tasifeto District. There are several villages where public transportation has special routes. However, most public transportation does not have routes because the village area is very large, and the settlements are spread out. Most public transport operating hours are fixed every day from morning to noon. The mobility of border village residents out of their area is dominated by selling agricultural products or purchasing other necessities at markets in the city center. For sustainable development in the field of transportation, it is necessary to know more about policies regarding the application of both regulations and socialization to the community such as the use of public services with effective and efficient services (Budiman et al., 2022).

c. Availability of Educational Infrastructure in Rural Borders

Education is a very important aspect in the development of a society, especially in efforts to increase quality human resources. The availability of educational facilities in a region can also increase its growth. One conceptualization of the category of welfare achievement is the extent to which a need is met (Sholihah, 2016). Therefore, increasing the amount of educational infrastructure is one of the efforts made to improve community welfare. In this way, the development of border areas as the country's front line can be accelerated. Specifically, the availability of educational infrastructure plays an important role in increasing the number of active community participation in education. Increasing participation rates will of course be directly proportional to increasing intelligence and stemming negative influences that can dampen the spirit of nationalism (Bria, 2020). Considering that border regions are areas that are directly exposed to the cultural heterogeneity of neighboring regions.

The rural border owns various educational facilities, including play group (PAUD), elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP), and senior high school (SMA/SMK). Each village has a PAUD between two schools, with at least one elementary school in each village. SMP facilities are available in 16 villages, with easy and very easy access. Only four high school facilities, Sadi, Makir, Fatulotu, and Tohe, have easy and very easy access categories and serve residents in other border villages.

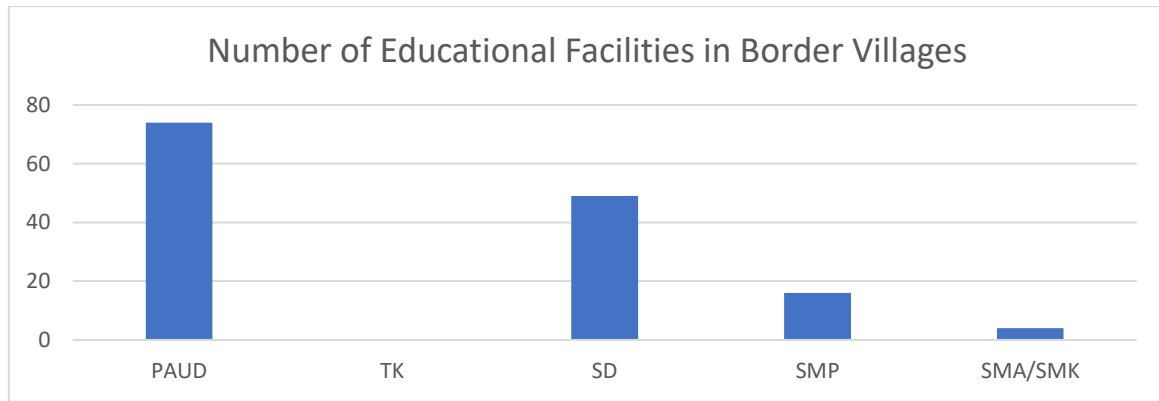


Figure 3. Number of educational facilities in border villages.

d. Availability of Health Infrastructure in Rural Borders

Health services are a tool and/or place used to provide health service efforts, whether promotive, preventive, curative or rehabilitative, carried out by the government, regional government and/or the community. The health aspect creates a productive society (Herawati & Bakhri, 2019). Infrastructure availability in a region significantly impacts economic development and community welfare. Infrastructure development is capital for boosting a country's economy and improving living standards. Health facilities are crucial for improving community welfare and supporting rural growth. Government and society efforts contribute to health services, with government-owned facilities playing a significant role in providing health services. Infrastructure is a critical physical element in border regions, with a significant correlation between infrastructure conditions and community socio-economic activities and welfare. Health is a sector being developed by the government, and the function of infrastructure is critical in border regions (Suharmiati & Astuti, 2013).

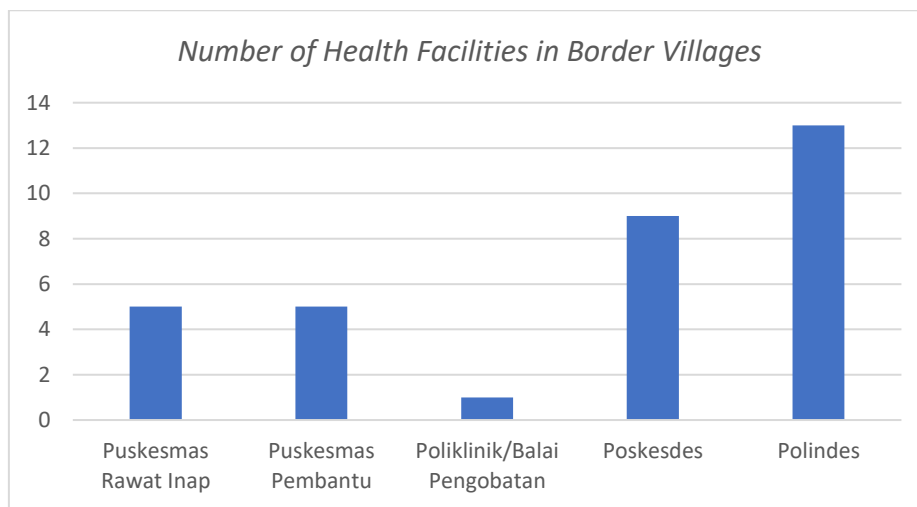


Figure 4. Number of Health Facilities in Border Villages

*Puskesmas are the execution units for healthcare services at the primary level and the spearheads of health development activities

Based on village potential data, there are 5 Inpatient Health Centers, 5 Assistant Health Centers, 1 Polyclinic/Medicine Center, 9 Village Health Posts, and 13 Village Polindes. Villages that have inpatient health centers are in Tohe, Lamak Senulu, Silawan, and Alas. The five villages with auxiliary health centers are Lamak Senulu, Kewar, Lookeu, Sadi and Dafala. Fatulutu has a polyclinic or medical center. The border villages that have Poskesdes are in the villages of Lasiolat, Fatulutu, Maneikun, Kewar, Mahuitas, Kitairu, Lookeu, Nanaenoe and Sarabau. The villages that have Polindes are in Alas Utara, Alas, Kotabiru, Dafala, Takirin, Fohoeka, Lakmaras, Henes, Asumanu, Maumutin, and Baudaok.

e. Trade Infrastructure in Border Villages

Economic infrastructure refers to the extent to which economic growth is accessible to the wider community, not just high-income individuals. It serves as a supporting capacity for achieving growth

targets and expanding access for communities to benefit from high economic growth. Infrastructure development is crucial for supporting communities in developing products and services, creating jobs, and boosting industry. Key infrastructure factors include roads, electricity, health facilities, community welfare, and market access. These elements work together to improve economic performance through specific mechanisms, ensuring that communities have access to high-quality products and services, contributing to overall economic growth.

Globalization has significantly impacted economic development, leading to city plans with amenities for everyday life. The market serves as a benchmark for increasing income in the region, as it is the only place for economic transactions specific to the sub-district area. There are permanent markets in rural borders in Fatulotu Village and Lasiolat District. Meanwhile, semi-permanent border village markets are in 9 villages, namely Fatulotu, Mahuitas, Lamak Senulu, Maumutin, Tohe, Sadi, Alas, and Alas Selatan. These semi-permanent markets operate once a week.

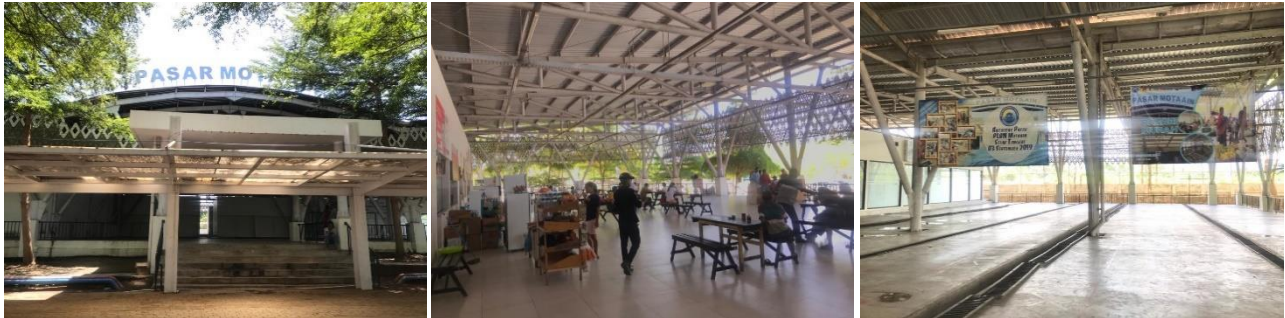


Figure 5. Border Village Market Documentation

Market infrastructure development is also carried out by the Regional Border Management Agency (BPPD) by Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Economic Development in State Border Areas. It is the Development or Revitalization of People's Markets (Pasar Sabete) and the Development or Revitalization of People's Markets (Pasar Henes). BPPD also built a border market at PLBN Motaain and Motamasin, which functions as a center for trade activities in the border area, serving Indonesian residents and residents from Timor Leste. Border areas will tend to influence each other. Apart from legal and regulatory aspects, border areas that interact with each other, especially trade and services, have a high permeability indeks (Deutschmann et al., 2023). A high permeability index indicates a region's high flow of people and commodities, making control difficult and potentially allowing free trade without regulations. This also means communities must adapt to fluctuating economic shocks, allowing for limited border closures. (McGahern et al., 2024). The border village market serves as an economic circulation hub, promoting money circulation and reducing dependency on neighboring regions, thereby preventing regional leakage.

Analysis of Border Village Development Levels

Indonesia has many border areas with other countries. It can be an opportunity to adopt the progress and systems of neighboring countries and then adapt to Indonesia's conditions. However, the ability of regional and central governments to see the problems experienced by 3T areas still needs to improve, and the planning programs launched tend to be less effective (Situmorang & Ayustia, 2019). Rural Development Level is a certain status of the achievement of development activity results, which reflects the level of progress or success of the community, village government, and regional government in implementing rural development. To assess the degree of progress of a village, measurements must be carried out based on aspects or indicators and constituent variables that must be met for the rural to develop. These indicators of preparation include infrastructure conditions, such as economic facilities and infrastructure, as well as basic services that provide availability and access to health and education facilities (Mamase, 2021). The progress of a village can be measured at the level of development through the maintenance of infrastructure and the rural environment, as well as social and cultural aspects that exist in the community (Kessa, 2015). In determining rural development, it is necessary to refer to regulations or legislation so that justification in determining the level of rural development is even. The method or approach used in solving problems can be determined more precisely with equity. In Indonesia, describing the development of a rural can use the Rural Development Index because this index refers to the implementation of the Law on villages and plays a role in assisting and using village funds (Listyawati et al., 2023). Local services and public transport accessibility are measured, and the results are described.

Rural area development is carried out to accelerate the community empowerment process and rural development level through participatory development methods and approaches. Regional governments and the community have been established through various policies and programs. However, despite these efforts, many rural areas have not been developed. Rural development is the most important part of national development, considering that 82% of Indonesia's territory is still predominantly rural and 50% of Indonesia's population still lives in rural areas. Several factors can influence rural development, namely the development of rural infrastructure, improvement of education, and economic aspects. Apart from that, the economic aspect, the government can expand affordability to trade service centers and reachability to financial institutions and credit (Listyawati et al., 2023).

The classification of villages based on their level of development is divided into five categories: independent, developed, developing, undeveloped, and very undeveloped. An independent village is a village that is independent in managing finances and human resources. A developed village is a village that has succeeded in developing its economic potential so that it can improve community welfare. A developing village is a village that is in the process of developing its village potential. Meanwhile, undeveloped villages still need to develop their village potential. In contrast, very undeveloped villages experience poverty in various forms and are vulnerable to social conflict, economic shocks, and other natural disasters. Figure six is a map of IDM status identified from the two districts of Belu and Malaka for the five years from 2021 to 2023.

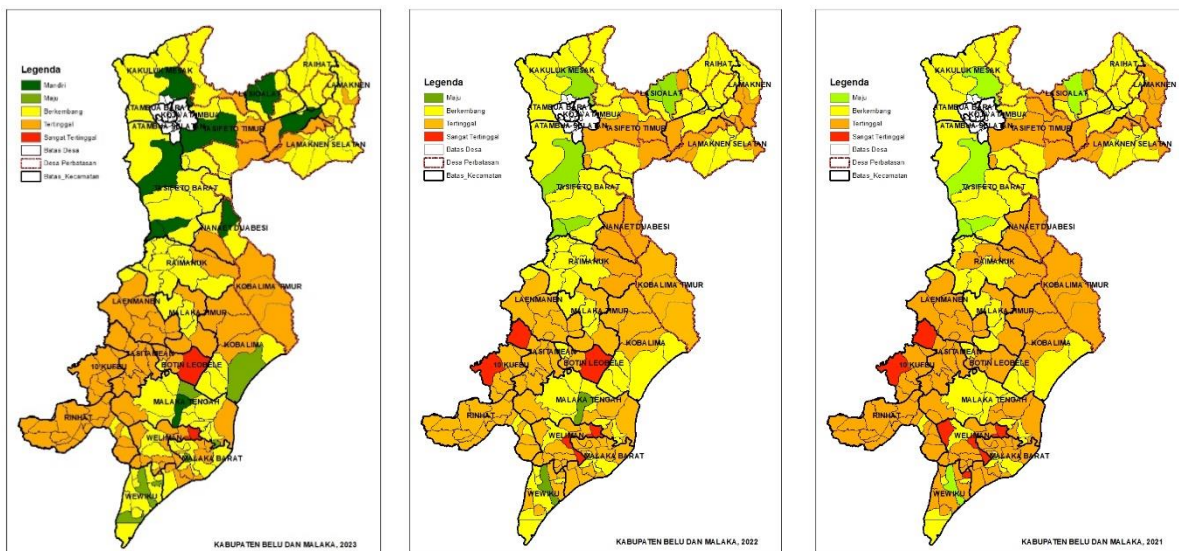


Figure 6. Development Level of Rural Border in 2021-2023

Based on the 2021 IDM data recap in the Belu Regency, there are 5 developed villages, 38 developing villages, and 27 undeveloped villages. In 2022, in the Belu Regency, there are six developed villages, 42 developing villages, and 20 undeveloped villages. Based on data from the 2023 Rural Development Index (IDM) in Belu Regency, there are 69 villages with the status classification of developed villages totaling nine villages, developing villages there are 49 villages, and there are 11 undeveloped villages. Meanwhile, in Malaka Regency, based on IDM data 2021, there are a developed village, 27 developing villages, 90 undeveloped villages, and seven very undeveloped villages. In 2022, there are two developed villages, 32 developing villages, 87 undeveloped villages, and six very undeveloped villages. Malaka Regency has good achievements in rural development. It is because Malaka Regency has an independent village, 7 developed villages, 49 developing villages, 74 undeveloped villages, and three very undeveloped villages. The recapitulation of IDM data based on the calculation of certain parameters obtained in Belu Regency in 2023 had an average value of 0.65; in 2022, it was 0.64; in 2021, it had an average value of 84.25; in 2020, had 0.63; in 2019, it had 0.61. Meanwhile, Malaka Regency has an average value in 2023 of 44.68, in 2022 of 0.57, in 2021 of 46.52.

In 2021, there will be two developed villages, 13 developing villages, and 15 undeveloped villages with an average of 0.60. There are 13 villages in the developing category. The average value is 0.63; in 2022, there will be two developed villages, 17 developing villages, and 11 undeveloped

villages with an average of 0.62. The development conditions of villages on the border are 30 villages and 7 districts. Based on certain parameters, in 2023, with IDM status, there will be 3 developed villages, namely Fatulotu, Maneikun, and Fohoeka Village. Fohoeka Village and Maneikun Village experienced significant changes from undeveloped to developed villages. It is due to the massive development of basic infrastructure, including the construction of community health centers, the construction of electricity networks, and the construction of roads connecting these villages to the government center. There are 19 developing villages, namely Kewar, Lamaksenulu, Makir, Henes, Lakmaras, Lutha Rato, Nualain, Fatuberal, Baudaok, Lasiolat, Nanaenoe, Asumanu, Maumutin, Tohe, Lookeu, Dafala, Sadi, Silawan, and Tulakadi. There are 8 undeveloped villages, namely Mahuitas, Debululik, Sarabau, Takirin, Alas Utara, Kotabiru, Alas, and South Alas.

Undeveloped villages are a high priority for development intervention so that their status can improve. The strategy in efforts to increase the status of undeveloped villages to developing villages is to develop local resource potential by exploiting opportunities from agricultural products and MSMEs, increasing MSME production to meet market demand, utilizing road infrastructure for economic activities such as goods distribution services, utilizing assistance from villages for developing the potential that exists in each hamlet, improving human resources through training provided by the village in the fields of agriculture, science and technology, as well as motivating the younger generation to continue their education at least to upper level (Muharam & Haviz, 2022). Meanwhile, villages with development status in the developing category are alternative villages. Alternative development of rural areas can be one of the optimal strategies for developing the economy of border areas (Nugraha, 2021).

In general, the development of the rural border in Belu Regency has experienced changes in the level of development that is better than in Malaka Regency. It is caused by differences in development interventions in the two regions. Belu Regency has received priority for handling border areas since 2011. It is recorded in the Master Plan for Management of National Borders and Border Areas for 2011-2014. Meanwhile, Malaka Regency was designated a priority location in 2020 in the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024. So this affects the level of development of the region. The earlier development policy interventions are implemented, the earlier development program implementation can be implemented so that the results and positive changes from implementing the program can be more pronounced. The impact of implementing a policy requires a waiting time (time lag).

Malaka Regency was an expansion area from Belu Regency in 2012. In general, the level of regional development in Malaka Regency is still below that of Belu Regency. Based on Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Economic Development in State Border Areas in Aruk, Motaain, and Skouw, the Belu Regency is also an area with special priority compared to the Malaka Regency. This policy encourages the acceleration of the development of new economic growth centers around the PLBN. Belu Regency has prepared 20 programs targeted to be completed within two years. Priority programs for accelerating border areas include the construction of road networks, construction of drainage networks, development of livestock areas, construction of clean water facilities, construction of reservoirs, construction of public markets, and construction of warehouse/depot facilities and gas stations. These programs are located on a rural border.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the analysis, information was obtained that the level of development of Indonesia-RDTL border villages, especially in Belu Regency, has increased in the last three years. Meanwhile, in Malaka Regency, the level of rural development has remained the same. In the last three years in Belu Regency, two border villages have changed from undeveloped to developed, and five undeveloped villages have become developing villages. There are three villages with very significant changes in border village development, namely Fatulotu Village and Maneikun Village in Lasioalat District, as well as Fohoeka Village and Nanaet Duabesi District. On the other hand, some villages have not had significant changes in village development in the last three years, namely villages that still have one hundred undeveloped villages. The villages are Mahuitas village, Lamaknen sub-district, Debululik village, South Lamaknen sub-district, Sarabau village, Tasifetotimur sub-district, Sarabau village, Tasifetotimur sub-district, Takirin village, Tasifetotimur sub-district, Alas Utara village, East Kobalima sub-district, Kotabiru village, East Kobalima sub-district, Alas village sub-district East Kobalima, and South Alas, East Kobalima sub-district. These villages must receive special priority for development and assistance so that they can improve their status as developing villages. Villages with developing status are villages that have changed status within the last three years and can become alternative villages. This alternative village should have strategic planning with minimal

egocentric bureaucracy, which is sure to accommodate scenarios of economic development inequality with neighboring countries. If there is an imbalance in economic growth, one region will result in a generation of movement, even permanent movement, to a region with a rapidly growing economy. Not only focusing on developing alternative villages but also preparing human resources in the area must be carried out to increase literacy and accept new, futuristic things.

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