

## Reducing Poverty and Improving Food Security through Public-Private Partnerships in the Coastal Areas

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### Abstract

*This study analyses the role and impact of public-private partnerships to improve food security in coastal areas of Indonesia. The public-private partnership model as a tool to address poverty, food needs and stunting is examined using a qualitative exploratory technique. Additional information was gathered by the researchers via interviews, field observations and documents. The study was carried out in Indonesia's Coastal Takalar Regency, and NVivo 12 Pro was used to visualise the data. The results showed that the parties involved in efforts to improve food security on the Takalar Regency Coast include the Food Social Service and Village Community Empowerment of Takalar Regency, Subdistrict Social Welfare Workers, village government, Mandiri Bank, food suppliers and E-Warong (noncash government assistance) agents. Findings further showed that the benefits arising from this collaboration can reduce social inequalities such as decreasing poverty, increasing food needs and reducing stunting cases in the coastal areas of Takalar Regency. This work revealed several obstacles to cooperation between the government and the private sector to improve food security through food aid programmes, namely corruption through diversion of aid funds and a lack of supervision.*

**Keywords:** Food Aid; Food Security; Poverty; Stunting

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## Introduction

The public-private partnership (PPP) concept has been implemented in several developing countries since the early 1990s (Trebilcock & Rosenstock, 2015). PPPs have been widely used to tackle intricate and dynamic social issues, such as setting a minimum wage, food security, waste management, slum upgrading, poverty reduction and the COVID-19 pandemic response (Afieroho et al., 2023; Harini et al., 2022; Putera et al., 2022; Smyth et al., 2021; Sururi et al., 2022; Zubaidah et al., 2023). Indonesia has historically used the PPP approach to encourage development. The Government Cooperation with Private Enterprises in Development legislation, which was passed during the Soeharto administration, is credited with introducing the concept of PPPs. In 2005, Presidential Regulation No. 67/2005 on PPPs was created under the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono administration, establishing a new PPP policy (Siagian et al., 2019).

PPPs have received significant attention lately as a result of the positive effects of their collaboration and synergy on achieving economic growth (Marx, 2019; Siagian et al., 2019). Policy implementation theory suggests that the collaboration of government and private actors can have a positive effect on addressing social problems (Baxter & Casady, 2020; Park & Chung, 2021). Other studies have suggested that the contribution of PPPs can address issues of poverty and food insecurity (Deladem et al., 2021; Smyth et al., 2021). As an example, the concept of PPPs overcoming poverty and food insecurity was seen in the United States with California's formation of Waste Not Orange County to provide food to people experiencing poverty. Diamastuti and Romadhon (2021) indicated that creating PPPs for economic empowerment might reduce poverty in the neighbourhood. When examining research trends linked to PPPs, significant work has been done concerning social issues such as poverty, food insecurity and the economy. To our knowledge, however, this study is the first concerning the use of PPPs to combat poverty and food security issues in the coastal areas of Takalar Regency.

One of the social problems that must be addressed quickly is the issue of food security, which is one of the goals of sustainable development worldwide. Food security is defined as having enough nutritious food to sustain growth and improve health (Burchi & De Muro, 2016). As a developing country, Indonesia has a complex food insecurity problem. CNBC Indonesia reported that 74 of 514 districts/cities in Indonesia are in priority categories 1–3 or experiencing food insecurity problems (Rizky, 2023). Food vulnerability occurs when food production in an area is lower than its needs, which can increase the prevalence of stunting in toddlers. Food insecurity cannot be separated from the influence of poverty experienced by the community. In Takalar Regency, the poverty rate was 8.25% in both 2021 and 2022, demonstrating no poverty reduction in the period (Badan Pusat Statistik Sulawesi Selatan, 2023). However, the stunting problem in Takalar shows a positive reduction from 34.7% in 2021 to 31.1% in 2022 (AbataNews, 2023).

Food insecurity problems in coastal locations (Panzai et al., 2022) are considered even greater than those in urban areas (Abdillah et al., 2023). Climate change in coastal areas is one of the causes of food insecurity in various countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Rabbani et al., 2015; Wickramasinghe et al., 2021). In addition,

poverty problems in coastal areas exceed poverty concerns in rural and urban areas (Benevenuto & Caulfield, 2020; Boillat & Bottazzi, 2020). The issue of food security in coastal areas is much more significant due to the lack of agricultural land to produce food (Kantamaneni et al., 2020). Consequently, many people in coastal areas depend on sea catches to fulfil their food needs (Payne et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2019).

Located in eastern Indonesia, the Takalar Regency consists mostly of coastal areas. The length of the coastal area of Takalar Regency is around 74 km, which includes Sanrobone, Mangarabombang, Mappakasunggu, Tanakeke Islands, South Galesong, Galesong City and North Galesong. Fishing and seaweed farming comprise the majority of occupations in the Takalar Regency coastal area (Suarni & Wahyuni, 2020; Wardana et al., 2022). In Takalar Regency, the population living in poverty was 24.75 thousand in 2022, or 8.25% (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2022). Additionally, 71,506 households in the Takalar Regency are listed as impoverished inhabitants in the integrated social welfare statistics (Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial, DTKS). The large potential of marine wealth in coastal areas in Indonesia does not guarantee a more prosperous community life (Obura, 2020; Rochwulaningsih et al., 2019), with many people living in coastal areas experiencing poverty and food insecurity (Atuoye et al., 2021; Nurhidayah & McIlgorm, 2019).

Serious attention by the government and private sector is needed to overcome socioeconomic vulnerability in coastal areas. Various programmes have been provided by the government, who have collaborated with the private sector to maximise their goals. The programmes are expected to overcome social problems in coastal areas including poverty, food insecurity and health concerns, such as stunting. Initiatives include noncash food assistance and the Family Hope Programme, which is oriented towards poverty alleviation and nutrition for underprivileged families (Rusliadi et al., 2023).

As a result of this interest, research is being carried out on how the public and private sectors may enhance food security in Takalar Regency's coastal districts. This study examines the extent of private and public sector participation in enhancing food security in the regency's coastal districts, adding to the body of knowledge on PPP theory in sustainable development initiatives. It is anticipated that this study can enhance collaboration between public and private sectors in enhancing food security and mitigating socioeconomic disparities, particularly in coastal regions.

## **Research Methods**

Qualitative methodologies are used in this study to examine public-private responses to food insecurity issues described above. The qualitative approach was selected as a means of conducting theoretical analysis, comprehension, investigation and explanation – supported by empirical data – on how public-private collaboration might enhance food security in Takalar Regency's coastal regions. Following the data collection, examination and evaluation were conducted in line with the phases of data reduction, presentation and validation to generate new findings beneficial for additional study

(Matthew et al., 2014). Subsequently, data were examined using the NVivo 12 Pro investigative instrument, as displayed in Figure 1.

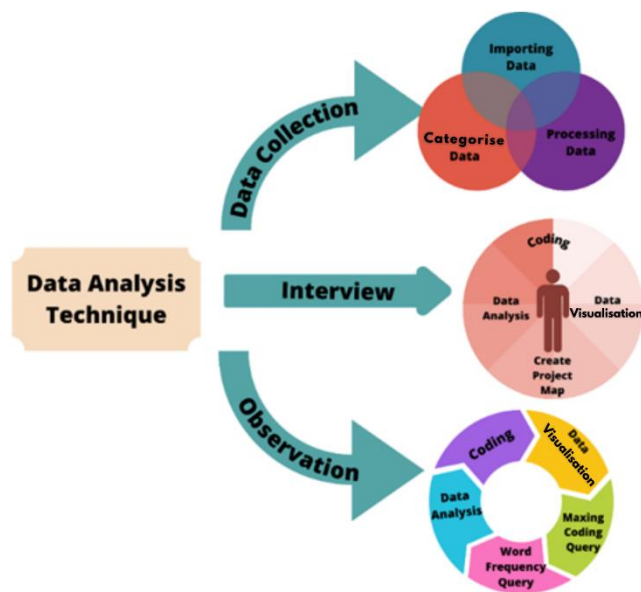


Figure 1. Technology and Infrastructure Readiness for Digital Government  
Source: Data Analysis Techniques Using NVivo 12 Pro (2023)

Table 1. Research Informants  
Source: Processed by Authors (2023)

Positions	Persons
Head of the Poor Handling Division	1 Person
Assistance, Community Empowerment, Stimulus	1 Person
Assistance Distribution and Environmental Arrangement Section	
Social Welfare Worker Assistance	1 Person
E-Warong agents	3 Persons
Families Receiving Food Assistance	4 Persons

Three steps of data analysis are shown in Figure 1. First, data gathering, which includes data import, classification and processing. Second, analysing the interview results from the field, including coding, data analysis and creating project maps and data visualisation. Third, observation, which includes data coding, data analysis, maxing coding query, word frequency query and data visualisation using NVivo 12 Pro (Woolf & Silver, 2018). The data processed was derived from observation, documentation and interview results. Purposive sampling is employed as the research technique in this paper (Berndt, 2020). Informants selected by researchers were thought to be in depth experts on the material and relevant issues, making them reliable sources of pertinent data. Another technique used to obtain data through the actors in the study was the snowball technique to enrich the information in the interviews (Audemard, 2020). The search for

data in the interviews stopped after the information reached a saturation point. The informants in the study can be seen in Table 1.

The total number of informants in this study was 10 people, consisting of employees from the Social Service and Village Community Empowerment of Takalar Regency, Social Assistants, E Warong agents and beneficiaries of assistance. The reason for selecting these informants is that they are considered to be directly involved in efforts to improve food security through government programmes in Takalar Regency.

## Results and Discussion

### Condition of the Coastal Area Community

The majority of people in the coastal area of Takalar Regency work as fishermen. The number of Takalar residents who work as farmers is 16,000 (Wardyah, 2023). This breakdown is influenced by the geographical location of several subdistricts in Takalar Regency around the coast, such as Sanrobone, Mangarabombang, Mappakasunggu, Galesong, South Galesong, North Galesong and the Tanakeke Islands. Thus, people who are in the coastal area of Takalar Regency rely on sea products to live and fulfil their daily needs. One of the causes of the high demand for food is that food production is not proportional to the population. The population of Takalar Regency can be seen in Figure 2.

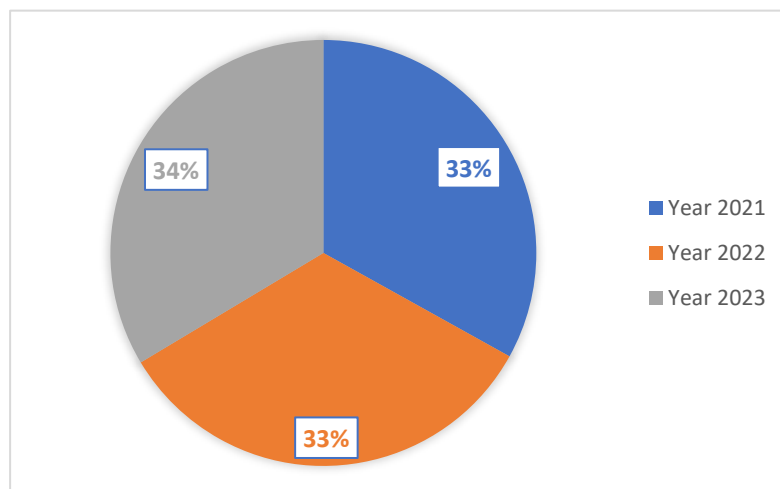


Figure 2. Total Population Data of Takalar, Indonesia  
Source: Processed by Authors (2024)

As displayed in Figure 2, the population in Takalar Regency has increased annually. Takalar Regency has seen an increase in the population of 4,760 people in the 3-year period 2021–2023 (Badan Pusat Statistik Sulawesi Selatan, 2023). This growth can be seen in 2021 when the population of Takalar Regency is 302,695 people, or around 33% of the total population of the last three years. The population then increased to 305,077 people in 2022, or 34% of the three-year total, and 307,455 in 2023, or 34%. Population

growth increases food demand, therefore, the government must balance population growth and food production to avoid hunger.

### Food Security Programme in the Coastal Areas

Noncash food benefit recipients may use their assistance to pay for specific essentials. The Ministry of Social Affairs administers this programme electronically via Warung Gotong Royong (E Warong; Electronic Mutual Cooperation Shop), which aims to streamline financial transactions for beneficiaries (Abdillah et al., 2023). Assistance was initially only offered for IDR 150,000 per month, but as COVID 19 expanded across Indonesia, the amount was raised to IDR 200,000 monthly.

An aid programme offering incentives to recipients will influence their purchases and consumption (Engel & Ruder, 2020). With this in mind, the Indonesian government has taken steps to guarantee economic expansion with empowerment programmes such as microenterprise finance, enhancing human resources and developing micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) capacity (Surya et al., 2021). To promote community productivity and the growth of the digital economy ecosystem, personal and MSME skill development programmes have also been undertaken (Maksum et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the digital economy has been advanced via a variety of strategies, including the national digital literacy initiative (Yanti & Yusnaini, 2018), the Digital Talent Scholarship (Sukma et al., 2020) and the Digital Leadership Academy (Weber et al., 2019). These initiatives assist the development of digital skills and the digitisation of MSMEs (Nguyen et al., 2022).

The community's business players are also crucial to the advancement of programmes aimed at reducing poverty (Kowo et al., 2019). MSMEs are among the key economic drivers that increase income while reducing poverty (Sokoto & Abdullahi, 2013). To combat poverty and promote economic development, the government has decided to include companies in the execution of projects aimed at reducing it via the provision of food assistance.

E-Warong is a partner in the implementation of government social programmes (Afringgo et al., 2021). The initiative has been successfully set up by the government as a market – or platform – to facilitate the distribution of food aid with the cooperation of additional stakeholders such as district social workers, social services, cooperatives, Himbara (association of state-owned banks), BULOG (state food distribution corporation) and food volunteers. E-Warong supports the legal growth of companies and revenue generation. It is anticipated that the programme will offer consistent, interest-free financing. People who are poor will have less of a burden due to the initiative, which will eliminate their need to borrow money from banks, loan sharks or internet lenders. In this way, an autonomous community can be established using E-Warong. As the area's economy is growing broadly, beneficiary families may find it more convenient with the expansion of E-Warong.

By supporting small enterprises, E-Warong can enhance Indonesia's economy. E-Warong serves as an example of the benefits of a food aid programme supporting the financial elements of community-run micro-businesses. Developing small businesses can

increase family income, raise living standards and generate employment (Oyelana & Adu, 2015). Furthermore, small enterprises have the potential to generate more jobs for the country's workforce. As much labour is absorbed, the small business sector can raise community revenue. MSMEs are thus seen to be strategically important in reducing unemployment and poverty. The positive benefits of aid programmes developing the local economy through MSMEs allow the expansion of the national economy to be successful.

An internal obstacle that occurs in the implementation of noncash food assistance programmes involving several sectors is the weak supervision carried out by local governments, resulting in cases of corruption of aid funds (Liputan 6, 2022). Weak supervision can invite corrupt practices, which can hinder the programme's goal of enhancing sustainable development (Abbas, 2021; Hope, 2022). In addition, communication between programme implementers is also needed to facilitate programme targets by sharing information related to regulations and technical programme implementation. This communication can overcome problems by creating a process of message exchanges in a network of interdependent relationships.

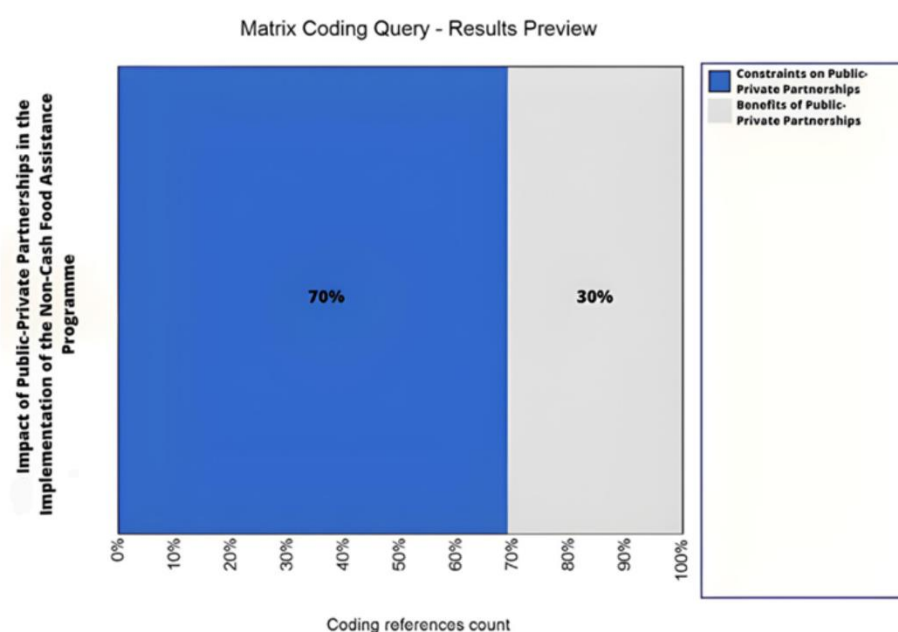


Figure 3. Visualisation of the Benefits and Constraints of Public-Private Partnerships  
Source: Processed by Authors Using Nvivo 12 Pro (2023)

A lack of communication can result in differences in perceptions between beneficiaries, E Warong and social assistants regarding the freedom of beneficiaries to conduct transactions in other stalls. In addition, another obstacle that occurs in the implementation of E-Warong is frequent delays in distribution that result in assistance being received every 2–3 months. This delay has a significant impact on programme objectives because the timeliness of programme implementation affects aspects of

government programme objectives (Forestier & Kim, 2020). A further barrier to the noncash food aid programme's implementation in Takalar Regency is the exorbitant cost of food goods at E-Warong agents in comparison to market rates. Figure 3 illustrates the proportion of advantages and limitations associated with the public and private sector's participation in the food aid programme's execution.

The government and private sector's execution of the food assistance programme in Takalar Regency has advantages and disadvantages. Figure 3 displays a query coding matrix visualisation made possible by NVivo 12 Pro. In the visualisation results, it can be seen that the benefits of public and private cooperation are 70% compared to the obstacles often experienced in programme implementation, namely 30%. The benefits of government and private involvement will increase economic growth in the private sector. Meanwhile, the government finds it easier to run the programme with the contribution of the private sector. This cooperation increases income for micro-entrepreneurs and facilitates synergy between organisations, which mutually benefits and positively impacts empowerment efforts toward programme targets. However, the involvement of the government and the private sector can create interdependence, resulting in less than optimal supervision due to the two institutions each expecting the other to conduct supervision. The government and private sector also can face a lack of communication and clarity on timeliness.

#### Relationships and Roles of the Government and the Private Sector in Food Security Programme in the Coastal Areas

Cooperation and coordination can make programmes more effective in addressing poverty and food security (David et al., 2020; George & McKay, 2019; Pollard & Booth, 2019). In addition to the growing recognition of the significance of enhancing the well-being of individuals, close observation ensures that information is clear and open on the execution of programmes aimed at reducing poverty and providing food security (Brugere et al., 2023; Dhahri & Omri, 2020; Fernando et al., 2020). The objective is to promote policy adoption in Indonesia that guarantees welfare innovation and sustainable development (Raihan et al., 2023). Responsible implementers are required to assist the policy or programme's implementation process. Enhancing food security for impoverished areas in Indonesia involves several stakeholders, as outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows a visualisation created using NVivo 12 Pro 'Mind Map' showing that both the public and commercial sectors are involved in implementing the programme to increase food security. The public and private sectors can influence how food programmes are implemented to ensure success in achieving their goals (Olson et al., 2021). It is the responsibility of the Ministries of Economic Affairs and Social Affairs to coordinate laws pertaining to the distribution of food assistance and register recipients using the data supplied by local governments. The Ministry of Social Affairs performs socialisation to the local Social Affairs Office, which is then handed on to districts and structures in the execution of the programme so that local government organisations may be appropriately consulted.



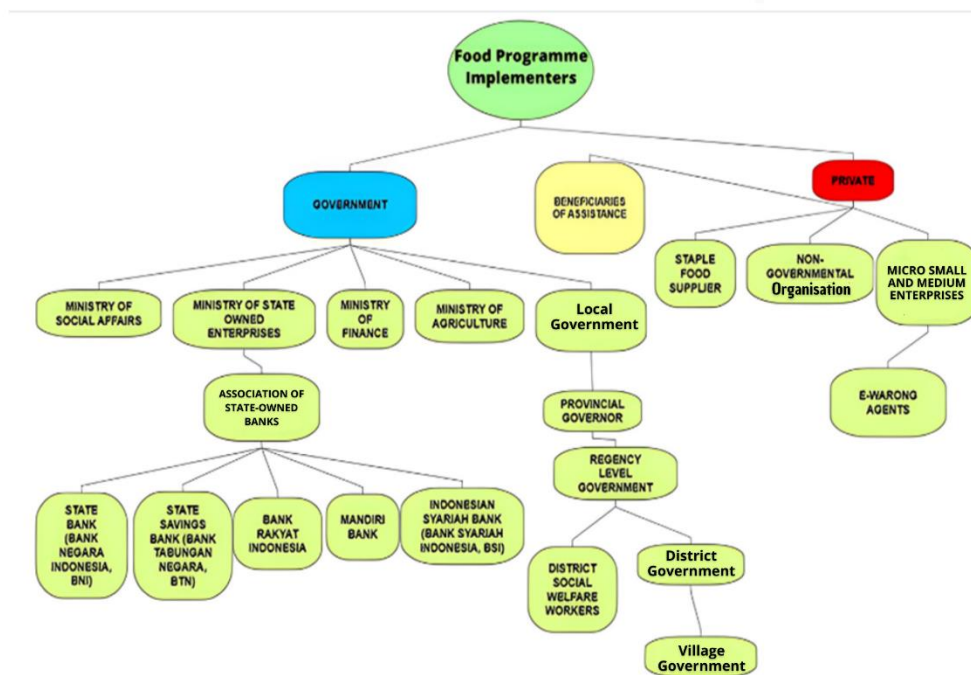


Figure 4. Visualisation of Implementing the Food Programme  
Source: Processed by Authors Using Nvivo 12 Pro (2023)

The responsibility of goods providers is to supply meals to every E Warong agent store. Rice warehouses in Takalar Regency and local agricultural companies provide the food items that goods suppliers deliver. For eligible households to obtain food aid, they must visit the E-Warong agent who is closest to their place of residence. The programme's administration involves state-owned banks, which send assistance money using each recipient family's account number. Utilising the banking system may lead to sustainable growth and financial gains (Biancone et al., 2020; Kang et al., 2019). The government's involvement in enlisting the private sector to implement food assistance programmes in the Takalar coastal region necessitates effective coordination and collaboration with the goal of using this cooperation to address the community's issues with food insecurity (Pollard & Booth, 2019). If done optimally, the government, the private sector and other sectors can have a significant impact on poverty alleviation and food insecurity.

Meanwhile, the private sector contributes to the preparation of food items that recipient households will buy under the categories that have been established. For beneficiaries to conduct transactions in accordance with their requirements, they merely need to visit E-Warong. The supplier must ensure that the Ministry of Social Affairs' requirements for basic necessities are satisfied in terms of quantity, affordability and quality. To ensure that this cooperation benefits the government, the beneficiaries and micro-businesses from the community are free to choose the necessities. Carbohydrates, protein and vitamin requirements must be met by the food items supplied by E-Warong agents. The aim is that the food programme can increase growth and fulfil nutritional intake for underprivileged families to avoid health issues such as stunting problems that

threaten toddlers (Muhyiddin & Nugroho, 2021). In the distribution of programme assistance, the Social Service of Takalar Regency first coordinates with the Subdistrict Social Welfare Workers together with the local government to observe the conditions of beneficiaries and E-Warong agents.

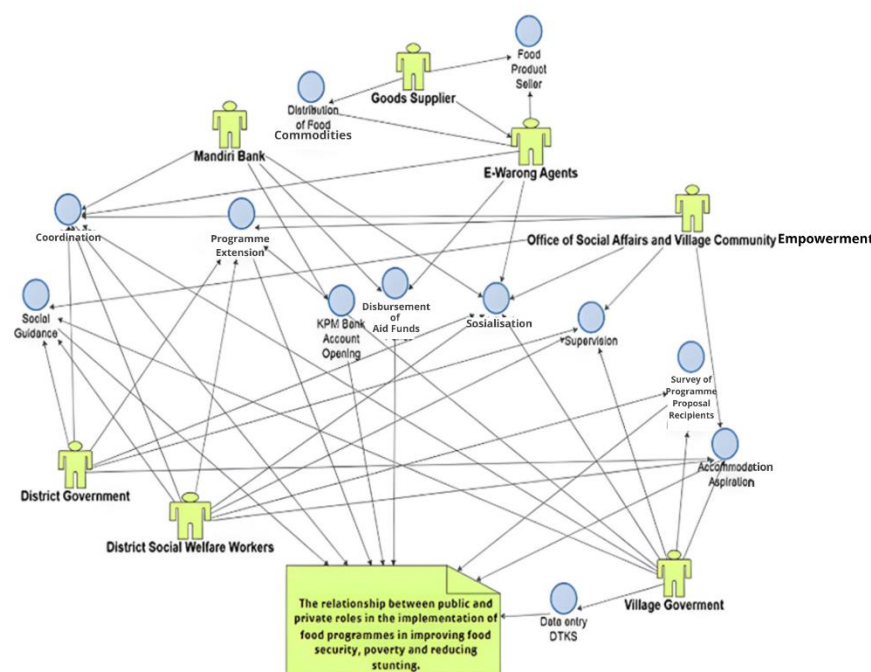


Figure 5. The Role of BPNT Programme Implementers in Takalar, Indonesia  
Source: Processed by Authors Using Nvivo 12 Pro (2023)

The role of the village government is to input data on their community members who are classified as underprivileged to be proposed as recipients of programme assistance. Meanwhile, Bank Mandiri plays a role in creating and distributing account books to each beneficiary in accordance with the data obtained from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Thus, people who receive assistance can redeem it at the nearest E-Warong agent by buying necessities per the programme. Food suppliers have the role of distributing food forms to all E-Warong agents in Takalar Regency. Figure 5 shows the role and cooperative relationship between the government and the private sector in carrying out food assistance programmes to improve food security, particularly in the coastal areas of Takalar Regency.

#### Impact of the Food Programme on Food Security for Coastal Communities

Takalar Regency has implemented several government social programmes to overcome poverty and food security problems. The initiatives consist of the Family Hopes Programme and the noncash food assistance programme. Out of 647,865 households receiving food aid in South Sulawesi Province, 31,321 families in Takalar Regency are receiving noncash food assistance. Takalar is sixth among the 24 regencies/cities in South

Sulawesi in terms of the number of people receiving noncash food help. Figure 6 below shows how the poverty rate in Takalar Regency has changed over time.

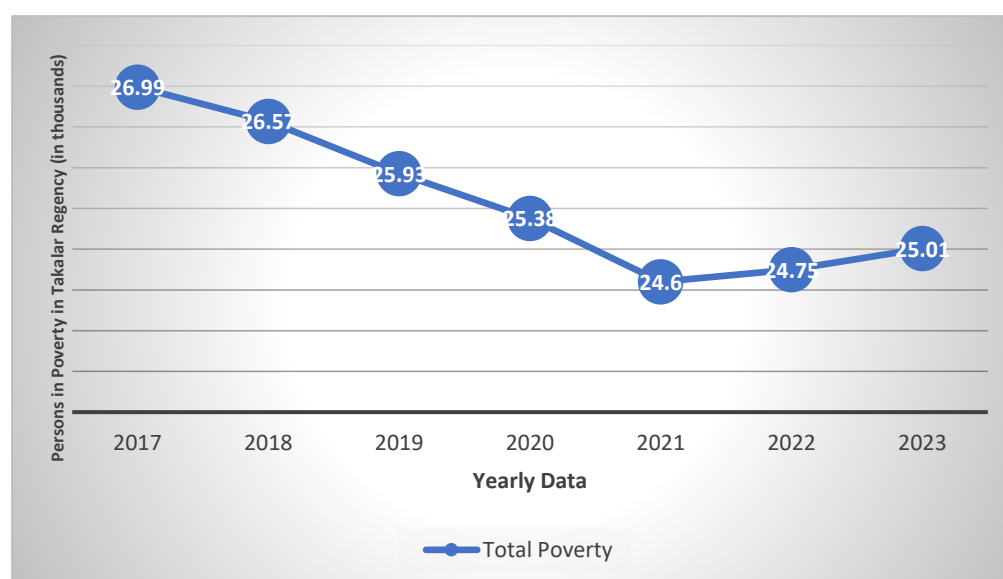


Figure 6. Persons in Poverty in Takalar, Indonesia 2017–2023  
Source: Processed by Authors (2024)

Figure 6 indicates that noteworthy outcomes have been seen from 2017 to 2022, which corresponds to the programme's inception in Takalar Regency. The poverty level in Takalar Regency dropped from 26.99 thousand in 2017 to 26.57 thousand in 2018, or from 9.24% to 9%, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the presence of government initiatives addressing poverty concerns may improve people's quality of life, particularly when it comes to issues of food security and poverty (Mora-Rivera & García-Mora, 2021). In 2019, there was a rising tendency, but there was an overall decline, this time to 25.93 thousand, or 8.7%. In 2020, Takalar Regency saw a decline in the poverty rate once again, while other areas saw a rise in poverty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the influence of COVID-19, the poverty rate has grown in several parts of Indonesia with the emergence of new impoverished groups in addition to those that already existed (Suryahadi et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the poverty rate in Takalar Regency declined in 2020 to 25.38 thousand, or 8.44%. Additionally, favourable trends were seen in 2021, when the percentage of the population living in poverty was 24.6 thousand, or 8.25%. In 2022, however, the downward trend in poverty rates halted, and the rate of poverty rose a little to 24.75 thousand people before stabilising at 8.25%. In 2023, the poverty rate increased again, reaching 25.01 thousand (Badan Pusat Statistik Sulawesi Selatan, 2023).

Based on data from the Electronic Measurement-Community-Based Nutrition Recording and Reporting, the food programme has had a positive impact on reducing the stunting rate in Takalar Regency. In 2021, stunting reached 11.41%, which declined to 9.94% in 2022. In the interim, the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey from 2021 served

as the basis for 34.7% of the measurements. This proportion fell to 31.1% in 2022, a further decline (AbataNews, 2023). Takalar Regency, which had previously been ranked 32nd out of 24 districts/cities in South Sulawesi, came in 19th position on this basis. These data indicate the success of the PPP in Takalar Regency in lowering stunting rates via the food security programme.

Another benefit generated by the food security programme for coastal communities in Takalar Regency is the monthly fulfilment of carbohydrates, protein and vitamins to beneficiaries. The types of assistance obtained by the community are one sack of rice, one shelf of eggs, and apples. Each type of food aid obtained fulfils aspects of essential nutritional needs.

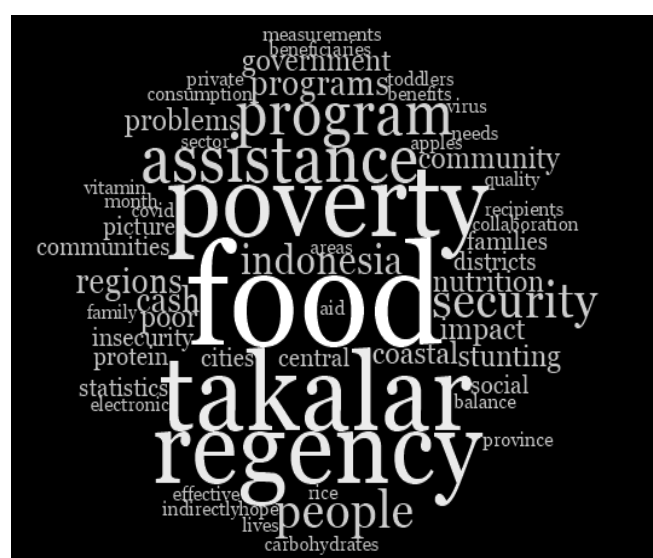


Figure 7. Visualisation of the Benefits of the Food Programme in the Coastal areas  
Source: Processed by Authors (2024)

The visualisation results related to the benefits provided by the food assistance programme to improve food security in the coastal areas of Takalar Regency can be seen in Figure 7. The existence of initiatives to improve food security can provide benefits that meet the needs of the community in the form of food. Consequently, food insecurity can be reduced as well as the stunting rate in toddlers, which exemplifies how public and private sector collaboration can resolve challenging social issues.

## Conclusion

Using the PPP strategy is beneficial for sustainable development initiatives. Improving food security via social programmes aimed at eradicating poverty and food insecurity is an endeavour well suited for a PPP strategy. In this study, public entities include the Takalar Regency Social Service, Subdistrict Social Welfare Assistance, Mandiri Bank, district government and village government. Nongovernmental organisations, food product providers and E-Warong agents are the private entities engaged in the programme's execution. The findings of this study demonstrate that the vulnerability of

food problems in coastal areas is much greater when compared to food vulnerability problems in urban areas. The impact of the involvement of the government and the private sector in food security efforts by running food programmes is that it can increase synergy and cooperation between the government and the private sector, shrink social inequalities, reduce poverty, raise food consumption and decrease stunting problems in toddlers. However, other findings related to obstacles and weaknesses in the cooperation between the government and the private sector in implementing the programme are weak supervision due to the attitude of mutual expectation of responsibility and the practice of corruption of aid funds. Future study is advised to look more closely at government policy and private management of government initiatives, particularly those in coastal locations.

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