

# **Optimization Of Village Natural Resource Management Policies By Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) To Improve Local Community Welfare**

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Abstract: The management of natural resources (NR) in villages has great potential to support the improvement of local community welfare, yet in reality, many villages have not been able to systematically and sustainably optimize their natural wealth. Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), as economic and legal entities mandated by Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, hold a strategic position to manage these potentials. This study aims to analyze the role and optimization of village NR management policies through BUMDes as a means to create community welfare, as well as to examine obstacles encountered in practice. Using a normative juridical approach and analysis of the latest regulations such as Government Regulation No. 11 of 2021, Law No. 23 of 2014, Law No. 6 of 2023, and Law No. 32 of 2009, this research highlights the importance of regulatory synchronization and strengthening the institutional capacity of BUMDes. The findings indicate that although there is a sufficiently strong legal basis, many BUMDes lack legal entity status, experience managerial limitations, and have minimal technical regulatory support at the regional level. Therefore, policy optimization through the formulation of Village Regulations, harmonization with regional development planning, and enhancement of human resource competencies is essential. Institutional strengthening and cross-sectoral support are considered capable of expanding positive impacts such as increasing original village revenue, creating employment, and empowering vulnerable groups. This study recommends sustained collaboration among government, community, and private sectors as a pathway toward village welfare based on local independence. Keywords: BUMDes, Natural Resources, Village, Legal Policy, Community Welfare.

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

The disparity in welfare in rural areas remains a persistent issue to this day, even though villages possess abundant natural resources (Farkhan, 2023). This phenomenon indicates a failure in managing local potentials that should serve as the basic capital for community-based development. Natural wealth such as forests, water, agriculture, and other natural products have not been fully developed in a directed and sustainable manner (Fitria, 2024). Villages are often targeted for exploitation without receiving proportional benefits (Hidayat, 2025). This inequality raises serious questions about the true direction of village development policies and how local institutions such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) are involved in the process. Ideally, local community welfare can be achieved if resource management is conducted fairly and takes into account the interests of village residents as rightful owners of these resources (Rahayu, M. J., AT AL., 2024).

The lack of optimization in managing natural resources in villages further exacerbates the existing inequality. BUMDes, as economic institutions formed based on the needs and potentials of the village, still face various institutional and policy challenges that have not been fully supportive (Jayadi, 2024). Many BUMDes operate without a clear business direction or

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even lie dormant due to the absence of integrated strategic planning aligned with natural resource management policies available in the village (Wanusmawatie, 2021). This incapacity stems not only from managerial aspects but also from weak concrete regulatory support to make BUMDes the main driver of local potential management. Many villages have yet to formulate Village Regulations (Perdes) that comprehensively govern natural resource management through BUMDes. Weak operational legality becomes a major obstacle in making BUMDes a driving force for village community welfare (Syafrin, 2023).

The importance of policies favoring the strengthening of BUMDes becomes an urgent need in the context of sustainable development in villages (Mulyani, 2021). Legal instruments and public policies must be designed to open the widest possible space for BUMDes to actively participate in natural resource management based on the interests of local communities. Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages provides a strong juridical basis for villages to regulate and manage their own affairs based on community initiatives, indigenous rights, and local customs (Masnun, 2024). Article 87 of this law affirms that villages may establish BUMDes aimed at improving the welfare of village communities. Based on this, further operational policies are needed to ensure that BUMDes not only exist formally but also actively perform their economic functions productively and sustainably (Karyana, 2023).

The legal definition of natural resources is explained in Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management. Article 1 point 2 states that natural resources are elements of the environment consisting of biological and non-biological resources that together form an ecosystem unit (Liku, 2022). Villages generally possess both types of resources, such as forests, rivers, community mines, and agricultural land. These potentials can provide high economic and ecological value if managed in a directed, participatory, and sustainable manner (Ningrum, 2021). The issue lies in who holds the authority to manage and how the management mechanisms are implemented within the village institutional structure. A legal approach that supports villages can provide a strong foundation to encourage community participation in both preservation and utilization of existing potentials (Rezi, 2024).

Classifying natural resources into biological and non-biological types is crucial to understanding the appropriate management approach. Biological resources include forests, flora, fauna, and other biodiversity, while non-biological ones encompass minerals, water, soil, and other mining materials (Sulfianti, 2025). Each type requires different methods and management policies depending on its ecological and social characteristics. Villages as legal and social entities have a direct interest in managing both types because they relate to the survival and economy of village residents. Local knowledge and culture also play an important role in maintaining the balance between utilization and preservation. Legal instruments must ensure that all forms of utilization do not harm sustainability and uphold the principle of intergenerational justice (Lindawaty, 2023).

The principle of sustainability is the main foundation in managing natural resources at the local level. Law Number 32 of 2009 stipulates that environmental protection and management must be carried out based on sustainable and participatory principles (Manik, 2024). Villages, as the smallest community units in the government system, have equal responsibilities and rights in realizing these goals. Active involvement of village communities in the planning and implementation of natural resource management can create development models that are not only environmentally friendly but also socially just and economically beneficial. Community participation should not be limited to implementation but also extend to decision-making processes (Nurhayati, 2025). Recognition of the community's right to a

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good and healthy environment must be articulated in local policies and the operational mechanisms of village institutions such as BUMDes.

Understanding local social and economic welfare needs to be based on development theories relevant to the conditions of rural communities. Utilitarianism theory emphasizes that policies and actions taken must provide the greatest benefit to the largest number of people (Pertiwi, 2024). In the context of villages, this means that the management of natural resources should generate economic and social benefits that can be collectively felt by the community, not just by certain individuals or groups. Welfare is not merely about income but also includes aspects of participation, access to resources, and quality of life. The utilization of natural resources by BUMDes, which is community-oriented, can bridge the gap between theory and the practice of welfare. This approach avoids top-down exploitation and replaces it with a grassroots-based empowerment model.

Community-based development is an increasingly recognized approach in local development practice. This approach encourages rural communities to actively participate in every stage of development, from identifying potential to evaluating program success (Zahro'Amika, 2024). In the context of natural resource management, this approach is highly relevant because it promotes appreciation of local knowledge and traditional wisdom that have long been used to maintain environmental balance. Participation here is not just symbolic involvement but equal decision-making between village officials and the community. In this way, development outcomes truly reflect the needs and expectations of the local community. The welfare achieved is also more sustainable because it grows from collective awareness and effort.

BUMDes as a village-owned enterprise holds a strategic position within the framework of local development. Article 87 of Law No. 6 of 2014 states that BUMDes is established based on the needs and potential of the village as a business entity whose entire or majority capital is owned by the village through direct participation originating from village assets (Ash-shidiqqi, 2022). This means BUMDes is not just an ordinary business entity but a legal instrument that can be used to independently and sovereignly manage and develop local resources. Government Regulation No. 11 of 2021 further provides a more technical explanation regarding the establishment, management, and supervision of BUMDes as a legal entity. This legal status enables BUMDes to collaborate with third parties, access financing, and run business units directly related to the management of village natural resources (Aminah, A., & Pratiwi, D., 2025).

The functions of BUMDes are not limited to purely economic activities but also include social functions and public services. BUMDes business units can operate in service sectors, production, distribution, to waste management and renewable energy. The social function of BUMDes is evident from its ability to create jobs, increase community income, and support other village programs. The public service function includes providing access to basic needs such as clean water, managing the village market, to managing eco-tourism based on local natural resources (Candra, 2021). If these three functions are carried out well, BUMDes can become a comprehensive development instrument. Good legal policies and governance are key to ensuring that this great potential can truly be realized on the ground.

#### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a normative juridical method with a statutory and conceptual approach as the main basis for analysis. The normative juridical method aims to examine how

written legal norms, especially statutory regulations, regulate the role and authority of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in the management of village natural resources, as well as how these policies impact the improvement of local community welfare. The statutory approach is used to systematically review relevant legal provisions, such as Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021 concerning Village-Owned Enterprises, Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Ratification of the Government Regulation in Lieu of Law on Job Creation into Law, and Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management. The analysis is conducted by reviewing how these regulations provide a legal basis and institutional space for BUMDes to manage natural resources legally and sustainably. On the other hand, the conceptual approach is used to examine theoretical concepts such as community welfare, local economy, village empowerment, and natural resource governance, to support a deeper understanding of the function and relevance of BUMDes in the context of village development. This approach allows the research not only to be descriptive of the legal content but also analytical of the social and economic realities underlying the formation and implementation of village legal policies (Lestary, R., 2021).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Natural Resource Management Policy by BUMDes**

The management of natural resources at the village level has a fairly strong legal basis, especially after the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. Article 87 paragraph (1) states that villages may establish Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) as business entities whose entire or majority capital is owned by the village through direct participation originating from separated village assets. This provision provides a legitimate space for villages to independently manage local potential, including natural wealth. The implementation of BUMDes as a managing actor is intended so that the village economy can grow from the bottom up, along with increasing community participation in managing the surrounding environmental wealth. Central and regional governments are expected to provide policy support and sustainable guidance to strengthen the legal position of BUMDes are also supported by Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021, which clarifies the institutional structure and business activities of BUMDes.

The role of local government as a facilitator and regulator is also emphasized in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. Article 11 paragraph (2) states that mandatory governmental affairs not related to basic services, including environmental management, fall under the authority of regional governments. This shows that natural resource management at the local level is not solely the domain of the central government but requires active roles from district/city governments to bridge village capacity and environmental sustainability. This support can come in the form of technical policies, human resource training, as well as regional regulations that encourage collaboration between BUMDes and other stakeholders. Local governments also have the responsibility to ensure there is no overlap of authority between villages and other parties in managing local natural wealth. Inter-agency coordination becomes very important so that natural resource management does not cause social or legal conflicts. In this context, villages should not be left to operate independently without synergy from higher-level governments.

The principle of environmental protection and management is also a strong foundation in BUMDes' natural resource management policy. Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management emphasizes that every natural resource utilization

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activity must be based on prudence, sustainability, and participation principles. Article 3 of this law affirms that the purpose of environmental management is to preserve the survival of living beings and ecosystem sustainability. This means BUMDes is not only required to manage natural resources productively but also to be responsible for their environmental impact. Management must be conducted with a sustainable principle so that future generations can also enjoy the existing resources. This strengthens the importance of comprehensive environmental evaluation in every business activity plan carried out by BUMDes. Without attention to sustainability, the business activities run risk damaging the village ecosystem that forms the foundation of community life.

In the latest perspective, Law Number 6 of 2023, which replaces the Job Creation Law, brings changes in the regulation of business licensing and partnerships. One important aspect of this law is the simplification of business licensing and the strengthening of the legal position of local business entities, including BUMDes, in establishing partnerships with the private sector. This opens greater opportunities for villages to access investment and technology in managing natural resources. However, there remain obligations for business actors, including BUMDes, to meet environmental and social standards as regulated in the implementing regulations of this law. These opportunities need to be utilized wisely so that villages do not merely become new objects of exploitation, but active subjects in sustainable development. The freedom in management must also be accompanied by control and supervision based on ecological and social justice values.

The forms of natural resource management activities carried out by BUMDes can vary depending on the local potential possessed by each village. In some areas, BUMDes manage village forests as a source of income through ecotourism programs, commodity tree planting, and utilization of non-timber forest products. Clean water is also an important sector, especially in areas previously experiencing clean water access crises, where BUMDes can build and manage small-scale water treatment installations. Small-scale mining, if managed legally and sustainably, can become a source of village income, although its management must be very careful to avoid environmental damage. Other sectors developed include agro-tourism, village energy based on micro-hydro or biogas, as well as processing of agricultural products that can increase added value for the community. BUMDes must be able to run these activities with an ethical business model that favors shared welfare, not just economic profit.

Partnerships become an important element in strengthening the capacity of natural resource management by BUMDes. In practice, many villages establish cooperation with the private sector, universities, or donor agencies to obtain technical training, funding, and market access. These partnerships can improve the quality of products and services produced by BUMDes, while opening opportunities for wider business networks. However, not all partnerships are fair, so villages need adequate negotiation skills to avoid being disadvantaged. Transparency and community involvement in drafting partnership agreements are also important to maintain accountability and legitimacy. Supervision from local governments is also necessary to ensure partnerships do not violate village governance principles and environmental protection. Strong BUMDes institutions become the main foundation so that villages do not become passive parties in these cooperative relationships.

Despite having great potential, natural resource management by BUMDes faces several serious obstacles, especially in management capacity and human resources. Many BUMDes administrators do not yet have adequate technical or managerial skills in managing natural resource-based businesses. This impacts weak planning, financial management, and business development strategies. Lack of access to training and mentoring also worsens the situation, as not all regions have adequate facilities or resources to improve such capacity. Often, BUMDes business activities stop midway because administrators are unable to adapt to market dynamics or emerging technical problems. This shows that the success of natural resource management does not rely solely on regulations and natural potential, but also heavily depends on human capacity. Improving the human resource capacity of villages needs to become a priority in future village development policies.

Another problem that hinders progress is the absence of clear and operational technical regulations at the regional level regarding natural resource management by BUMDes. Many local governments have not yet established regional regulations or technical guidelines that can serve as references for BUMDes in carrying out natural resource-based economic activities. As a result, villages often face legal uncertainties, especially concerning licensing, spatial planning, and profit distribution. The lack of such technical regulations also makes villages vulnerable to harmful external interventions, such as land grabbing, market monopolies by outside parties, or administrative conflicts. Technical regulations based on community participation and local data are urgently needed so that natural resource management policies become fairer and more sustainable. Local governments have a crucial role in accelerating the drafting of these regulations to prevent gaps between potential and implementation on the ground.

Conflicts of interest also pose a serious challenge in the management of natural resources by BUMDes. In some cases, BUMDes business decisions are influenced by local elites or parties with certain political and economic interests. This situation creates distrust among the community towards BUMDes management, even triggering resistance and horizontal conflicts. Weak internal and external supervision mechanisms worsen this condition because there is no system capable of effectively detecting and handling irregularities. Village community participation in the supervision and evaluation of BUMDes programs is very important to maintain institutional integrity. In addition, strengthening regulations regarding financial transparency and accountability is also needed to prevent misuse in natural resource management. Without a strong supervision system, BUMDes can lose public trust and fail to achieve its main goals.

These challenges cannot be solved instantly but require a comprehensive and sustainable policy approach. The involvement of central government, regional government, and village communities must align in efforts to strengthen BUMDes as a resilient and trustworthy natural resource manager. This process requires time, resource support, and commitment from various parties to maintain a balance between economic exploitation and environmental preservation. Institutional and legal reforms must be accompanied by cultural changes and community awareness about the importance of responsible natural resource management. If these challenges can be overcome, then BUMDes will not only become the engine of the village economy but also the protector of local ecosystems that are a shared heritage. A community-based, transparent, and collaborative approach becomes a promising middle path in shaping a future of equitable natural resource management.

### Optimization of Policies and the Role of BUMDes for Community Welfare

Optimizing legal policies in the management of natural resources by Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) requires adaptive regulations that are oriented toward the real needs of village communities. The drafting of Village Regulations (Perdes) that support the sustainability of local resource management becomes an important foundation for BUMDes to operate within a clear legal framework. The Perdes must clearly explain the types of businesses to be managed, the forms of possible cooperation, as well as mechanisms for supervision and

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accountability to the village community. The strength of the Perdes lies in its closeness to field conditions, so the drafting process needs to involve active participation from village residents, customary leaders, and local business actors. The Perdes should also be dynamic and flexible in response to changes, whether from national legislation or the socio-economic conditions of the village. When local policies can bridge the gap between economic needs and environmental protection, BUMDes will function more optimally as an instrument of sustainable development.

Harmonization between village policies and the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) as well as the District Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) is a crucial aspect of developmental synergy. RPJMDes, as a five-year village planning document, needs to integrate the resource management policies implemented by BUMDes so they do not overlap with programs initiated by the regional government. Synchronization with the district RPJMD opens up opportunities for program collaboration and budget support from the regional level. When village and district agendas reinforce each other, the effectiveness of natural resource management increases and directly impacts community welfare. This collaboration not only reduces conflicts of interest between institutions but also strengthens the village's bargaining position in regional development decision-making. The district government has the responsibility to facilitate this harmonization by providing planning assistance and adjusting macro policies.

Strengthening technical regulations at the district level is one key to creating legal clarity in BUMDes operations. The district government can draft Regent Regulations (Perbup) and Regional Regulations (Perda) that provide technical guidelines for village-based natural resource management. These regulations must not only regulate licensing mechanisms and business governance but also address environmental protection, indigenous community rights, and fair profit-sharing systems. When BUMDes are given clear technical and formal legal frameworks, incoming investments will have a strong legal foundation and encourage trust from various stakeholders. The regulations must also consider business sustainability and social responsibility toward surrounding communities. In this context, the role of relevant district agencies is essential to provide regular guidance, supervision, and evaluation of BUMDes performance.

Certification of BUMDes legal entities is a strategic step to strengthen institutional legality and capacity. Certification through the Ministry of Law and Human Rights not only provides legal recognition but also opens wider access to funding sources, business cooperation, and legal protection in running enterprises. This legality emphasizes that BUMDes is a legal entity authorized to act on behalf of the village in economic activities. The certification process must be accompanied by legal and administrative training for BUMDes management so that it is not merely formal but truly creates accountable governance. This certification also serves as a reference when BUMDes engages in cross-sector cooperation, whether with private parties, financial institutions, or donor agencies. When BUMDes has strong legal status, public trust will increase significantly.

Training in village management and entrepreneurship becomes an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of BUMDes managers. Human resources who understand business governance, business planning, financial management, and risk management will increase the chances of success for village economic programs. Training can be facilitated not only by the local government but also through collaboration with universities, NGOs, and industry players. Participatory training models based on local case studies will be easier to understand and apply in the context of each village. Capacity building should be continuous and not stop at a single training session. As the knowledge and skills of BUMDes managers improve, innovation in natural resource management will naturally grow as well.

Access to financing is a crucial factor in realizing the business plans initiated by BUMDes. Village Funds (Dana Desa) can be allocated proportionally to strengthen the business units managed, while still paying attention to the principles of prudence and transparency. Besides Village Funds, financing opportunities can also come from social investment schemes such as CSR funds, philanthropic institutions, and private partnership programs. When BUMDes has realistic business projections based on local potential, its attractiveness to social investors will increase. Professional business proposals and feasibility studies are essential prerequisites for accessing funds beyond government budgets. Healthy access to financing will accelerate village economic growth and reduce dependence on government aid.

Increasing the Village Original Revenue (Pendapatan Asli Desa, PADes) is one of the tangible impacts of optimizing BUMDes' role in natural resource management. When BUMDes business units run efficiently and sustainably, their contribution to the village treasury will be significant. Higher PADes provides greater fiscal space for the village to finance infrastructure development, public services, and social programs. Fiscal independence of the village becomes an important indicator that natural resource management policies are not only economically beneficial but also enhance the village government's capacity to respond to the needs of its citizens. Transparency in BUMDes financial reporting is also a determinant of the sustainability of contributions to PADes. When villagers see the real benefits of the joint enterprise, support and participation will continue to flow.

Job creation and micro-enterprises generated from BUMDes activities have a domino effect on the welfare of the village community. Natural resource management, such as processing agricultural products, producing clean water, or managing local energy, requires labor from the surrounding environment. This creates new job opportunities, reduces unemployment rates, and encourages the development of local entrepreneurship. The presence of BUMDes can also inspire the emergence of new business units in supporting sectors. When the village economy starts to move, the cycle of local consumption and production will grow, strengthening the community's economic resilience against external shocks. The role of BUMDes in building the village business ecosystem must be continuously encouraged through facilitation, training, and market access.

Empowering vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities is one indicator of BUMDes' success in the social aspect. When BUMDes business units create inclusive participation spaces, equitable benefits of village development can be realized. Vulnerable groups are not only beneficiaries but also active players in the value chain of the businesses built. For example, involving women in craft production activities, youth in information technology, or people with disabilities in administrative tasks. This empowerment not only increases individual income but also strengthens their confidence and social position within the community. When social justice becomes a guiding principle for BUMDes, village development will truly reach all layers of society.

Improvements in social services such as informal education, environmental health, and strengthening community solidarity can be positive by-products of BUMDes' economic success. When village income increases and community members have stable earnings, their participation in social activities will also rise. BUMDes can act as a facilitator for social activities, such as nutrition counseling, skills training, or digital literacy programs. These activities create spaces for dialogue among residents, strengthen social cohesion, and foster

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high solidarity in facing shared challenges. Vibrant social services supported by a strong local economy create a prosperous and empowered village environment. When BUMDes integrates into community life, its function is not only as a business institution but also as an agent of community change.

### CONCLUSION

The implementation of BUMDes holds strategic potential not only as a local economic entity but also as a legal instrument in managing natural resources at the village level. Its existence bridges the community's interest in directly benefiting from local potential while remaining within a legitimate legal framework. When BUMDes is optimally utilized, village economic independence can be realized through sustainable business management based on natural resources. The legal status of BUMDes strengthens the village's bargaining position in business collaborations as well as in the formulation of development policies. Optimizing legal policies is an important element in reinforcing the institutional foundation of BUMDes so that it can not only survive but also grow and provide significant impacts on community welfare.

The central and regional governments need to demonstrate real commitment in strengthening regulatory support and technical assistance for village-based natural resource management. A clear legal framework, management training, and access to financing must be designed integratively so that BUMDes can operate with good governance. Monitoring implementation on the ground is an important step to ensure that every policy is truly carried out and delivers results in accordance with its objectives. A sustainable approach in supervision and evaluation can detect obstacles early and encourage swift improvements. Multistakeholder collaboration involving the community, government, private sector, and academia is key to creating a resource management ecosystem that is fair, transparent, and accountable.

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