



DETERMINANT FACTORS OF GAPOKTAN IN PROMOTING BUSINESS VENTURES: A CASE STUDY OF SEPAKAT FARMER GROUP IN NAGARI CANDUANG, WEST SUMATRA

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ABSTRACT

Gapoktan (gabungan kelompok tani/farmer group associations) play a vital role in increasing the economic scale and operational efficiency of agricultural collectives, yet many face challenges in sustaining business ventures. The study therefore seeks to explore success factors for Gapoktan to sustain itself in commerce-related activities. The specific goals of this study are to discuss the role of Gapoktan, their partners, their collaborative partners, and factors that act as enablers for them. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, using Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the Gapoktan chairperson, farmer group leaders, and the Agricultural Extension Center coordinator. According to the findings, the Sepakat Gapoktan is primarily engaged in three activities: (1) organic vegetable marketing; (2) compost production, and; (3) Biological Agent Service Information Center. The main factors contributing to the success of Gapoktan in its business ventures are: (1) effective leadership by the Gapoktan chairperson, (2) treating the association as a business entity rather than a social group, (3) engagement of local leaders, (4) commitment to terms of time, energy, and financial resources, (5) collaboration with external institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

A *Gapoktan* (gabungan kelompok tani/farmer group association) emerges from combining several *poktan* (kelompok tani/farmer groups), primarily aiming to boost farming efficiency and strengthen farmers' bargaining power. Despite lacking formal legal recognition as a cooperative, *Gapoktan* often performs economic roles quite similar to one. This involves procuring agricultural supplies, processing goods,

managing marketing efforts, and even providing microfinance services. *Gapoktan Sepakat* is not a cooperative as defined by Law No. 25 of 1992 on Cooperatives (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 25 Tahun 1992 tentang Perkoperasian*). Instead, it operates as a non-formal entity that has truly developed into a significant economic force (Sariati & Hayanti, 2023). This specific *Gapoktan* handles a range of business ventures, clearly demonstrating its entrepreneurial spirit. These efforts include marketing healthy vegetables, creating compost, and developing biological agents, all undertaken even without being formally registered as a cooperative. Gaining a clear understanding of this institutional setup is vital; it is how we grasp *Gapoktan*'s role, its operational flow, and the key factors driving the success of its business endeavors. According to Ministry Regulation No. 67 of 2016, *Gapoktan* serves various roles, including: (1) as a supplier of agricultural production facilities, (2) a farming production coordinator, (3) a processing center, (4) a marketing agent, and (5) a microfinance provider that oversees savings and loans activities.

Ideally, *Gapoktan* fulfills several important functions which actually make a significant positive impact to financially improve the lot of farmers and advocate sustainable farming. The group serves as a crucial hub, distributing essential farming supplies such as seeds and fertilizers even simple machinery. This is essentially supporting farmers to get more out of their land. And through promoting cooperative farming, *Gapoktan* is also nudging its members to trade practical know-how and tools. This, in its own right, has a huge impact on yield and reduces costs. Its processing works are smart: They add value to raw farm products, putting more profit in the pockets of farmers. Through joint marketing, *Gapoktan* also strengthens farmers' bargaining position in the market. And in the end its microfinance program offers an actual lifeline, loans and savings. These choices enable farmers to stay in business and ride out financial peaks and troughs, particularly during slack times.

However, despite this solid foundation, *Gapoktan* still encounter tremendous challenges for growth and competitiveness. It should be noted that this information is based on observations and from interviews conducted during the particular research with the personnel of *Gapoktan Sepakat*. Interviews exposed problems in leadership and management, financial constraints, technological gaps and limited training opportunities.

- (1) Management and leadership challenges. Inadequately trained and experienced management often leads to poor leadership. Effective management at *Gapoktan* requires excellent leadership. Without them, the organization faces disconnected procedures and decreased output.
- (2) Financial barriers. For most farmers, limited financial resources restrict growth and make it hard to invest in technology or to have an impact at scale. While *Gapoktan* microfinance unit is a progress, capacious fund is still constrained due to complex bureaucratic process and strict credit terms, which make the acquisition of Kredit Usaha Rakyat (KUR) difficult (Wati, 2015; Sariati, 2023).
- (3) Technology gaps and training needs. Access to modern technology remains another major stumbling block. Many *Gapoktan* struggle to incorporate up-to-date farming techniques that could greatly improve efficiency and yield. Ideally, training programs, set up to fill this gap, would be sufficient or in depth enough so that farmers could actually effectively use the new tools.

Thus, on a regional level, only relatively well-supported *Gapoktan* have been able to take up new agricultural techniques. This inequality has implications for the competitive strengths of the under-resourced *Gapoktan* which struggle to operate in the wider agricultural sector.

Recent data from the Kementerian Pertanian (2024) underscores the reach and diversity of these organizations: West Sumatra alone is home to 1,329 *Gapoktan*, encompassing 22,711 farmer groups. These groups span various agricultural segments, with 12,494 focused on food crops, 5,009 on horticulture, 6,312 on plantations, 3,487 on livestock, and 674 engaged in processing. These spread highlights both the potential and uneven development of agribusiness initiatives across regencies.

Drilling down into the distribution of processing-oriented farmer groups across West Sumatra's 20 regencies and cities, Agam Regency stands out as a leader. This region not only boasts the highest number of processing-focused groups but demonstrates a strong commitment to moving beyond basic production. Pasaman follows with 80 groups, Padang Pariaman with 72, West Pasaman with 55, and Pariaman City with 51. These figures emphasize on downstream activities such as processing and packaging, which can significantly boost income for farmer groups by allowing them to sell higher-value products.

Although there is a growing perception that *Gapoktan* can also support business activities other than production, many operate principally on an upstream role such as production and cultivation. This narrow focus hinders their ability to expand into more profitable markets beyond simple farming. Downstream activities such as processing and marketing, in fact, have the potential to offer farmers sharply higher incomes but they require better infrastructure, better market connections, and better business skills to pursue.

In some areas, such as Agam Regency, value-adding programs have already begun. But such cases remain relatively rare. Most of this *Gapoktan* in Indonesia have not developed downstream operation even though they have economic potentials that are still untapped. This isn't simply an issue of infrastructure, but a break-down of commerce and institution-building.

For that reason, the slow development of downstream functions should be viewed as more than just a technical issue; it represents a deeper, systemic challenge. It is important to identify the reasons why only a few of *Gapoktan* are moving in this direction as catering for a long-term if not permanent development of stronger and more sustainable models in the rural sector.

There are some important factors influencing the sustainability and performance of *Gapoktan*, including good leadership, resources adequacy, strategic cooperation and comprehensive training materials. Effective leadership is key for integrating the different aspects within *Gapoktan* and making them work in harmony with a common purpose. Partnerships with governments, non-governmental organizations, or the corporate sector can provide access to cutting-edge technology, money, and market opportunities. For example, collaboration with agriculture research centers can result in better farming techniques and inputs.

Recognizing and examining such critical success factors is needed in order to develop appropriate interventions and policy support measures that lead to an enhanced performance of *Gapoktan*. It is anticipated that, by examining the factors

behind their success, this study can provide new knowledge based on evidence that will contribute to future agricultural development policies and capacity building in the country.

More frequent and improved value-relevant training is needed for farmer group members. Those sorts of programs need to not only inform on technical knowledge, but also ensure that farmers understand basic business management skills like keeping proper financial books and leveraging market analysis for how to play and stay in business at scale. There is a long road from simply cooperating models, to merging business and the successful outcome is dependent on learning over time.

In summary, while Gapoktan has managed to integrate farmers and increase agricultural production, it needs a further elaboration in management, financing, and accessibility of technology to become more competitive. Overcoming these challenges and promoting a can-do spirit for learning and improving should support Gapoktan to go into downstream activities and not only survive, but thrive. This study tries to explore Key Success Factors that make *Gapoktan* succeed through practicing their activities, partnership, and growing factors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method to examine the key factors that support the success of *Gapoktan* in managing business ventures. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach is useful for understanding social issues within their real-life context. The research site was chosen intentionally – Agam Regency has the highest number of processing-focused farmer groups in West Sumatra. Out of 94 *Gapoktan* in the regency, only three in Canduang District are still active and sustainable in running their business units. Among them, *Gapoktan Sepakat* was selected as the research subject because it is the most consistent in maintaining its economic activities and partnerships with other institutions.

To assess success, the study used several criteria: (1) the number of active business units, (2) the ability to collaborate with external partners like hospitals, cooperatives, and universities, (3) the level of farmer participation in business activities, and (4) support from the local government. From these indicators, *Gapoktan Sepakat* proved to be the most relevant subject for this research.

Fieldwork for this research was carried out between September and October 2024. Two main approaches were employed in obtaining data: secondary data collection and the administration of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Participants for the FGDs were the Chairperson of Gapoktan, one Agricultural Extension Coordinator, and ten heads of various Farmer Groups under Gapoktan Sepakat. The research focused especially on Gapoktan's main business activities, its partnership agreements, and the most influential factors to its overall success.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section is based on the result of a series of method such as field observation, focus group discussion and in-depth interview with farmer, unit coordinator and *gapoktan*'s leader. The information is structured by theme, beginning

with *Gapoktan Sepakat* as it stands to provide context followed by a discussion of its business units and success factor. The paraphrased quotes provided serve to capture participants' perspectives as accurately as possible.

Gapoktan Sepakat is among the leading farm group organisations located in Agam regency, Canduang subdistrict. Although unregistered as a cooperative, it performs a range of core cooperative functions, including production coordination, marketing and extension of financial facilities for the members' benefit. This case illustrates a typical rural Indonesia institution model, with the Gapoktan acting as economic and social institutions (Kementerian Pertanian, 2012).

The distinguishing aspect of a Gapoktan from a cooperative lies in their structure and their legal status. Gapoktans are formed with the aid of the government, without a formal legal status, and with the goal of increasing self-strength and social solidarity. Cooperatives are business organizations guided by the Law 25 of 1992 and with a responsibility to generate profits from their members. Being aware of these differences enables farmers and their corresponding parties to choose the superior institution to support their farming enterprise individually and collectively.

Gapoktan Sepakat was founded in 2018 as an association of 55 farmer groups working towards strengthening the rural farm economy in Nagari Canduang Koto Laweh further. In its earlier years, it started a microfinance section to finance the needs of the members economically. Though the programme had promise in the initial stages, it later faltered due to operating and performance issues.

After sensing the group's potential, community leader Mr. Juli Mustanto took the initiative to lead a renewal process in 2021. Among others, the association has since set more defined objectives, improved leadership structure, and begun laying foundations for long-term sustainability.

Though still relatively young, *Gapoktan Sepakat* has demonstrated strong resilience and consistent performance. Today, it stands out as one of only three cooperatives in Canduang District that have successfully maintained both operational sustainability and active business engagement. This revival, which reflects the commitment of its members to improving the local agricultural economy, is also supported by the community.

According to Luthfi and Basir (2023), the district government of Canduang Koto Laweh has been supportive in the growth of cooperatives like *Gapoktan Sepakat*. By organizing various programs of training and cultivating a culture of cooperation, the government makes the farmers enthusiastic about cooperating with an economic vision shared among all of them. This government assistance also plays a critical role in enabling the farmers with the appropriate tools and information so that their endeavors in the cooperatives bear fruit. According to Putra and Sadono (2024), extension support has the potential to expand farmers' innovation adoption.

Gapoktan's composition and operation in Indonesia are stated in the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 67 of 2016, which explains Gapoktan as an organization consisting of a series of farmer groups with the main goal to achieve efficiency and economic power increase. The regulation also emphasizes Gapoktan's operation in strengthening grassroot agricultural institutions through facilitation of easy access to farm production facilities, promotion of joint farming activity, and

strengthening post-harvest processes, marketing, and basic financial services like savings and loans.

Gapoktan is not technically registered as a cooperative but is set up to carry out social and economic work concurrently. What exactly that really means in the practical aspect is linking their members with external support – capital, education, better farm technologies, etc. Through the creation of such linkages, *Gapoktan* should boost production, reinforce their organization, and help to sustain farming in the long run in rural communities.

In keeping with the overall mission, *Gapoktan Sepakat* has set up three fundamental business units to meet the distinct needs of the domestic farmer members:

Healthy Vegetable Marketing Unit

This marketing unit is critical in having the farmers cultivate and sell high-quality vegetables to primarily local markets. There's also an interest in connecting with the regional markets some distance further down the road. Through emphasizing quality products, the group also promotes eco-friendly farming while providing the people with more options in food choices. There's also the economic benefit accruing to the farmers, who have been marketing their products collectively, directly to consumers, like local markets or food houses. This way, they earn more than selling individually. Through doing so, farmers take better advantage of an exchange rate. This impact from marketing has extended beyond the area of Nagari Canduang Koto Laweh and is only just beginning to touch surrounding Agam Regency subdistricts, presenting more avenues to increase farmers' income. This marketing business, including promotion and searching out new partners with which to do business, is specially managed by the Healthy Vegetable Marketing Unit led by *Gapoktan Sepakat*.

This unit focuses on promoting vegetables cultivated by farmers who possess Prima Certificate for food safety, issued by the Regional Food Safety Authority under the supervision of Indonesia's National Food Agency (OKKPD). This certificate guarantees that products from the farm are products of national quality and are safe for consumption. This certification is awarded to agricultural products which are subjected to multi-faceted examination, experiment and supervision to ensure compliance with the necessary levels for the Prima Product label. Hence the certified vegetables are guaranteed for quality and safety, thereby protecting the consumers. Lasmini et al. (2020) have demonstrated that farmers who receive technical support are often very interested in growing health-promoting vegetables, as indicated by their enthusiasm for adopting new practices. Wulandari et al. (2024) observed that the attitude of farmers to the adopt of improved seeds depended on their knowledge, motivation, logical action. Additionally, Djumadil and Suhardi (2023) emphasized that marketing serves as the vital connection for advancing a robust vegetable agribusiness, as it links production with consumption activities.

Through its Healthy Vegetable program, *Gapoktan* providers collaborate with Prima-3 Certified farmers to guarantee that their products are safe for public consumption. Hardiyanti et al. (2022) further found that loyal customers favor buying healthy, nutrient-dense vegetables, even at higher prices, due to a growing awareness of healthy living as a preferred lifestyle choice. Confronted with the

ongoing and pressing issues surrounding pesticide application in horticultural regions of West Sumatra, *Gapoktan Sepakat* finds a valuable opportunity for itself. The cooperative's Healthy Vegetables working group marketing strategy involves establishing collaborative partnerships with certified farmers, Agam District Agricultural Cooperative, nearby mini-markets, and Yarsi Hospital for both individual and group market sales. One of the participating farmers noted that selling through *Gapoktan* felt more reliable compared to selling to individual traders, especially because prices were fixed and payments were received on time. Several members also mentioned that the Prima-3 certification boosted buyers' trust, especially from institutional markets like hospitals and minimarkets.

Herawati et al. (2024) explained that farmers' income is highly sensitive to price fluctuations and rising storage costs. Therefore, the incorporation of technology has the potential to minimize these effects through minimizing post-harvest losses and enabling farmers to store their products in the best possible conditions. According to Hanifa et al. (2023), farmer shop and mini markets linkages aid the marketing of the cooperative as among the marketing outlets of agriproducts. Promotional activities, personal selling, marketing directly, and communication through word of mouth also play significant contributions to making the marketing efforts of the cooperative more efficient. Ratnawati et al. (2017) state that the dominant factors influencing consumers' decisions to purchase healthy vegetables are price, meaning that healthy vegetables are still considered more expensive than conventional ones. As a result, consumers of healthy vegetables tend to be loyal customers. Similarly, Imran et al. (2021) found that consumers' willingness to buy healthy vegetables over conventional ones is highly influenced by quality and price. This implies that consumers are more likely to choose expensive vegetables with good quality and safety, indicating an increased awareness of food safety. Furthermore, Harahap et al. (2024) stated that pesticide-free hydroponic spinach cultivation is feasible for development and marketing as a healthy vegetable commodity.

The Compost Production Unit

To meet the demand for organic fertilizers, this unit manufactures compost from local agricultural waste. The Sepakat Farmers Group members, trained by the Agam District Agriculture Service and BPTPH, handle the production. Some of the compost is given freely to active members as internal support. The majority, however, is sold to individual farmers nearby or to other farmer groups. Prices vary by packaging size and delivery point, ranging from IDR 2,500 to IDR 8,500 per kilogram. Sales revenue is jointly managed and reinvested into operations and training, thereby securing the project's long-term viability.

Gapoktan Sepakat is actively supporting eco-friendly agriculture and helping farmers cut costs by producing compost. This compost is key because it not only boosts soil health but also drives sustainable farming practices. For farmers, this unit is all about easier and cheaper access to fertilizer. This major new initiative demonstrates their commitment to ensuring the infrastructure is in place. Compost is, after all, an organic fertilizer, made from simple stuff like kitchen scraps, plants, and (in some cases) market refuse and produced via a careful, well-ordered composting process. This type of fertilizer enhances the soil's capacity to retain

moisture and absorb additional nutrients. One of the benefits of compost is its ability to improve soil texture and strengthen nutrient content, particularly in sandy soils.

Gapoktan Sepakat works alongside local farmers whose expertise in compost production was gained as a result of training offered by the Food Crop and Horticulture Protection Agency (BTPPH) and the Agam District Agricultural Office. A farmer who joined the compost production training shared that using compost made from local waste materials helped reduce their dependence on chemical fertilizers and lowered their input costs. Another member highlighted that the soil became easier to manage and yielded better results after switching to compost. Compost marketing efforts can extend to both the cooperative's internal network and external purchasers. Indeed, data from Nurdy et al. (2024) affirm that farmer groups (*Gapoktan*) possess superior insight into transforming waste into valuable compost materials. Additionally, these groups show greater proficiency in preparing compost products for retail sale.

Hosen (2012) indicates that composting technology adoption in Agam Regency stands at approximately 25-35%. Notably, applying compost in rice farming increases average yields by 15%, with corn yields potentially rising by 20%. Such boosts in agricultural productivity could elevate average farming household income by about 12.90%. This evidence powerfully demonstrates the numerous benefits cooperative members gain from composting. Kabeakan et al. (2024) point out how environmentally sustainable farm inputs help reduce costs but increase quality for crops. In addition, Yaser et al. (2023) point out that the use of compost fertilizer as fertilizer for horticultural crops is more effective as it results in all-around best productions time after time. While the selling price of compost fertilizer has risen due to higher costs of raw materials, the company still makes some profits after exceeding their break-even point as reported by Sianipar et al. (2016). All this cumulatively demonstrates using compost fertilizer for horticultural cultivation as being highly profitable.

The Biological Agent Unit (POS IPA)

Dedicated to the development of biological agents for organic pest control, this unit's work is vital. Using the biological options decreases the use of chemical pesticides by greatly reducing the harm they cause to both human health and the environment. Offering those organic remedies, *Gapoktan Sepakat* significantly contributes to the maintenance of ecological stability as well as the development of safe-pest management among its members. Working through *Gapoktan Sepakat*'s Information and Service Post for Biological Agents (POS IPA), the Biological Agent Unit acts as the main local extension of the lab. Accessible through the Biological Agent Service Post (PPA), the unit is responsible for the preparation, multiplication, application, development, and spread of environmentally friendly production materials in alignment with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles. Trained and selected farmer representative supervises the post.

Hendrawan et al. (2024) indicate that the proper marketing of biological agents has the potential to utilize marketing technology advances. This includes the utilization of diverse components as well as the densities of the microorganisms for the purpose of product quality and trustworthiness so as to obtain the best value of the TAS at 7.39. In the implementation of the POS IPA program, *Gapoktan Sepakat*

also cooperates with the BTPPH, the Food Crop and Horticultural Office, the Animal Husbandry Department, as well as several others, such as members of the legislatures of the province and the Agam District who inhabit the electoral district of Canduang. The cooperatives have received variable assistance in the forms of compost homes, fermentation tanks, organic fertilizer treatment equipment (APPO), motor carts, choppers, demonstration refrigerators, scales, as well as packaging equipment. Products like *Trichoderma*, Lactate Acid, and decomposers, developed by POS IPAHA, are readily available to farmers within *Gapoktan Sepakat* at competitive prices.

According to one of the unit coordinators, there has been an increase in awareness among members about the risks of chemical pesticide use. He explained that many farmers now request bio-agents regularly, and some have even expressed interest in learning to produce them independently at home. The primary raw materials used in the production of biological agents at POS IPAHA are sourced from the local environment, including bamboo forest soil, straw, livestock manure, household organic waste, and rice washing water. These materials are then fermented or cultured in specific media. Additionally, *Gapoktan Sepakat* collaborates with the Agam Regency Agriculture Service and BTPPH to obtain microbial isolates such as *Trichoderma* spp. and *Lactobacillus* spp. from relevant laboratories. These locally available raw materials not only reduce production costs but also enhance farmer participation in the production process through training and hands-on practice. This approach makes the production of biological agents more sustainable and better integrated with the local organic farming system.

Atika dan Murdianto (2022) pay attention to the fact that the establishment of cooperatives require government policies for the development of industrial areas. This implies that the agricultural sector's contribution should surpass that of non-governmental sectors to ensure the sustainability of cooperative operations, which ultimately enhances the welfare of farming households. Syatrawati dan Inderiati (2017) argue that vegetable crops require empowerment for the production and use of biological agents as an alternatives for the control of pests as well as diseases so as to minimize the use of chemical pesticides. Faiz et al. (2024) emphasize that biological control contributes significantly to the advancement of sustainable agriculture.

With these business units, *Gapoktan Sepakat* fulfills diverse needs among the members of the agric community. It acts as the backbone infrastructure providing the members with access to resources, information, as well as collaborations that not only enhance productivity but also the well-being of the agricultural community. In this way, *Gapoktan Sepakat* demonstrates the positive impact that well-managed cooperatives can have on local economies, underscoring the effectiveness of community-focused agricultural initiatives in transforming rural areas.

Discussion

Several elements affect how well a company turns out. Regarding *Gapoktan Sepakat*, several major causes have been found to be the main drivers of its success in running its corporate segments. The chairmen confront challenges both inside and outside. Inside, the chairman has to inspire members to aggressively support the activities of the organizations; outside, the chairman has to concentrate on building and sustaining amicable contacts with external parties to promote mutually

advantageous projects. These relationships are key to boosting the business activities and providing the resources.

To ensure its success, *Gapoktan Sepakat* uses five key components in organizing its operations: leadership, business orientation, local champions, willingness to sacrifice, and partner cooperation. In synergy, the whole these factors can enable the *Gapoktan Sepakat* to build a strong foundation that will enable it to serve its purposes despite multiple problems in agriculture faced by the members.

Leadership is “the process in which an individual influences the activities of others toward the attainment of goals” (Robbins & Coulter, 2012; Yukl, 2010; Northouse, 2013). To strengthen the team bond, the chairman has regular meetings with the team leaders to discuss tactics, new projects and fresh opportunities for the cooperative. Such gatherings are opportunities to reconcile and come to an agreement on common objectives, and the sharing of best practices can be enormously beneficial to the community members. The *Gapoktan* chair also wanted to work together with other parties so that whatever healthy vegetable varieties were produced by the farmers, it would also have a market. Furthermore, the chairman, together with the stakeholder, promote the activities as compost production, and POS IPA program, a program on upscaling sustainable agricultural practices. Therefore, pesticide use can be reduced or adjusted through regulations. This is supported by Nainggolan and Harahap (2024), who stated that excessive pesticide use directly decreases farmer production and income.

Business orientation represents another important key success factor, separating *Gapoktan Sepakat* from other community-based organizations. While the traditional cooperative might strongly encourage social support, *Gapoktan* is much more business-focused, reflecting a demand for professional management and market orientation. In this case, the cooperative needs a few technologies to better manage its operations, such as those related to vegetable conservation, compost and the development of biological agents. Adoption of those technologies not only improve product quality but also improve *Gapoktan* position in the market lead to better competitiveness. In managing business activities, *Gapoktan Sepakat* applies collective management instead of employing fulltime professional managers. The system is managed as a whole by the head of the *Gapoktan* along with coordinators of each business units who are all from the member groups of farmers. Every unit, be it vegetable marketing, compost production, or production of biological agents, is supervised by a small team that handles routine functions while updating the leadership periodically.

Financial management is performed internally with a very simple financial system and decisions are usually done in discussion and consensus in regular coordination meetings. The group’s business capital is mostly sourced from member contributions and reinvested profits and sometimes from government programs or institutional partners. There is a strong connection to the local community through the supply chain: member farmers supply raw materials, work in production and serve as distributors.

In order to provide better understanding on this governance and process, Figure 1 also presents the organizational chart of *Gapoktan Sepakat* demonstrating the interrelation between the chairperson, the unit coordinators, as well as the partner universities.

A cost increase of 315% is a very large range and is very unlikely to occur if the economy and inflation are stable. Likewise, an increase in interest rates to 46% is also something that has never happened in our economy in almost the last 3 decades. The sensitivity analysis to the increase in production factor prices is estimated from the trend of price changes in production means and the increase in the production factors used (Putra et al. 2024).

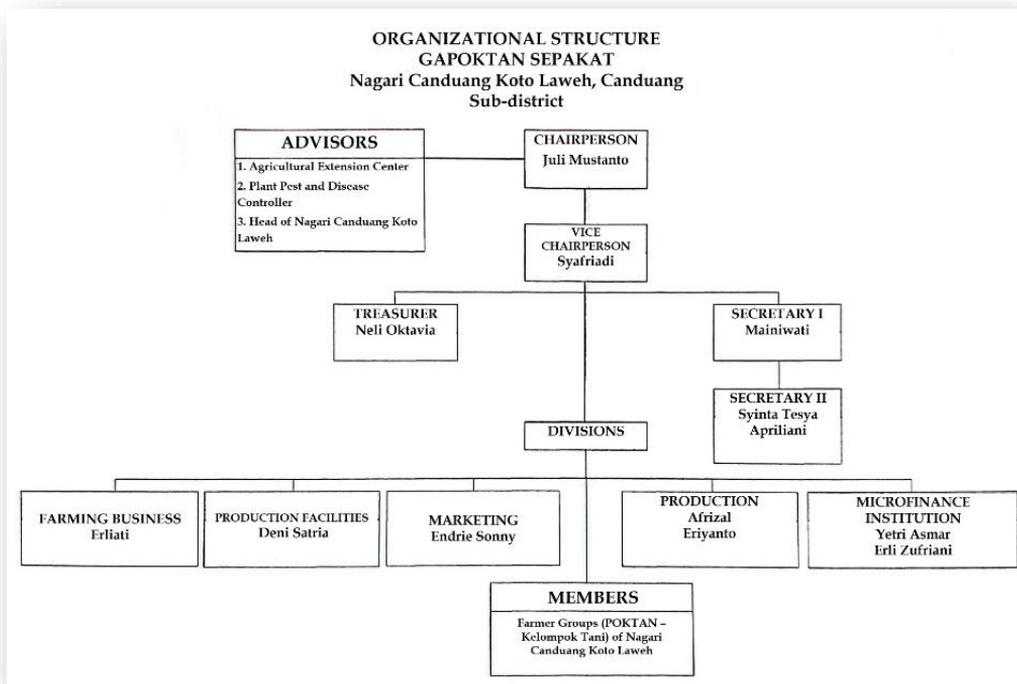


Figure 1.
Organizational structure of *Gapoktan Sepakat*

Created as an enterprise, *Gapoktan Sepakat*'s underlying principle lies on the basis of a shared vision for an autonomous farming society, increasing the value of the products of the farmers as well as the sustainability of the customers. It is an administrative style among those identified by Ratnasari et al. (2019), as successful *Gapoktans* too act on an ethical basis, demonstrating elaborate and sophisticated designs of agrarian human ecology and as an overall truth, competent farm management. Similarly, Faqih et al. (2020) indicate that leadership, and institutional commitment, are crucial to the success of rural agribusiness, including an in-depth access to credit and business capability. *Gapoktan Sepakat* embodies these values when it articulates its own vision of a self-reliant farmers embedded in market oriented, value-added, and sustainable development.

Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 67/Permentan/SM. 050/12/2016 emphasizes that *Gapoktan* plays a dual function in the field of the development of the agricultural technical aspect and the entrepreneurial development. This regulation implies that *Gapoktan* is an economic institution as provider of value added service

to farmers, that is capable of assisting farmers to improve their economic welfare through business professionalism. Kamal et al. (2024) stated that financial management influence the successfulness of farmer groups in managing their business.

Business approach is essential for *Gapoktan Sepakat* to improve the economically independent and competitive farmers in Nagari Canduang Koto Laweh, Agam District. This is also in line with Law No. 19 of 2013 on Farmers Protection and Empowerment (*UU No. 19 Tahun 2013 tentang Perlindungan dan Pemberdayaan Petani*), that vision the establishment of farmer groups and cooperative so farmers can develop economically and have a self-sufficiency level of economic by forming a professional management of farming.

In *Gapoktan Sepakat* this orientation manifest in the establishment of three business units, namely; marketing center for certified organic vegetables (Prima-3), compost management and the Biological Agent Information and Service Post (POS IPA). An example of this has been their collaboration with Tazkia Mini Market and Yarsi Hospital, which has widened horizons for the vegetable market, stabilizing the demand and securing better prices for the farmers. Furthermore, their partnership with the Agricultural Cooperative of Agam Regency has increased efficiency in purchasing and distributing inputs an important step in the professionalization of their supply chain (Rahman et al., 2025).

However, the pivot to a more business-oriented model has also come with its share of obstacles. The lack of access to capital continues to be a significant challenge, especially if they interest in expanding compost production or purchasing more modern equipment. What is more, members have been slower to develop strong branding and to enter new markets because of deficiencies in management and marketing abilities. In order to address these issues, *Gapoktan Sepakat* has improved its members' management and marketing skills by utilizing training facilities offered by Andalas University and BPTPH. In order to improve access to business finance, the collective is also thinking about formalizing a cooperative; in fact, Noer et al. (2025) shows that this can significantly increase farm profits.

According to Rahman et al. (2025), there is a requirement to improve entrepreneurship skill, particularly in terms of supply chain management and product branding, to improve the competitiveness of *Gapoktan*. In the same vein, Koib and Simamora (2022) emphasize that strategic partnership is crucial to strengthen business capacity and bargaining power, which is evident from *Gapoktan Sepakat's* multi-stakeholder partnerships. As Pujiharto (2010) stated, it also has to strengthen *Gapoktan* for the purpose of building the bargaining power of the farmer on the basis of external stakeholders so as to provide them access towards knowledge, capital, as well as market.

By facing these challenges directly on and spending money on training as well as institutional development, *Gapoktan Sepakat* presents an encouraging model of how farmer groups may develop into sustainable business-minded agricultural institutions.

Another contributor to the success of *Gapoktan Sepakat* is the existence of local champions who help drive the development at the grassroots level. Local champions tend to be central in the context of the countryside due to their intimate knowledge of local requirements as well as their credibility among their people (Sambodo et al.,

2023). Local champions act as exemplars by displaying their devotion to the end of the cooperative as well as their influence through example on fellow members. In Gapoktan Sepakat, local champions range from the likes of Mr. Syafridi, Mr. Jafri Asman, as well as Mr. Arisman Desri, all of them self-suffices extension people. Such champions not only consist of old-timers but also people who lead by example by inspiring their colleagues towards sustainable agronomic production as well as organic fertilizer-making. In their demonstration of example, the champions help instill the culture of cooperation as well as innovational as well as mutual assistance among the people.

Local ambassadors play an important role in transforming thinking as well as doing, particularly in the regions where the way of life runs deep. It enables others to take up new activities, for example, registering for the POS IPA program, an initiative for enhancing health through farming. Such higher awareness among the members ensures long-term sustainability of Gapoktan as it instills ecofriendly behavior among the members and makes them think beyond short-term economic returns.

Willingness to sacrifice is another crucial ingredient supporting Gapoktan Sepakat's activities. It was demonstrated through the chairman's readiness to invest time, energy, and resources in the development of the cooperative. It includes not only the usual administrative responsibilities but also involves the participation of the chairman in outside activities potentially aiding the cooperative, for example, going for exhibitions as well as making alliances. It was indicated by Sudarsono (2019) that the voluntariness of a leader in making personal sacrifices determines the success of the cooperative as it follows the deep concern for the objective of the group as well as being capable of influencing the member's similar concern. In the chairman's attempt at forging ties with the external parties, it follows his concern as those ties tend to consume time as well as require the bulk of the resources.

This commitment to the cooperative not only solidifies the chairman's leadership position but enables the formation of an encouraging culture whereby members feel instilled to participate in the development of Gapoktan. In seeing the devotion of the chairman, the members will, in turn, encourage activities as well as initiatives as long as the activities hold the understanding that those activities constitute part of an overarching well-encouraging mission.

To facilitate this objective, Gapoktan Sepakat oversees three main business units: the sale of certified organic vegetables (Prima-3), the production of composts, and the Biological Agent Information and Service Post (POS IPA). An example of their development includes their cooperation agreement with Tazkia Mini Market and Yarsi Hospital, which assisted in making their vegetables' demand more stable as well as the prices higher. Also, their cooperation agreement with the Agricultural Cooperative of the Agam Regency increased the effectiveness of inputs procurement as well as product distribution, evidencing an orientation toward more organized supply chain management (Rahman et al., 2025).

In spite of all the above positive measures, the transition towards the business-model still encounters challenges. Access to funds being limited has hindered the growth of increasing the production of composts or the purchase of innovative equipment. Additionally, the absence of marketing as well as business skills amongst the members presents challenges for branding and market development.

In order to bridge the gaps, Gapoktan Sepakat engaged in training activities conducted by Andalas University focusing on training, technology adoption, and institutional strengthening. The program promoted the development of formal agribusiness institutions to support market access and financial sustainability, which in turn contributed to increased farmer incomes (Noer, et al., 2025).

Research by Rahman et al. (2025) also highlights the improvement of entrepreneurial capacity through the enhancement of supply chain management and branding skills in order to become more competitive. Likewise, Koib and Simamora (2022) indicate that collaborations between internal stakeholders and external stakeholders may strengthen business capacity as well as bargaining capacity. According to Pujiharto (2010), the establishment of Gapoktan institutions may enable farmers to access money, market, as well as information more effectively.

Through the management of these challenges through capacity-building and institutional improvement, Gapoktan Sepakat is turning out to be an outstanding illustration of how farmer groups may develop into sustainable business-minded agriculture organizations. meet industry requirements for the production of organic waste fertilizers in order for the industry at large to benefit.

Collaborations among academic institutions, especially Andalas University, have also been an integral part of the success of Gapoktan. Andalas University adds value to the growth of the cooperative through the production of Trichoderma and Lactate Acid. Trichoderma itself is an advantageous fungus being utilized as an attack force by crops for the elimination of destructive pathogens. Trichoderma helps cut the use of chemical pesticides as well as boost healthier crops. Lactate Acid, on the other hand, improves the soil's health while acts as fertilizer for the growth of crops. Both of the above-mentioned productions not only add technical capacity for Gapoktan but also make it the champion of sustainable farming.

Gapoktan's partners come from different backgrounds, such as government agencies, private business, educational institutions, and civil society groups. Each of the partners contributes different resources, knowledge, and technology different from the existing ones in the cooperative, providing an holistic assistance system supporting the business activities of Gapoktan. For example, university linkages allow Gapoktan access to the best available research technologies as well as innovations on agriculture, facilitating the use of more efficient as well as sustainable methods. Access to the best available agronomic technologies is incalculable as it makes Gapoktan more competitive as well as enables it to embrace new technologies increasing the production of crops, quality of crops, as well as resource use. Regular cooperation through the university linkages enables the transmission of knowledge as well as technical assistance ensuring the continuous access of Gapoktan to agronomic advances.

According to studies conducted by Suryaningsih (2018), inter-sectoral collaborations are important for facilitating farmer well-being as well as the long-term sustainability of the rural cooperatives. In building those collaborations among diverse partners, Gapoktan not only expands the basis of its economy but also develops an elastic base of support for it to overcome problems as well as for it to cope appropriately when the market for agriculture changes. Safriansyah et al. (2020) confirm this by stating that healthy vegetable businesses, as Micro, Small, and

Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), need to collaborate with local governments, the private sector, and higher education institutions to drive MSME growth.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. *Gapoktan Sepakat* has three main ventures: (1) Marketing Healthy Vegetables, (2) Compost Production, and (3) POS IPAHA (Information and Services for Biological Agents).
2. *Gapoktan's* partners include Farmer Groups, the Agricultural Cooperative of Agam District, Tazkia Mini Market, Yarsi Hospital, Andalas University, and the Provincial Food Crop and Horticulture Protection Center (BPPTH) of West Sumatra.
3. The key factors driving the success of *Gapoktan* in managing business ventures are: 1) Leadership of the *Gapoktan* Chair, 2) Managing *Gapoktan* as a business unit rather than a social unit, 3) Engaging local champions, 4) Willingness of the management to sacrifice time, effort, and resources, and 5) Synergistic collaboration with partner institutions.

This study offers valuable insights, but its scope is quite limited. It only focuses on one *Gapoktan* in a single area, and most of its data is qualitative. Future research should explore similar initiatives elsewhere to find broader patterns. For policymakers, consider supporting *Gapoktan* by providing leadership training, fostering partnerships, and strengthening their structure. This could help replicate this successful model in other rural communities.

In addition, this study uses a single case study design that focuses on *Gapoktan Sepakat*, so it does not include a comparative analysis with other less successful *Gapoktan*. Therefore, questions regarding performance gaps between *Gapoktan* are beyond the scope of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

[Author 1]: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Writing original draft.; [Author 2]: Supervision, Validation, Writing review & editing; [Author 3]: Data curation, Visualization, Writing—review & editing; [Author 4]: Project administration, Resources, Writing review & editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the article.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no financial, personal, or professional interests that could be interpreted as having influenced the conduct, analysis, or reporting of this study. The research process, from study design to dissemination of findings, was carried out independently and in accordance with accepted ethical and academic standards.

No financial support, sponsorship, or funding of any kind was received from any individual or organization with a financial interest in the outcome of this research. Moreover, the authors declare that there has not been any relationship, employment, membership, leadership, neo-relationship, organization, advocacy, co-

ownership, possession, trademark, copyright, and other type of relationship whatsoever that may affect the result and work in this research.

This study was pursued solely for academic and community development purposes, whose intent is to contribute to knowledge generation and support community empowerment through collaborative research. All findings and conclusions drawn in this article were done exclusively from the data collected in the study and were formulated without external influence or bias.

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ETHIC STATEMENT

The research was carried out with utmost care and consideration of all participants. Members of Gapoktan Sepakat participated voluntarily, having been clearly informed about the activities and their purpose beforehand. Prior to the commencement of any activities, members of Gapoktan Sepakat were provided with thorough nations about the study, and opportunities for questions and discussion were made available Verbal consent was obtained from everyone involved. No personal or sensitive data was collected, and all identities were kept confidential. There were no physical, psychological, or social risks to participants.

The activities undertaken as part of this study were not isolated events, but rather formed a meaningful component of a larger community empowerment and capacity-building initiative. The overarching goal was to support institutional growth and help build sustainable livelihoods for the members of Gapoktan Sepakat. By working closely with the community, the researchers sought to ensure that every procedure was not only ethically sound but also genuinely beneficial to those involved. All steps were conducted in line with widely recognized ethical standards for social and community-based research, reflecting a genuine commitment to the long-term well-being and development of the community.

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