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## **Implementation of strengthening the function of agricultural extension in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this research is to analyze how the implementation of strengthening the function of agricultural extension and the factors that influence the effectiveness of agricultural extension based on the phenomenon of Agricultural Extension problems in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency in accordance with the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 27 of 2023. This research used qualitative research methods. The number of informants was 10 people determined by purposive sampling technique. The data collection techniques used were observation, interview, and document study. The results showed that the implementation of strengthening the function of agricultural extension in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency which focuses on four main indicators in accordance with the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 27 of 2023, namely strengthening working relationships, providing and increasing the capacity of extension personnel, utilizing technology and information, and ensuring the availability of infrastructure and facilities, has contributed positively to the success of extension services. The four indicators play an important role: (1) Strengthening working relationships shows good collaboration, although strengthening synergies is still needed; (2) Provision and capacity building of extension personnel has been carried out through training, but still requires a sustainable program; (3) The use of technology and information has begun to be applied, but increasing accessibility and technical skills is still a challenge; (4) Guaranteeing the availability of basic infrastructure and facilities has been carried out, but it is not yet fully adequate and requires further support. Factors influencing the implementation of strengthening the extension function include government policies, human resources, supporting infrastructure and facilities, effective communication, inter-stakeholder collaboration, and agricultural technology and innovation.

**Keywords.** Policy Implementation, Strengthening Function, Agricultural Extension, Food Self-Sufficiency

### **A. Introduction**

Agricultural Extension is a learning process for Main Actors and Business Actors so that they are willing and able to help and organize themselves in accessing market information, technology, capital, and other resources, as an effort to increase productivity, business efficiency, income, and welfare, and increase awareness in preserving environmental functions (Vintarno et al., 2019) [1].

The implementation of agricultural extension functions is carried out as a necessity to improve the availability, access and quality of food consumption which is a strategic step to increase production and productivity, distribution arrangements, as well as food safety and quality that has added value and competitiveness. Increased effectiveness in the implementation of agricultural extension occurs when supported by qualified agricultural extension resources, strong institutions, adequate facilities and infrastructure that support the successful implementation of agricultural extension (Zulhak et al., 2020) [2].

Agricultural extension workers, who are individual Indonesian citizens who carry out agricultural extension activities, are considered as reformers who are expected to improve their ability and capacity in achieving food security. Professional agricultural extension can be realized if supported by the existence of competent extension workers. The performance and success of agricultural extension workers are measured through 9 (nine) indicators. The indicators of the success of agricultural extension can be considered as the needs of the community. Indicators of the success of agricultural extension include: (1) The preparation of agricultural extension programs in accordance with the needs of farmers (BPP Regency / City), (2) Preparation of work plans for agricultural extension in each working area, (3) The availability of regional map data for the development of location-specific technology in accordance with the regionalization of superior commodities, (4) Dissemination of agricultural technology information evenly and in accordance with the needs of farmers, (5) The development of empowerment and independence of farmers, farmer groups, (6) The realization of business partnerships between farmers and entrepreneurs that are mutually beneficial, (7) The realization of farmers' access to financial institutions, information on agricultural production facilities and marketing, (8) Increased agribusiness productivity of superior commodities in each work area, (9) Increased income and welfare of farmers in each region (Indraningsih et al., 2010) [3].

These indicators of success can be realized if supported by the existence of competent extension workers. Agricultural extension workers are expected to have the ability to carry out complex work, based on certain professional abilities, including planning skills, carrying out activities, solving problems with a certain level of independent responsibility, having managerial skills and being able to keep up with developments, knowledge, and technology in their field of expertise (Sunartomo, 2016) [4].

East Bolaang Mongondow Regency is an area of North Sulawesi Province consisting of 7 (seven) districts and 81 (eighty-one) villages with a total area of approximately 866.54 km<sup>2</sup> and the potential area of agriculture, plantations and livestock is approximately 452.7 km<sup>2</sup> or has a percentage of around 52.24% of the total area in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency. The 7 (seven) districts include: Nuangan District, Motongkad District, Tutuyan District, Kotabunan District, Modayag District, Mooat District and West Modayag District.

No	District	Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )*	Potential Land Area for Agriculture, Plantation and Animal Husbandry (Km <sup>2</sup> )**
1	Kotabunan	140,82	26,79
2	Tutuyan	87,69	17,61
3	Motongkad	211,12	30,61

4	Nuangan	138,80	77,53
5	Mooat	176,17	118,55
6	Modayag	39,79	53,76
7	Modayag Barat	72,15	127,85
	Total	866,5	452,7

**Table 1.** Data on Area and Potential Land Area of Agriculture, Plantation and Animal Husbandry of East Bolaang Mongondow Regency

Source:

\*) Central Bureau of Statistics of East Bolaang Mongondow Regency 2023

\*\*\*) East Bolaang Mongondow Regency Agriculture Office 2023.

**Table 2.** Data on the availability and needs of Agricultural Extension Workers in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency

No.	District BPP	Total of Village	Number of Agricultural Extension Workers (People)				Number of Agricultural Extension Workers Needed (people)
			Civil Servant	Civil servants with employment agreement	Regional Honorary Workers	Volunteer	
1	Kotabunan	15	5	-	-	1	10
2	Tutuyan	10	4	2	-	-	5
3	Motongkand	11	4	1	-	1	6
4	Nuangan	11	4	-	-	2	6
5	Mooat	10	5	-	-	2	5
6	Modayag	14	5	2	-	6	7
7	Modayag Barat	10	5	1	-	3	5
	Total	81	38	8	-	15	44

The results of initial observations found that the problems that occur in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency include the lack of availability of Agricultural Extension Officers. In fact, according to the mandate of Law number 19 of 2013, the minimum standard is 1 village 1 Agricultural Extension Worker. However, as shown in table 2, due to the excess workload, it affects the work patterns and behavior of Agricultural Extension Workers who do not seem too concerned with developing their competencies and careers because they are preoccupied with carrying out tasks in their work areas and even if there is an opportunity to develop their competencies (participating in training and competency certification), the PPL concerned provides a personal budget because Functional Training Financing is no longer organized in the Budget Planning of the Agriculture Office of East Bolaang Mongondow District for the last 4 (four) years due to budget refocusing as a result of Covid-19.

The next problem is the lack of knowledge and skills due to lack of access to the latest agricultural information, supported by inadequate communication and information facilities due

to work locations far from network access, as well as limited facilities to support the implementation of extension tasks and functions (there are still sub-districts that do not have BPP offices and there are still PPLs who do not have PPL operational vehicles). These issues have caused the implementation of the agricultural extension function in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency to not be fully optimized and run well. Agricultural extension should be implemented in accordance with Indonesian Law No. 16 of 2006 concerning the Agricultural, Fisheries and Forestry Extension System (SP3K). As for the strengthening of Agricultural Human Resources and the application of appropriate, effective and efficient agricultural technology innovations, it is carried out in accordance with Presidential Regulation No. 35 of 2022 concerning Strengthening the Agricultural Extension Function, namely with 6 (six) substance strengthening functions, namely: (1) Strengthening of working relationships, (2) Strengthening of District and Village Agricultural Extension institutions, (3) Provision and Capacity building of extension personnel, (4) Agricultural extension materials, (5) Utilization of information and communication technology, and (6) Ensuring the availability of infrastructure and facilities.

In a previous research journal conducted by Salsabilla et al. (2023) to find out the implementation of Presidential Regulation Number 35 of 2022 concerning Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension in accordance with Chapter 1 Article 2 which contains 6 substances in Jombang Regency, East Java, namely the implementation of the substance of strengthening working relationships, the substance of strengthening agricultural extension institutions, the substance of providing and increasing the capacity of extension personnel, the substance of extension materials, the substance of utilizing information and communication technology, and the substance of guaranteeing the availability of infrastructure and facilities have all been implemented but not complete.

The linkage of the problem of the weak function of Agricultural Extension in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency adjusted to efforts to strengthen the functions in MOA 27 of 2023 lies in the indicators/substances (1) Strengthening working relationships, including the dissemination of agricultural extension information materials both conventionally and modernly using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), (2) Provision and capacity building of extension personnel, (3) Utilization of Information and Communication Technology, which includes utilizing information technology infrastructure in the form of physical components, software and networks, and finally (4) Guaranteeing the availability of infrastructure and facilities, including the facilitation of office infrastructure, ICT equipment, transportation facilities and other equipment that support the target of agricultural extension.

The main strategic issue in strengthening the function of agricultural extension is related to the target of improving national food security consisting of food availability, food accessibility, food utilization/consumption and food price stability between time and regions sourced from agricultural potential. Thus, increasing agricultural production and productivity which is the overall activity of managing biological natural resources with the help of technology, capital, labor, and management to produce agricultural commodities which include food crops, horticulture, plantations, and/or livestock in an agroecosystem will also increase the contribution of the agricultural sector to national development. As 4 (four) keys to successful agricultural development that have been launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, namely: (1) Achieving self-sufficiency and sustainable self-sufficiency, (2) increasing food diversification, (3) increasing added value, competitiveness and exports, and (4) improving farmers' welfare. Furthermore, with the existence of human resources in agriculture that are qualified, reliable and have managerial, entrepreneurial and business organization capabilities to realize the 4

(four) successes of agricultural development, the agricultural development actors are also able to build businesses from upstream to downstream that are highly competitive and able to apply the principles of sustainable agriculture towards Golden Indonesia.

Based on this description, a study will be conducted that aims to analyze how the implementation of strengthening the function of agricultural extension in each indicator and the factors that influence the effectiveness of agricultural extension based on the phenomenon of Agricultural Extension problems in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency in accordance with the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 27 of 2023.

## **B. Method**

The approach used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach. According to (Herdiansyah, 2013), qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc., holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods [5]. This method is used to examine objects in natural conditions, where the author is the key instrument with data collection techniques carried out in triangulation (combined observation, interviews, documentation), inductive data analysis and research results that emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Tumbel, 2023) [6].

The indicators of this research are 1) strengthening working relationships, 2) Provision and capacity building of extension personnel, 3) Utilization of Information and Communication Technology, 4) Assurance of the availability of infrastructure and facilities. The number of informants was 10 people determined by purposive sampling technique. The data collection technique used was triangulation technique: observation, interview and documentation study. The data analysis technique uses the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1984) in Sugiyono (2017), namely: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [7].

## **C. Result and discussion**

### ***Strengthening Working Relationships***

Strengthening working relationships in the agricultural extension function is an important element to achieve successful implementation of directed and structured policies. According to Minister of Agriculture Regulation (MOA) No. 27 of 2023 on the Implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 35 of 2022 on Strengthening the Agricultural Extension Function, strengthening these working relationships involves synergistic communication, coordination and collaboration at various levels. This regulation underscores the importance of strengthening working relationships to support the operationalization of agricultural extension (Salsabilla, 2023) [8].

Based on the results of observations and interviews in the field for this first indicator, it was found that 1) Coordination and collaboration from all cross-stakeholders, including PPLs, farmers, government and private sector, has been going well so far. Although conditions in the field are still found there are still sectoral egos and conflicts of interest. To dismiss these obstacles, effective communication is needed so that the end result is also in accordance with what was planned. 2) There is no budget support for agricultural extension programs, and there is only a budget for the General Allocation Fund (DAU) Earmarked division of the Education Office to finance Capacity Building of Farmers and PPLs through Field School Activities for Integrated Pest Control (SL-PHT). 3) The Base Administration Unit (SATMINKAL) as a forum

for agricultural extension workers to carry out coordination, including monitoring and evaluation in the context of national agricultural development efforts has not been formed, and its authority and operationalization are still under the Extension Division.

From the results of the research, it was found that the successful implementation of strengthening labor relations is influenced by indicators: communication, coordination, collaboration, supervision and control and the establishment of a base administrative unit. From the results of interviews and observations, it was found that communication and collaboration are key factors in strengthening working relationships. Effective communication between stakeholders allows for mutual understanding and solutions to problems faced. Likewise, good collaboration with partners increases the success of extension programs.

This research is not much different from the research conducted by Salsabilla et al. (2023) with the title: Implementation of the Policy on Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension in Jombang Regency, East Java according to Presidential Regulation 35 of 2022 concerning Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension. The results of the research obtained Communication indicators in the implementation of the substance of strengthening working relationships are very influential because in this communication there is communication between policy makers and policy implementers regarding Presidential Regulation No. 35 of 2022. Communication is the first requirement for the successful implementation of the Perpres policy, where implementers must know what they should do. So that the communication process between the figures involved in implementing the Presidential Regulation policy can run well and smoothly.

The obstacles encountered in the field are: 1) Lack of structural support from TAPD and DPRD in allocating adequate budgets. The existence of sectoral egos that still occur fragmentation in budget allocations that hamper cross-sectoral synergies. So that the implementation of policies in the field of agriculture, including agricultural extension, cannot be carried out optimally. 2) Budget limitations due to the impact of Recofusing in the Covid-19 Pandemic situation as well as budget priorities for non-strategic activities such as Legislative Elections and Regional Head Elections which until now the impact has reduced financial support for strengthening working relationships. 3) Satminkal that has not functioned optimally according to the regulated nomenclature. Although its role in fostering the career patterns of extension workers is still carried out inherently by the Extension Division. 4) Supervision and control carried out by the Department of Agriculture as the fostering agency of Agricultural Extension through monthly coordination and evaluation meetings with Agricultural Extension Officers, in fact not optimal in producing follow-up recommendations for solving problems that occur in the implementation of agricultural extension tasks.

Follow-up and recommendations that can be made are 1) Improved communication, in which case extension workers must be trained to master effective communication techniques, both interpersonally and through digital media. 2) Strengthening coordination and collaboration, where the Department of Agriculture needs to expand strategic partnerships with research institutions, universities, and the private sector to support extension programs. 3) Establishing a Base Administration Unit (Satminkal) for more structured extension coordination. 4) Budget Reform, in which local governments should revise budget priorities, ensuring adequate allocations are made for strengthening agricultural extension linkages. 5) Sectoral Ego Mitigation, in which a cross-sectoral team-based approach involving all stakeholders needs to be implemented to reduce fragmentation.

Thus, strengthening working relationships in the agricultural extension function, as stipulated in the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 27 of 2023, has a strategic role in

supporting the successful implementation of extension services in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency. And if integrated with local policies and practices, it can have a significant impact on the progress of the agricultural sector in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency.

### ***Provision and Capacity Building of Extension Personnel***

Based on observations and interviews in the field for this second indicator, it was found that 1) The minimum standard for the needs of PPLs as mandated by the law is 1 Village 1 PPL. The Office of Agriculture through the Head of Personnel, has proposed the filling of Agricultural Extension Worker Position Formations in accordance with the ANJAB and ABK of the Office of Agriculture, but the proposal was not approved for recruitment as proposed with the consideration that the filling of PPL functional staff quota must also be adjusted to regional financial capacity. 2) The quality of extension services to farmers, even in efforts to increase productivity in the context of achieving food self-sufficiency under President Prabowo Subianto's Astacita Program, is constrained by the lack of human resources and budget allocations to support capacity building such as technical guidance, education and training and competency test certification. Capacity building facilitated by the APBD budget is only limited to the Integrated Pest Control Field School activities, whose budget is Earmarked Funds (funds that are specifically allocated for certain purposes and cannot be used for other purposes). The Earmarked Fund that is used is the Earmarked DAU division in the Education Office with the technical guidelines for use referring to 212/PMK.07/2022 concerning Regional Performance Level Indicators and General Provisions for the Part of the General Allocation Fund Specified for Use in Fiscal Year 2023.

Agricultural extension workers have a strategic role in supporting agricultural development, especially in increasing the capacity of farmers to adopt new technologies, increase productivity, and maintain the sustainability of the agricultural sector (Juliana, 2022) [9]. Strengthening the function of agricultural extension is an important aspect to ensure the sustainability of agricultural development, which includes providing adequate human resources (HR) for extension workers and increasing their capacity (Sutrisno, 2016) [10].

Based on Presidential Regulation Number 35 of 2022 concerning Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension and Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture Number 27 of 2023 concerning the Implementation of Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension, the indicators of providing and increasing the capacity of agricultural extension workers aim to improve the quality of extension services provided to farmers so that they can support productive, efficient, sustainable agricultural development, and improve farmers' welfare. This includes ensuring the availability of agricultural extension workers through the recruitment of agricultural extension workers (CPNS, PPPK, casual workers, and independent extension workers), the placement of extension workers in agricultural extension work areas (WKPP), and the provision of facilities and infrastructure, including operational vehicles, IT equipment, and information media. Furthermore, the implementation of improving the competence of agricultural extension workers can be done through socialization, technical guidance, education and training (basic, technical, and functional training), certification of extension worker competence, training in the use of digital technology, and internships or comparative studies to learn the best agricultural extension practices.

Taking into account the above, efforts to increase the quantity and quality of human resources to strengthen the function of agricultural extension workers can be done by: 1) Increased Recruitment and Placement, namely local governments must expand the recruitment of extension workers through CPNS, PPPK, and Independent Extension Workers. 2) The

placement of extension workers needs to be focused on areas with high agricultural potential. 3) Optimizing the Budget for Socialization, Technical Guidance, Training, competency tests and competency certification, in this case BKPSDM must allocate a budget for adequate education and training of extension workers, while looking at the situation and conditions of budget priorities for increasing the capacity of extension workers proposed by the Agriculture Office. 4) Utilization of Digital Technology, including training in the use of digital applications and e-learning platforms must be a priority. It can be offline or online. 5) Partnership with Central and Provincial Governments, in which training and certification programs organized by the central and provincial governments need to be expanded to cover more extension workers. 6) Self-initiative by Extension Officers, in which Extension Officers can be encouraged to utilize independent resources in their capacity development with the support of subsidies or incentives.

The results of this study are not much different from the research conducted by Warsana and Sirait (2023) with the title: Increasing the Capacity of Central Java BPTP Extension Officers Through Workshops. The results of his research state that workshop/technical activities are an effective method for improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Central Java BPTP Extension Officers. The knowledge of Central Java BPTP Extension Officers related to the material presented by resource persons increased by an average of 24% (from 69.75 - 93.75%). In addition, it also increases the interest of participants in applying the knowledge gained to work more professionally and then there is an ability to do follow-up which is actualized by: a) being able to apply the material to support performance as an Extension Officer, b) being able to transmit the knowledge gained during the workshop/technical guidance to other Extension colleagues, and c) being able to receive instructions/guidance from BPTP Central Java [11].

Thus, the provision and capacity building of agricultural extension workers plays an important role in supporting the development of the agricultural sector. Although regulations have provided clear direction, implementation in the field still faces significant obstacles. By improving the recruitment system, allocating the right PPL human resources and budget, and synergizing across sectors, the function of agricultural extension can be strengthened to achieve sustainable agricultural development.

#### ***Utilization of Information and Communication Technology***

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an important element in strengthening the agricultural extension function. By utilizing ICT, extension agents can improve the efficiency, reach, and effectiveness of their services to farmers (Eksanika & Riyanto, 2017) [12].

ICT utilization includes: 1) Rapid and wide dissemination of information through official websites, mobile applications, and social media. 2) Agricultural Information System, which includes data on farmer groups, land coordinates, group members, and commodities developed. This data facilitates the allocation of agricultural production facilities assistance. 3) Training and Distance Learning (E-Learning), which provides access to training to farmers through digital platforms, increasing the capacity and knowledge of farmers and extension workers. 4) Online Marketing of Agricultural Products (Marketplace), which supports farmers in selling their products online (Prayoga, 2018) [13].

Based on the results of observations and interviews in the field for this third indicator, it was found that 1) Utilization of technology and information already exists in each BPP such as computer equipment, printers, projectors, internet networks that enable PPLs to access, store,

transfer, process and share information. It's just that everything is not optimal, because some of the equipment is damaged and requires repair. The internet network at each BPP does not use wifi, but is accessed by data packages. Because all PPLs receive PPL Operational Assistance, the monthly data credit allowance is IDR.150,000. 2) Remote areas, such as Kokapoy Village (Mooat district) and Jiko Belanga Village (Nuangan district) do not yet have access to the internet, so PPLs in these villages access the internet outside the village. Meanwhile, Bukaka Village (Kotabunan district) uses the existing electricity network to transmit internet data called Power Line Communication (PLC). 3) The data storage system (back up) already exists but is not yet optimal, because it only uses the Google drive storage system. 4) Compliance of internal elements in the Office (fields) to upload information related to duties and functions, databases, programs and activities, and documentation to be accessible up to the BPP level. 5) Existing internet access has not been optimally utilized by PPLs due to limited knowledge and skills in using digital devices. 6) There is no budget allocation for repairing damaged computer/printer/projector equipment, due to the impact of budget refocusing during the covid-19 pandemic, and the focus on budgeting for the 2023 legislative and regional elections.

The results of research conducted by Ekopranoto and Setyawan (2022) with the title: "Digitalization of Agricultural Extension in the New Normal Era". The results of his research state that efforts to deliver information to rural communities through ICT, free or at low cost, can increase the flow of timely and transparent information to build or strengthen innovation networks among various stakeholders. Production and marketing of agricultural products and related sectors through the creation of basic market facilities and market information for farmers is essential. This corroborates the results of research conducted by researchers that the potential of Agricultural Extension Officers and Farmers in the use of ICT, there are many positive things related to information and learning that will be obtained by PPL and Farmers if they seriously develop and try to learn the digitization of agricultural extension. Because at the same time it will also increase farmers' access to mass media and new technology and information, and of course it is beneficial and has a good effect on the effectiveness of extension and optimal productivity of agricultural products [14].

#### ***Assurance of the Availability of Infrastructure and Facilities***

Strengthening functions in terms of ensuring the availability of adequate agricultural infrastructure and facilities is one of the factors supporting the effectiveness of agricultural extension. With the availability of complete and quality facilities, agricultural extension workers can carry out their duties more optimally, reach more farmers, and have a more significant impact on the development of the agricultural sector. Agricultural extension infrastructure facilities include: 1) Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) which serves as the center of extension activities at the sub-district level. BPP should be equipped with facilities such as training rooms, discussion rooms, and demonstration areas. 2) Field Demonstration Facilities, or demonstration plots used to practice the latest agricultural technology. 3) Communication Infrastructure such as Internet access, computer equipment, and communication networks to support information technology-based activities (Fitriyah, 2021) [15].

Besides that, there are also means of counseling including: 1) Props and Extension Media: Includes brochures, video tutorials, infographics, training modules, and other relevant visual aids. 2) Transportation: Operational vehicles such as motorcycles or cars to support the mobility of extension workers, especially in remote areas. 3) Technology Devices: Smartphones, tablets, laptops, or drones to support modern technology-based extension. 4)

Welfare in terms of income or compensation (PPL Allowance) in accordance with the workload and work location. 5) Operational extension activities, the costs required to support PPL activities in the preparation of Agricultural Extension Program at the village level (Purukan et al., 2021) [16].

Based on the results of observations and interviews in the field for this fourth indicator, it was found that 1) Operationalization of duties and functions of the Agriculture Office and BPP has been running well, although not yet optimal. BPP Office buildings are already available for 6 (six) BPPs, but the Office buildings of the Agriculture Office and BPP Motongkad do not yet have their own buildings. The Agriculture Office still uses the UPTD Puskesmas Office, while BPP Motongkad uses one of the rooms of the Motongkad Sub-District Office. In addition, some BPP Offices have to be renovated. 2) Some supporting facilities for agricultural extension have been severely damaged and require repair. For example: official vehicles, computers/laptops, and printers. 3) There is no special budget allocation for BPP for agricultural extension such as other supporting facilities, operations for PPLs such as stationery, maintenance of official vehicles, office equipment or new procurement, and Agricultural Extension Program activities. So far, the use of stationery is all through the Agriculture Office, and even then it is arranged in such a minimal way that all BPPs get a share allocation. 4) The nominal PPL allowance has been stagnant and has not been revised since 11 (eleven) years ago and still uses the basic regulation of Perpres 16 of 2013. Even though when compared to the UMP and UMR for Private Workers / Laborers, every year there is an increase. However, this tends not to reflect the rising cost of living or the growing demands of work. Moreover, PPL must be at the forefront of the success of one of President Prabowo Subianto's Astacita, namely the provision of free nutritious food as an effort to achieve food self-sufficiency.

The results of research conducted by Bake et al. (2023) with the title: Competence and Provision of Functional Allowances and Their Effect on the Performance of Field Agricultural Extension Workers in West Muna Regency. The results showed that the provision of compensation (functional allowances) in a fair, fair, objective manner as well as consistency and certainty in the provision of functional allowances and the adequacy of the allowances provided also had a significant effect on the performance of agricultural extension workers in West Muna Regency. Performance improvement for agricultural extension workers can be done by maximizing the provision of a reward system in the form of adequate functional allowances, in addition to the competence of agricultural extension personnel. Thus it can be understood together that, functional allowances are a means to encourage employee morale and motivation so that employee performance becomes better and ultimately encourages improvements in organizational performance. The positive effect shows the unidirectional contribution of the two variables tested, namely competence and the provision of functional allowances [17].

### ***Determinants of Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency***

In the implementation of strengthening the function of agricultural extension according to the results of research in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency, there are determinant factors, including the following:

Government Policy. Local government policy in this case through the Department of Agriculture is the main factor affecting agricultural extension. Clear and consistent policies related to extension programs, budget allocations, provision and capacity building of agricultural extension human resources can strengthen the extension function. For example, policies related to extension programs, increasing competence, and strengthening the role of

extension workers in agricultural development to maximize the implementation of effective extension programs.

**Human Resources (HR).** The success of agricultural extension depends largely on the quantity and quality of human resources involved. Agricultural extension workers who have sufficient knowledge, good communication skills, and the ability to manage and deliver relevant information to farmers will be more effective in carrying out their duties. Therefore, strengthening human resources, both in terms of socialization, technical guidance, education and training, competency certification, and practical experience, is an important factor in strengthening the extension function.

**Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities.** Adequate infrastructure, such as available and easily accessible extension offices, information technology that supports communication, and adequate equipment for extension (such as computers, official vehicles, teaching aids, and extension media) can accelerate and facilitate extension. The availability of adequate infrastructure will facilitate interaction between extension workers and farmers and support learning and information sharing. This includes welfare or the provision of appropriate compensation for PPL functional allowances.

**Effective Communication.** Clear, two-way communication based on the needs of farmers and other relevant stakeholders greatly influences the success of extension. Extension workers who are able to convey messages in a way that is easy to understand and understand the language of farmers, as well as open space for discussion and feedback, will strengthen the extension function. Information and communication technology (ICT) also plays a big role in improving the effectiveness of extension in this digital era.

**Collaboration between stakeholders.** Collaboration from agriculture-related institutions, including government, community organizations, and non-governmental organizations, is essential in strengthening the extension function. Collaboration between various parties, including the private sector, can also enrich the extension approach with different knowledge, resources, and experiences, so that extension becomes more comprehensive and integrated.

**Agricultural Technology and Innovation.** The use of technology in agricultural extension is a key factor in improving extension efficiency and effectiveness. Information and communication technologies (ICT), such as mobile applications, websites, and social media, are increasingly being used to disseminate information and increase extension outreach. Extension that utilizes modern technology to disseminate agricultural innovations can have a greater impact in a shorter time.

To overcome the above obstacles, it requires the seriousness of the Regional Government and other relevant stakeholders, both legislative and executive elements to pursue policies to improve the competence of agricultural extension workers and farmers, the utilization of application systems and integrated information technology in accessing accurate and accountable data, the support of supporting infrastructure and facilities needed in agricultural extension and the establishment of a forum for coordinating all agricultural extension stakeholders, as well as regular and continuous monitoring and evaluation as an effort to increase the effectiveness of agricultural extension in East Bolaang Mongondow district as well as the achievement of rice self-sufficiency targets in 2025 and food self-sufficiency in 2028.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the results and discussion, the Implementation of Strengthening the Function of Agricultural Extension in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency is focused on 4 (four) indicators according to Permaturan 27 of 2023, including: Strengthening working relationships, providing and increasing the capacity of extension personnel, utilizing technology and information and ensuring the availability of infrastructure and facilities. So it can be concluded that:

a) The implementation of strengthening the agricultural extension function at the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency shows that the four main indicators have an important role in supporting the success of extension activities. 1) Strengthening Working Relationships. Collaboration between related parties, both internal and external, is quite good but still requires further strengthening to improve synergy in supporting extension. 2) Provision and Capacity Building of Extension Personnel. Efforts to improve the competence of extension workers have been made through training and coaching, but a more intensive and sustainable program is still needed to ensure that extension workers are able to keep up with developments in agricultural science and technology. 3) Utilization of Technology and Information. Technology and information have begun to be utilized in extension, such as the use of digital media and agricultural applications. However, there is a need to improve accessibility and skills in the use of these technologies to make them more effective. 4) Guaranteed Availability of Infrastructure and Facilities. Basic infrastructure and facilities have been provided, but are not yet fully adequate. Better support for physical infrastructure and work aids is needed to optimally support BPP operations.

b) Determinant / inhibiting factors in the implementation of indicators of strengthening the function of agricultural extension in BPP of East Bolaang Mongondow Regency, including: 1) Government policy; 2) Human Resources (HR); 3) Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities; 4) Effective Communication; 5) Inter-Stakeholder Collaboration; 6) Agricultural Technology and Innovation.

Overall, strengthening the extension function in East Bolaang Mongondow Regency has shown positive developments. However, to achieve maximum results, special attention is needed to increase the capacity of extension workers. Taking into account the existing obstacles, strategic steps are needed from the local government and related stakeholders, such as increasing the competence of extension workers, optimizing the use of technology and integrating information systems, providing and improving adequate infrastructure, establishing a coordination forum between parties, and routine and continuous monitoring and evaluation are also key elements to support the performance of agricultural extension and the success of agricultural extension programs effectively and efficiently, in order to achieve the target of rice self-sufficiency in 2025, and food self-sufficiency in 2028.

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