

# The Evaluation of the Indonesian Government Authority in Managing the Border Area of West Kalimantan-Sarawak

Muhammad Syafei <sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Rafi Darajati <sup>2)</sup>, Adityo Darmawan Sudagung <sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1, 2)</sup> Faculty of Law, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, Indonesia

<sup>3)</sup> Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

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*Corresponding author:*  
Muhammad Syafei  
[muhammad.syafei@hukum.untan.ac.id](mailto:muhammad.syafei@hukum.untan.ac.id)



**Abstract** – This article aims to analyze the extent to which the regulatory authority established by Law Number 43 of 2008 has been implemented to manage the development of Indonesia’s border areas. The central and regional governments envision the forefront of the state to optimize the welfare of people living in Indonesia’s border areas with neighboring countries. Due to the widening economic gap with Sarawak, less optimal coordination between central and regional governments in handling state border areas, and limited infrastructure and social facilities, the border area poses a complex threat to the sovereignty of Indonesia. We conducted descriptive normative research by exploring several sources from the laws and regulations, books, journal articles, and online news articles. Additionally, we incorporated field research as our data collection method in West Kalimantan Province. The author observed the border area and conducted expert interviews with the local government, the manager of the border gate at Entikong, Sanggau Regency, and the West Kalimantan Provincial government representative. Normatively, the authority has been divided and defined in Law Number 43 of 2008. However, a lack of coordination in implementing the law was caused by the ambiguous hierarchy of authority among the stakeholders due to the physical capabilities to reach the areas. We argue that the closest coverage of authoritative bodies in giving services to the people will boost the people’s welfare in the border areas.

**Keywords:** *ambiguity, authority, border area, sovereignty.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Geographically, Indonesia shares international land borders with three countries: Malaysia, Timor Leste, and Papua New Guinea. These land borders are in West, East, and North Kalimantan, Papua, and East Nusa Tenggara. The land border between Indonesia and Malaysia, in particular, spans approximately 2,000 kilometers. This boundary line crosses eight regencies in three provinces: the regencies of Sanggau, Sambas, Sintang, Kapuas Hulu, and Bengkayang in the province of West Kalimantan, Kutai Regency in East Kalimantan, and the regencies of Malinau and Nunukan in North Kalimantan. The border line that separates West Kalimantan, the Republic of Indonesia’s territory, and Malaysian territory in Sarawak stretches for approximately 966 kilometers.

The legitimate basis for delimiting the land boundaries between Kalimantan and Sabah-Sarawak

dates back to when both countries were still under colonial rule, respectively, by the Dutch East Indies Government and the British Government. Namely, they are the 1891 Treaty and the 1915 and 1928 Conventions. The joint boundary agreement between the independent countries of Indonesia and Malaysia began in 1973, following the 1973-2006 MOU of Indonesia's land border. Indonesia's saysia. Until 2009, 19,328 boundary monuments had been produced, complete with their coordinates (Bangun, 2014). Most of the delimitation of the land borders between Indonesia and Malaysia represent watersheds—mountain/hill ridges or water dividing lines. Even so, in terms of demarcation, seven outstanding boundary problems (OBP) still need to be settled (Syahputra, 2022). Indonesia and Malaysia formed a Joint Working Group to address the Outstanding Border Problems (OBP). Both countries also agreed to establish three more institutions to resolve issues of land borders between Indonesia and Malaysia, such as the Indonesia-Malaysia GBC (General Border Committee) coordinated by The Ministry of Defence, the Indonesia-Malaysia JCM (Joint Commission Meeting) hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Survey and Demarcation Technical Sub-Commission that organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In practice, West Kalimantan presents a particular case due to its bordering location with the State of Sarawak, Malaysia. Several facts that aroused our interest in researching this border area are as follows. To start with, there are five regencies, 15 sub-districts, and 98 villages within the area of 23,741 km<sup>2</sup>, directly adjacent to the State of Sarawak, Malaysia territory. The area has an average population density of 8 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, the communities of 55 villages in West Kalimantan and 32 villages in Sarawak are connected by about 50 footpaths. Thirdly, the economic gap between West Kalimantan and Sarawak communities ranges from US\$ 400 to 4,000 (Putra, 2017, p. 132). Fourthly, the coordination between central and regional agencies in handling state border areas was not optimal. Lastly, limited infrastructure (transportation, electricity, clean water, and telecommunication) and social facilities (education and health) categorized them as disadvantaged regions. Substandard economic performance, unresponsive bureaucracy, and inefficient service delivery altogether erode the people's trust in their government (Tanny & Al-Hossienie, 2019; Widaningrum, 2017).

There are at least five reasons that contribute to the problems in the border areas of Indonesia. First of these reasons: most of the land border areas in Indonesia are still in need of development due to limited economic, social, cultural, and other supporting facilities and infrastructure. As a result, most people living in the border areas must endure unfavorable living conditions (Suwartiningsih et al., 2018; Pynanjung et al., 2021). In comparison, Malaysia has built a growth center and border corridors through various economic and trade activities, which benefit the Malaysian government and its people. This condition leads to a high dependence of the Indonesian border communities—that live in areas bordering with Malaysian territories—on the neighboring country. For example, many Indonesian nationals living in Entikong reportedly chose to seek medical treatment in Sarawak rather than in Indonesia due to differences in availability and quality of care (Widiyastuty et al., 2023). Indonesian citizens living in the West Kalimantan border areas are exposed, daily, to comparisons of their living conditions with their neighbors (Dewantara et al., 2023). They shared co-existed daily relations, which were preserved through good receptions by the Malaysian community at the border (Abdullah et al., 2022).

Second, the blurring of the boundaries of the Indonesian territory due to the destruction of stakes on the border of West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan. This issue has caused around 200 hectares of forest from the Indonesian territory to become Malaysian. Third, unclear national boundaries have caused several border violations committed by Indonesian citizens and foreign nationals. Fourth, the issue of criminal acts, such as people and small arms smuggling, drug trafficking, spreading acts of terrorism, and other international crimes that cross the boundaries of national sovereignty, also factor in the problems in the border areas of Indonesia. Terrorism, separatism, and other transnational crimes may be closely related to utilizing or exploiting sea lanes in Indonesian territorial waters so they can willingly enter Indonesia (Azizurrahman, 2014). The final issue is the rise of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing cases by local and foreign fishermen (Darajati, 2022, p. 421). From an environmental perspective, this irresponsible management of fish resources hinders progress in realizing the sustainable capture fisheries sector.

West Kalimantan and Sarawak's long borderline has the potential for significant challenges. The mapping of the relationship between cooperation in the management of national borders between the two countries, made with considering the fulfillment of the economic rights of border communities, shows three problem dimensions: at the local level, national level, and international/regional level. We argue that all strategic issues can be boiled down into a core problem: the weakness of Indonesia's

government in the border regions.

Studies on border issues are, in truth, nothing new to be discussed in social sciences. There has been much research conducted by social scientists, even with the effort to develop a multidisciplinary approach by combining more than one discipline (Wilson & Donnan, 2012, p. 13). One influential work on border studies by Wilson and Donnan (2012, p. 13) explained the phase of four generations of the studies. It explained the Mexico-US border, the relation between nation and state, and border areas—part of the state territory—and their roles as geographical and political “peripheries.” Lastly, it also engaged with the critical issues of interest to the discipline concerned.

Even so, the border remains a fascinating topic to discuss in a contemporary globalized world, as Adesina (2019) stated. In a growing world believed to be borderless, border studies remain complex and contradictory. The emergence of COVID-19 in the last three years does support the idea that the state border must be guarded and secured by all means. The debate over a borderless state, or one with secured borders, is an entry point for exploring this issue in the context of the Indonesia-Malaysia borderland.

Significant research has been conducted in this borderland, especially by Indonesian and Malaysian scholars. The boundary of two nation-states is an exceptional case due to the classical rivalry between both states that put the issue of border disputes over land or sea as one of their main political and security agenda in the name of national sovereignty (Jalli & Sualman, 2020; Karulus & Askandar, 2020; Yuniar, 2022; Sudagung, 2021; Sudiar, 2018; Thontowi, 2015). Meanwhile, simultaneously, they did acknowledge *serumpun* as their common identity and principal to conduct better international cooperation and border diplomacy (Bangun, 2014; Roels, 2021; Wardhani, 1999). Other factors that played a role in this complex area represent the identical identity of dwellers who live alongside the border, for example, the Bidayuh and the Iban, who shared strong kinship and cultural relations (Bala, 2002; Efriani et al., 2020; Eilenberg, 2005; Suwartiningsih et al., 2018). The previous factor, combined with the economic disparity and the relational history between the two areas, shaped the economic activities, legal or illegal, between the people who live in West Kalimantan and Sarawak (Anuar & Harun, 2019; Awang et al., 2013; Eilenberg & Wadley, 2009; Ishikawa, 2018; Lord & Chang, 2019).

Lastly, to a large extent, on the Indonesian side of the border area, there is the issue of less than well-coordinated border management. The issue is an exciting entry point for our paper. Malaysia has a much more apparent authority division in its border management than Indonesia (Abdullah et al., 2022). In Indonesia, although the Jokowi administration has articulated more political interest in development activities at the border gate since 2014 (Alunaza & Sudagung, 2020), our previous research found that the substance of Law No. 43 of 2008 about State Territory, as the primary legal basis of border management, could create implementation ambiguity over the central-local government’s authority (Darajati, 2022). Therefore, this article will analyze to what extent the regulation of authority based on Law Number 43 of 2008 was implemented to manage the Indonesian border area’s development and how it impacts the service coverage to the people in the specific area.

## **II. LITERARY REVIEWS**

The state is an organization of power that brings together units of human society in a particular area as a nation, possesses a sovereign government, and is recognized for its existence by another state in the international community. The state, an organization of power, utilizes instruments, organs, and institutions, which, according to the Trias Politica theory, consist of the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary (Jones, 2002, p. 3). The three state institutions are fundamental and must exist in a democratic rule of law. Meanwhile, the existence of other institutions can be determined according to the underlying philosophy and the system of government, as well as the form of state adopted by a country.

These essential ideas have become the fundamental norm in establishing a national legal system at the central and regional levels. Government administration and national development throughout the state are operationalized with these ideas functioning as fundamental guiding principles. These central ideas are engaged to accomplish Indonesia’s dream as outlined in the Preamble to its 1945 Constitution. The Indonesian government must protect its nation and people. It also must promote public welfare and education for its people and appreciate social justice for every one of its citizens. It must equally perform its duties on the global stage to ensure international order.

Attempts have been committed to actualizing these four goals of the state through governance and development by the Old Order government, the New Order government, and the current Reformation governments. However, the results still need to be improved, particularly in border areas,

which until today are still considered underdeveloped in terms of economic, social, and cultural infrastructure and supra-structural development (Hidayah et al., 2022). These underdevelopments, thus, severely affect the national resilience of the Republic of Indonesia.

The way authority is regulated is closely related to the theory of sovereignty. According to Bodin, sovereignty is the supreme power in a unanimous, original, indivisible, and continuous country without interruption (Miglietti, 2018, p. 18). Therefore, even though the government and Head of State may alternate, the state with its sovereignty still exists and continues uninterrupted. Likewise, according to Laski (1983), the modern state is independent in the face of other communities, or, in other words, is sovereign from them; there are three kinds of cohesive sovereignty in the context of democratic constitutional countries: the sovereignty of the people, the law, and the state.

This theory of sovereignty is based on the thoughts of Rousseau, who positions the people as the highest holder of power in a country. Without the people, the state and government cannot exist. The existence of the people is one of the fundamental requirements of the presence of the state. Sovereignty is also repeatedly identified with democracy, interpreted as the government from, by, and for the people. Therefore, the will of the state must be based on the people's will (Soehino, 2004: p. 121). However, the people's will does not give rise to majority power. So that state governance can be carried out in an orderly, democratic, and just manner, it is necessary to regulate the implementation of the people's sovereignty law formulated in the constitution. This arrangement raises the notion of a rule of law or constitutionalism. This rule places law as a sovereign provision in implementing development.

The hierarchy of authority is formulated based on the people's sovereignty and state sovereignty. It is exercised in carrying out the due process for government affairs, as well as development affairs. The aforementioned authority itself is derived from government administrative law. In its entirety, it can be explained as rules that relate to both the acquisition and use of government authority by public law subjects within the context of public law relations. In this regard, government authority can be considered the government's ability to promote a legal, binding relationship between itself—the government—and its citizens, as well as implement positive laws on its territory.

Concerning this definition, Bagir Manan argued that authority didn't represent something similar to power when used in the legal context. In the same—legal—context, power describes the right to or not to do something, while authority simultaneously represents rights and obligations. When concerning regional autonomy, the term rights contains the meaning of the power to self-regulate and self-manage. Despite that, obligations horizontally signify the power to constitute government as they should. Vertically, it implies the power to operate the government in an orderly state government bond (Manan, 2001, p. 37).

From the opinion of the legal experts above, we argue that the essence of authority comes from state power, regulated based on the constitution or statutory regulations. Subsequently, it is interpreted as a formal authority and functions to carry out state, government, and development tasks to achieve state goals according to the scope and substance of its affairs. Hadjon (1994, pp. 48–49) included his explanation of the three primary sources of authority in the context of administrative law doctrine, which are:

1. Attribution: Original authority that originates directly from the granting of authority by the constitutional legislators or the legislators to state institutions, government agencies, or state/government officials to carry out specific state/government affairs. The responsibility for implementing the attributable authority rests entirely with the authority holder.
2. Delegation: The entrustment of authority from one administrative body, institution, or official to other administrative bodies/institutions/officials, both within the state, to carry out specific affairs with the consequence that the responsibility for carrying out that authority rests entirely on the recipient of the delegation (delegates).
3. Mandate: A temporary delegation of authority (power of attorney) from superior or equivalent State administrative officials to subordinate State administrative officials or its equivalent to act on behalf of the authorizing agent carrying out certain affairs, where the responsibility for implementing this authority remains with the mandate giver.

By comparing these criteria, the authority delegated to the central, provincial, and regency governments, according to articles 10-12 of Law No. 43 2008, could be categorized as attribution authority. Furthermore, articles 14-18 described the vital tasks of border management attributed to the National and Regional Border Management Agencies. These written documents of authority division will be more elaborated in our analysis and compared to the implementation in our research location.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

We conducted descriptive normative research to describe the law norms that govern border management in Indonesia. We collected the data from several sources: laws and regulations, books, journal articles, and online news articles. Additionally, we combined field research as our data collection method in West Kalimantan Province. The first empirical data were collected in 2010 by interviewing the provincial government authority and observing the border area at West Kalimantan. The second field research was conducted from August to October 2022. It was concluded to renew the data and clearly understand the recent development impacted by the newest policy, which takes place in the border areas of the West Kalimantan Province. The author observed the border area and conducted an expert interview with the local government representative and the border gate manager at Entikong, Sanggau Regency. As suggested by Bogner et al. (2009), interviewing an expert would also mean interviewing someone with more knowledge of his function towards the social system or structure. The data analysis was done simultaneously during the fieldwork by coding and comparing the data with the theory from the literature review suggested by Flick et al. (2004). Our primary focus was evaluating the regulation and how the policymakers processed it, thus implementing the law to uncover the authority problems in dealing with the service coverage towards the people.

### **IV. BORDER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY IN INDONESIA**

The Indonesian territory is provided with substantial legal certainty by Law Number 43 of 2008 on State Territories, as mandated by Article 25A of the 1945 Constitution. The management of state territory, as referred to in the Indonesian 1945 Constitution, essentially adheres to the following principles:

1. There must exist an arrangement of government, which is the Indonesian state government, that serves to protect the entire nation and its people.
2. Land, water, and air, as well as the natural wealth contained therein within the state territory, must be utilized for the prosperity of the Indonesian people and must be utilized in that manner until the Indonesian people have reached the greatest extent of their wealth.
3. There must be a decentralization from the national government to large and small regional governments. These smaller governments are autonomous from the central government but simultaneously work as a part or element of the unitary state, the Republic of Indonesia.
4. The Republic of Indonesia must strive to realize social welfare for its people.

Meanwhile, the primary substances regulated in Law Number 43 of 2008 concerning State Territory could be described as follows.

1. The State Territory includes the land area, subsoil, water area, and airspace above it. The water area includes archipelagic waters, inland waters, territorial sea, and seabed. All the sources of wealth contained therein are also considered the property of the Republic of Indonesia.
2. The Republic of Indonesia holds sovereign rights in its Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf. It also holds control rights in its Contiguous Zone.
3. The government of the Republic of Indonesia holds the right to regulate the management and utilization of state territory and border areas.
4. Different institutions may be given the authority to handle Border Areas within the State Territory. The members of these institutions must be part of the elements of the central or regional governments. This requirement is made with consideration for the strategic position of border areas and the significant effects that it may have on crucial matters, such as state sovereignty, territorial integrity, law enforcement, and the people's welfare.
5. People's members may participate in guarding and defending State Territories, including Border Areas.
6. Anyone who commits violations related to the State Territory and its boundaries may be given prohibition and sanctions.

Although Law No. 43 of 2008 does regulate the authority of the Indonesian Central Government, as well as its Provincial Government and Regency/City Government, in managing State Territories and Border Areas, as mentioned in articles 9-12, there are still details that are further regulated by Government Regulation, as is dictated in Article 13. This arrangement is imperative and will undoubtedly have its juridical impact if it is not realized.

If we look closely, we could divide the elements of this law into at least three categories: authority, duties, and participation. First, the authority of the central, the authority of the central, provincial, and regency governments. Second, the duties and characteristics of the Border Management National Agency. Both are in line with making arrangements for the management and utilization of both State Territories and Border Areas, which are regulated in articles 10-12 and 14-17 of Law No. 43 of 2008. A detailed explanation is presented in the Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** The Authorities of Governments Based on Law No. 43 of 2008

Actors	Authorities	Source of Legal Standing
Central Governments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the management and utilization policies of the State Territory and Border Areas.</li> <li>2. Hold negotiations with other countries regarding establishing State Territory Boundaries by the provisions of statutory regulations and international law.</li> <li>3. Building or making signs of State Territory Boundaries.</li> <li>4. Collect data and name islands and archipelagos as well as other geographical elements.</li> <li>5. Grant permission to international flights to cross territorial airspace on routes determined in laws and regulations.</li> <li>6. Granting innocent passage permits to foreign ships to cross the territorial sea and archipelagic waters on the routes specified in the laws and regulations.</li> <li>7. Carry out supervision in the contiguous zone needed to prevent violations and punish violators of laws and regulations in customs, fiscal, immigration, or sanitary within the State Territory or territorial sea.</li> <li>8. Determine airspace prohibited from being crossed by international flights for defense and security.</li> <li>9. Make and update a map of the State Territory and submit it to the House of Representatives at least once every 5 (five) years.</li> <li>10. Maintaining the integrity, sovereignty, and security of the State Territory and Border Areas.</li> <li>11. The Government must determine the cost of developing Border Areas and may assign regional governments to exercise their authority under co-administration tasks by statutory regulations.</li> </ol>	Article 10
Provincial Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out Government policies and stipulate other policies in the framework of regional autonomy and co-administration.</li> <li>2. Coordinating development in the Border Area.</li> <li>3. Carry out the development of Border Areas between regional governments and/or between provincial governments and third parties.</li> <li>4. Supervise the implementation of Border Area development by the Regency/City Government.</li> <li>5. The Provincial Government must also determine the cost of developing Border Areas.</li> </ol>	Article 11
Regency Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out government policies and stipulate other policies in the framework of regional autonomy and co-administration.</li> <li>2. Maintain boundary markers.</li> <li>3. Coordinate in developing tasks in the border area in their territory.</li> <li>4. Develop the border areas between regional governments and/or between regional governments and third parties.</li> <li>5. Regency governments must also determine the cost of developing Border Areas.</li> </ol>	Article 12

Source: Author (2023)

Third, community participation. Article 19 Law No. 43 of 2008 says that local communities may participate in developing their respective Border Areas and guarding and maintaining them. Community participation, however, must be done under the Indonesian law. The long-standingness of Law No. 43 of 2008—and the authority division system that it dictates—indicates that existing regulation still maintains a solid and sufficient legal standing in regulating the development of its State Territory, including its Border Areas with neighboring countries. Even so, it may still be improved or renewed if it no longer follows the future needs of governance and national development.

**Table 2.** The Duties and Characteristics of Border Management National Agency Based on Article 14 to 17 Law No. 43 of 2008

Actors		Duties/Characteristics
National Management Agency	Border	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established by the central government</li> <li>2. The National Border Management Agency is led by a head of the agency responsible to the President by his authority. The position, duties, functions, organizational structure, and work procedures of the Management Agency and the permanent secretariat at the central level are regulated by a Presidential Regulation.</li> <li>3. Membership of the Management Agency comes from elements of the central government related to the borders of the State Territory.</li> <li>4. The Management Agency's task is establishing border development program policies, determining the budget requirements plan, coordinating implementation, and conducting evaluation and supervision. However, the implementation of technical development is carried out by specialized agencies by their main tasks and functions.</li> <li>5. The working relationship between the national and regional management agencies is coordinative.</li> <li>6. In carrying out its duties, the National Border Management Agency is assisted by a permanent secretariat located at the ministry whose duties and responsibilities are domestic administration.</li> </ol>
Regional Management Agency	Border	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established by the provincial government</li> <li>2. The Regional Border Management Agency is led by a head of the agency responsible to the Regional Head by their authority. The position, duties, functions, organizational structure, and working procedures of the Management Body and permanent secretariat at the regional level are regulated by Regional Regulation.</li> <li>3. Membership of the Management Body comes from elements of the provincial governments related to the borders of the State Territory.</li> <li>4. The working relationship between the national and regional border management agencies is coordinative.</li> </ol>

Source: Author (2023)

The provincial government of West Kalimantan had, in 2010, formed its regional border management agency through the West Kalimantan Governor Regulation No. 65 of 2008. However, the agency has been unable to function optimally in developing parts of its territory that border with the Malaysian territory. The failure of this agency may be attributed to its critical tasks and functions being only coordinative and administrative. The agency still lacks the authority that will allow it to execute technical tasks exclusively related to managing the development of border areas.

However, establishing the National Border Management Agency (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan, shortened as BNPP) impacted the management of Entikong border post areas, which were being taken over by the central government authority. As of the writing of this paper, the agency does not yet have the authority of a non-ministry government institution, which enforces the right—and capability—to act independently from other institutions, which it should have. This proposal is inspired by the substance of Law Number 43 of 2008. In the law, the regulation of the state territory has been integrated with the foundation and subsequent uses of the National Border Management Agency. We thought there remained a need for legal certainty regarding the National Border Management Agency's status: a State Ministry or non-ministerial government institution. Even though it is valid that the management of the state border area is cross-sectoral, we argue it will still be more satisfactory if the BNPP is upgraded to a ministerial level and led by the Minister for the Development of Border Areas. We hope that in the future, they will become more effective, efficient, and focused on carrying out tasks for the development of Indonesia's border area with the neighboring state territory as the front yard.

But the problems do not only lie in the constitutional aspects, especially in authority division. Our previous research discovered that the leading cause of the issues in the border area of West Kalimantan and Sarawak was the policy authority exercised in managing the border development program. In the same research, we also discovered practical issues that shaped the border management problem in West Kalimantan. Firstly, we found the involved stakeholders needed to be integrated. If anything, the involved stakeholders act individually as separate parties. Furthermore, more authority and coordination systems were needed among the stakeholders. Lastly, we also found the local government required more authority, which hampered their access to certain operational activities that may serve to develop their regions (Darajati & Syafei, 2022, p. 9). The provincial and district governments are left with only managing natural resources, human resources, and other assets based on the regional autonomy management pattern.



The ambiguity showed up because of a divided definition of border area. As Law Number 43 of 2008 suggested, the border area is the regency and district area located at the border of Indonesian sovereignty. However, with the BNPP establishment, the central government situated the area of the national border post, with a total of 19.493 m<sup>2</sup>, exclusively as their area of authority and bordering themselves with the area managed by the local government (see Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Border Checkpoint or *Pos Lintas Batas Negara* (PLBN) Entikong Area  
Source: Google Maps (2023)

An example may indicate the lack of hierarchy of authority and the subsequent miscoordination among stakeholders in managing West Kalimantan's border area. When the governor of West Kalimantan, Sutarmidji, visited PLBN Entikong, he pointed out the broken X-ray facilities at the border gate (Misbahul, 2023). Furthermore, news reports show that, even after this incident, the PLBN manager could merely propose the renewal of the facilities to the central government through BNPP. The central government must agree to the proposal and not the province governor, although the border gate is located in the territory he presided over. The governor had to allow his protest voiced in the media to impose political pressure on the central government and promote awareness of the needs of his border areas. In this globalized era, where social media has become a tool, anyone may press the government. The governor's action exposes classic problems in the bureaucratic communication process, which may sometimes halt regional development.

Indeed, it seems, nowadays, that the Indonesian people must notify the authorities of specific problems by first making the case or issue 'go viral' on social media. Once the issue has received widespread attention, the authorities will immediately untangle it. One example is a viral video from a Lampung citizen who protested the awful road conditions. When it reached the President, he reacted by illustrating his concern and going in person to see the damaged roads that the Lampung citizens and other citizens have complained about. He promised to rebuild a better road infrastructure, though only in some regions of Lampung (Bejo, 2023).

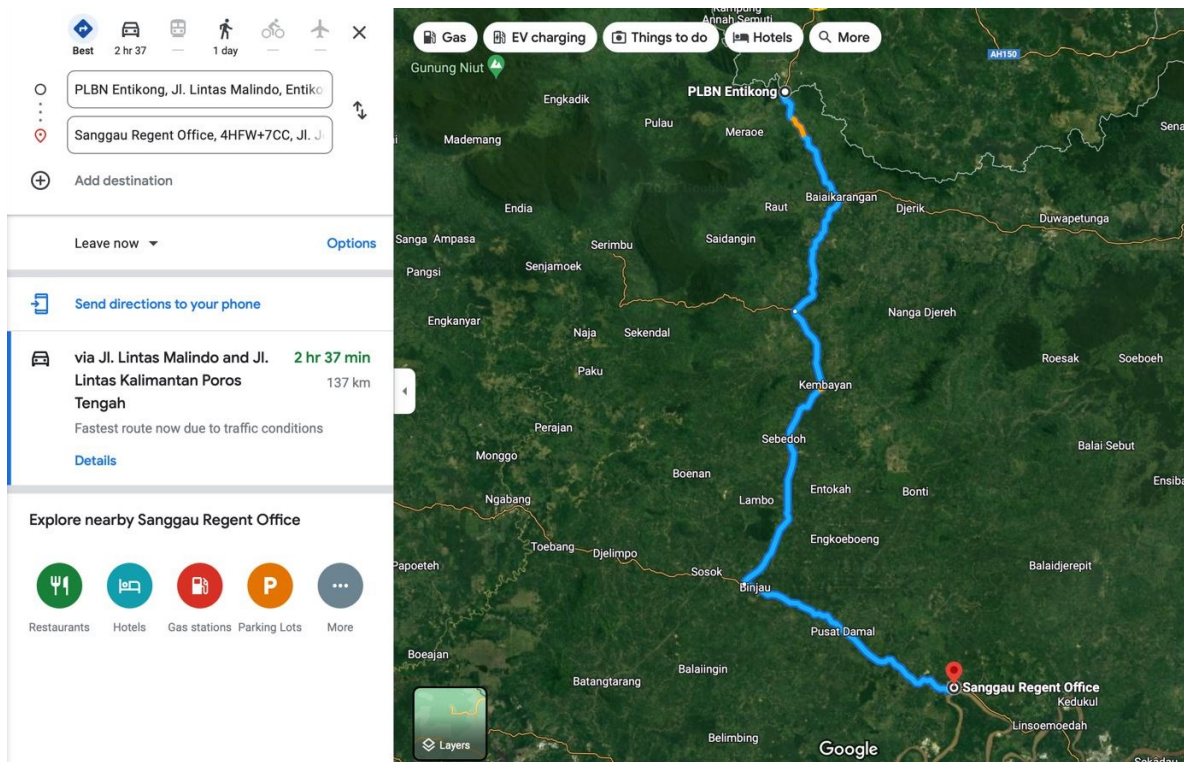
During our field research, the author found out that, in one of the traditional border posts—an informal gate—in Sanggau Regency, the electronic facilities of the customs officers could not be operated due to the lack of electricity. The solar panel, which was supposed to produce electricity for the post's usage, was broken. The officers had reported this matter to a superior authority. Despite that, they received the same response as the manager of PLBN Entikong: further actions regarding the matter must be taken with the approval from the central—national—government. Therefore, they must wait; the officials at the post must continue taking notes of the flow of goods from or to Malaysia by communicating it in a book by hand until the central government comes to their aid.

The issue also impacted the service coverage for the people. The people barely knew the border area or their area was under the government's authority. From our observation, people must distinguish between central or local government or the national management body. But, in fact, they merely thought



every layer of the government was the same government for them. Therefore, the local people sometimes demand clarification about how the service is provided to them, for example, in exporting goods to Malaysia through the Entikong border post. The seller has to be registered by the village government through Village Enterprise (BUMDES) to engage in international trade. The process was issued by the village government rather than the National Border Management Body, which has the authority in the border post.

Although we acknowledge the problem that arose during Law Number 43 2008 implementation, the people who want international mobility through the Entikong Border Post gained some beneficial impact. Regarding safety, with all national authorities under the coordination of BNPP, the national security around the border area was highly secured. An integrated service for cross-border vehicle licenses has existed in this border post. The user need only bring relevant documents, such as a letter of car ownership and a driver's license. From our experience, our car took about 30 minutes to cross the border. The other benefit that the local people got was the establishment of several branches of national authorities, such as immigration and customs, which made it easier to process their cross-border documents without going to Sanggau - the capital city of the regency - or to Pontianak – the capital city of West Kalimantan. It saved some travel time (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).



**Fig. 2.** Route from PLBN Entikong to Sanggau City  
Source: Google Maps (2023)

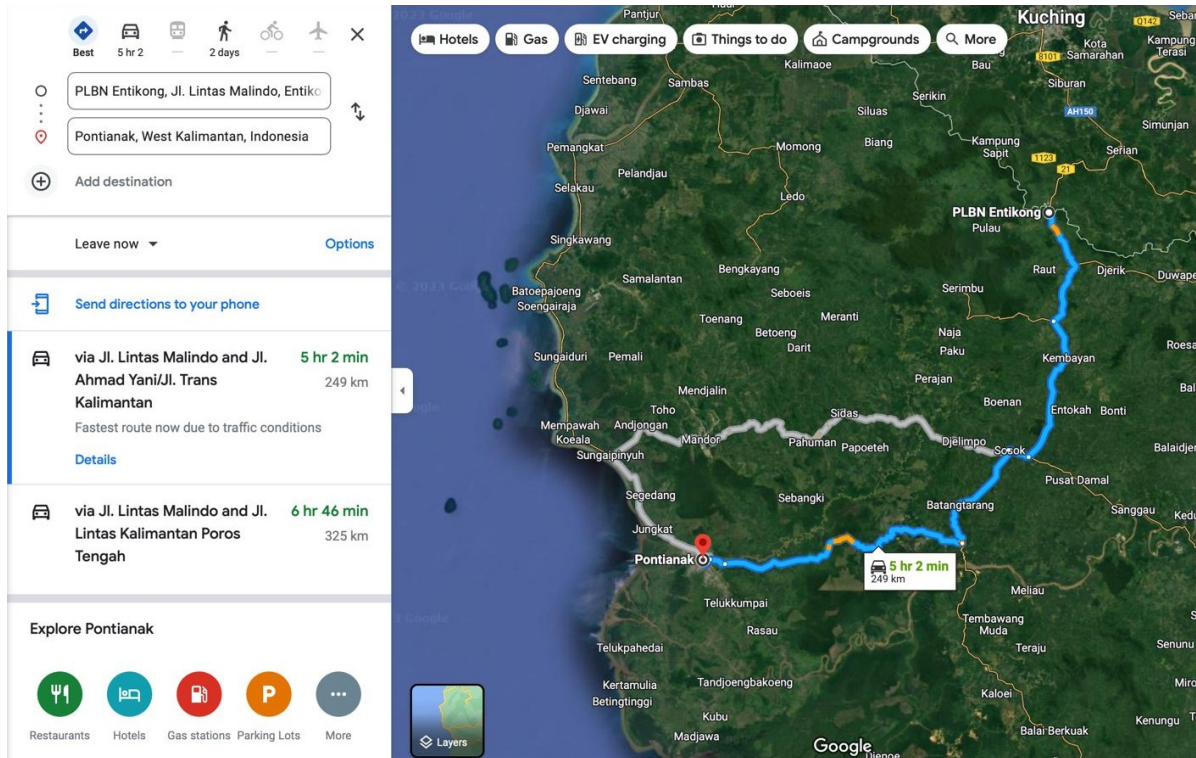


Fig. 3. Route from PLBN Entikong to Pontianak City  
Source: Google Maps (2023)

## V. CONCLUSION

From a normative perspective, the regulation of border management authority based on Law Number 43 of 2008 to manage the development of Indonesia's border area is written precisely clearly. However, a lack of coordination in implementing the law was caused by the ambiguous hierarchy of authority among the stakeholders due to the physical capabilities to influence the areas. From our findings, we argued the Indonesian government must objectively distinguish the practical implementation of the authority from the central, provincial, and district to village government and the national border management institution. We argued the closest coverage of authoritative bodies in giving services to the people would boost the people's welfare in the border areas. Border management must be aligned with the management's master plan and budget availability. Simultaneously, the development programs' implementation, monitoring, and evaluation should be executed objectively, consistently, and sustainably.

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