



Collaborative Governance in Road Construction in Molowahu Village, Tibawa District, Gorontalo Regency

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ABSTRACT

Road infrastructure development constituted an important factor in improving community welfare because it affected mobility and socio-economic activities. To support the effectiveness of such development, collaboration among stakeholders through the application of Collaborative Governance principles wa's required. This study aimed to analyze the application of Collaborative Governance in the road development in Molowahu Village, Tibawa District, Gorontalo Regency. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicated that all Collaborative Governance indicators had been applied, including initial conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, collaborative processes characterized by face to face dialogue, trust-building, commitment to the process, shared understanding, and interim outcomes. However, none of these indicators had been implemented optimally. Constraints in authority and limited budgets were identified as the primary causes that prevented the realization of physical road construction, so collaborative results remained limited to non physical aspects and had not yet been able to drive physical development. Therefore, strengthening collaboration was necessary to accelerate road development more effectively and concretely.

INTRODUCTION

Infrastructure development is a crucial aspect in improving people's welfare and quality of life, as well as encouraging economic growth, especially in rural areas. Roads, as part of basic infrastructure, play a vital role in connecting communities with various centers of activity, such as the economy, health services, and distribution of agricultural products. When road infrastructure is inadequate, it can hinder socio-economic interaction and slow down people's living standards. Road construction not only impacts mobility but also contributes to increasing agricultural productivity and reducing poverty rates in rural areas (Hilmawan et al., 2023).

The legal framework in Indonesia has laid a strong foundation for the implementation of targeted village development. Law Number 2 of 2022 concerning financial relations between the central and regional governments, emphasizes the importance of cross-government cooperation in managing development finances. Furthermore, Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning Villages emphasizes the position of villages as development subjects who have the authority to design and implement development programs tailored to the needs of the community. However, the scope of village authority is still limited to the basic development sector. This restriction is further emphasized in the Regulation of the Minister of Finance Number 108 of 2024 concerning Village Fund Management, the allocation of village funds is directed to support socio-economic activities and community empowerment, not to finance road infrastructure which is the responsibility of the Regency and Provincial Governments.

In the context of village development, the availability of road infrastructure is a strategic factor in supporting the mobility and social and economic activities of the community. Molowahu Village, Tibawa District, Gorontalo Regency, with an area of about 931 hectares and a population of 2,491 people, mostly depend on the agricultural sector, with 430 people working as farm laborers and 410 people as farmers. This dependence requires adequate road access support to facilitate the distribution of agricultural products, access to markets, and health services. However, in the initial conditions, road damage is still a problem that has an impact on hampered mobility and declining economic efficiency of the community. Although road construction has been included in the 2024-2029 RPJMDes and proposed through the RKPDes and the Musrenbang forum, institutional design that still relies on formal structures and the division of administrative authority has caused the role of village governments in strategic decision-making to be limited, especially since the authority for road construction is at the district level.

The facilitative leadership of the village head has been seen through communication efforts and aspiration proposals, but limited authority and budget limits the acceleration of the realization of physical development. The collaborative process through face-to-face dialogue has been carried out openly, but the follow-up still depends on the district government's decision. Efforts to build trust, strengthen commitment to the process, and form mutual understanding between actors have been made, but have not been realized in concrete actions. As a result, the temporary results of collaboration are still limited to non-physical achievements such as coordination and planning, while real changes in road conditions have not been realized.

Various research findings in Indonesia support this analysis. The study conducted by Hermansyah et al. (2024) emphasized that the success of collaboration in the transportation sector is greatly influenced by the role of local government facilitators, inclusive leadership, and effective communication between actors. Meanwhile, research conducted by (Junaidi et al., 2025) in Berau Regency shows that active collaboration between local governments and communities in road maintenance has been proven to improve the quality of infrastructure. However, in Molowahu Village, the opposite shows the opposite, although the principle of Collaborative Governance has been applied, it has not been able to encourage road construction in Molowahu Village.

Thus, the study on "Collaborative Governance in Road Development in Molowahu Village, Tibawa District, Gorontalo Regency" is so important because it presents unique dynamics that have not been discussed much in the previous literature. There are few studies that discuss the issue of village infrastructure development, when the village does not have direct authority, even though the community needs the infrastructure. So that this research can fill the gap where most of the existing research focuses on the effectiveness of the use of village funds (Hilmawan et al., 2023) or the extent to which Musrenbang (Development Planning Deliberation) in channeling the aspirations of the community (Akbar et al., 2020). However, in reality, in Molowahu Village, it shows that the process of absorbing community aspirations alone will not be effective if it is not followed by collaboration between levels of government.

In addition, the urgency of this research lies in efforts to improve the welfare of the community. Because the majority of the residents of Molowahu village work as rice farmers, the existence of adequate road infrastructure is an important factor in facilitating the distribution of agricultural products. The condition of damaged roads not only hinders distribution mobility but also has an impact on reducing crop prices due to delays in delivery to the market. This situation ultimately has implications for the decline of the village's economic competitiveness. Therefore, road construction cannot be seen solely as a physical infrastructure project, but also as a strategic effort to ensure economic, social, and social sustainability and improve community welfare.

In this study, Collaborative Governance is used as the main framework used as a basis for analysis to understand and examine the dynamics of interactions that occur in Molowahu Village. By understanding the dynamics of collaboration that are not optimal in Molowahu Village, this study is expected to make a practical contribution in formulating a more effective strategy to encourage cross-actor collaboration in road construction. The findings of this study are expected to not only provide contextual solutions for Molowahu Village, but also become a reference for other villages facing similar phenomena in basic infrastructure development.

RESEARCH METHODS

Approaches and Types of Research

In this study, the researcher uses a descriptive qualitative approach and a case study type of research. The use of this approach and type of research aims to explain in a structured, real, and accurate manner the actual conditions that occur in the collaborative relationship between the government and the community in the implementation of road construction.

Research Location and Time

The researcher conducted a research in Molowahu Village, Tibawa District, Gorontalo Regency. This location was chosen based on poor road conditions and lack of effective collaboration between the government and the community in the development process. This research was conducted from December 2025-January 2026, and is flexible according to the needs of the field.

In this study, the researcher used 2 data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Data collection in this study was carried out by three main methods: observation, interviews, and documentation.

Data Analysis

This study uses an interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This selection model is based on its characteristics that emphasize that qualitative analysis takes place dynamically and continuously, not through linear stages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Conditions

Ansell and Gash's Theory of Collaborative Governance explains that the initial conditions are the underlying situation for the emergence of collaboration. This indicator is used in the study to analyze how the needs of road construction in Molowahu Village, as well as the role and position of each actor, form the basis for collaboration, even though until now road construction has not been realized.

The results of the interview revealed that the initial condition of collaboration started from the community's need for road construction which was considered inadequate. These aspirations were conveyed to the Village Government and BPD as institutions that represent the interests of the community. The Molowahu Village Government, especially the village head and village secretary, then discussed the proposal in the village development planning deliberations. In terms of importance, the urgency of road construction can be seen from the explanation of the community who feel the impact of road conditions in daily life, as well as from the attitude of the Molowahu Village Government and BPD who consistently propose road repairs as a priority need of the village.

As a representative of the Regency Government, the PUPR Office has an understanding of the importance of road construction, but is in a strategic position as the main decision-maker. This difference in authority is the main feature of the initial conditions of collaboration. The Molowahu Village Government and the community function as the proposing party, while the PUPR Office is authorized in the planning and implementation of activities. At this stage, the contractor has not been involved because the road construction has not been determined to be realized. The initial relationship between the actors went relatively well and no open conflicts were found.

The relationship between the community's needs for road repair and the response of the Molowahu Village Government and BPD in the proposal process allows for the establishment of road construction collaboration in Molowahu Village. However, the division of authority that places the PUPR Office as the main actor in road repair causes the role of the Molowahu Village Government to be more administrative and facilitative. Thus, collaboration tends to be centered on the mechanism of conveying aspirations and institutional coordination, while the realization of development is greatly influenced by the policy direction and development priorities of the Regency Government.

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the initial condition of Collaborative Governance in road construction in Molowahu village is based on the community's need for road repairs and a fairly good initial relationship between actors. However, these conditions have not fully strengthened the collaboration process because road construction is still in the planning and proposal stages, so the intensity of interaction and deepening of the collaboration process between actors is still limited. This causes the collaboration that has been formed to not run strongly. Therefore, even though the foundation of collaboration has been formed, this initial condition has not been able to encourage the realization of road construction.

Institutional Design

In Collaborative Governance, institutional design refers to a set of rules, procedures, and mechanisms that regulate the involvement of actors in the collaboration process. In this study, these indicators are used to examine whether the existing institutional system is able to open up space for participation and ensure balanced involvement for all actors in road construction in Molowahu village.

The results of the analysis show that the institutional mechanism in road construction planning has been implemented according to the established procedures. The village musrenbang organized by the Molowahu Village Government and BPD is the main forum for the community to convey their aspirations. The village secretary carries out administrative functions through the preparation of planning documents, while the village head plays a role in conveying the results of the deliberations to the PUPR Office as an official proposal. This indicates that procedurally speaking, space for community participation is available.

The institutional design in the construction of roads in Molowahu village is hierarchical in accordance with the division of government authority. Although formal dialogue mechanisms such as the Village Musrenbang have involved the Molowahu Village Government, BPD, and the community in the proposal stage, the involvement of local actors does not continue in the decision-making and implementation process. Because the determination of priorities and the implementation of development are fully under the authority of the District Government through the PUPR Office. In addition, the contractor has not played a role in the planning stage because its involvement only occurs after the development is determined. This condition shows that although the initial dialogue has been established, substantive decisions regarding implementation remain centralized to the Regency Government in accordance with the provisions of authority.

The institutional design forms a more administrative and procedural pattern of collaboration, especially at the initial proposal and planning stages. The Molowahu Village Government and the community carry out their roles through existing formal mechanisms, especially in the delivery of aspirations and the fulfillment of administrative requirements. Meanwhile, strategic decisions related to priorities and the implementation of development are fully within the authority of the Regency Government through the PUPR Office, so that the involvement of village actors is limited. Therefore, the realization of road construction is greatly influenced by development policies and priorities at the district level.

It can be concluded that institutionally, the implementation of Collaborative Governance in road construction in Molowahu village has been supported by formal procedures that open up space for participation for the community and the Molowahu Village Government. However, the design has not been able to realize balanced collaboration, because the involvement of village actors is still limited to the early stages of planning, while decisions remain centralized to the District Government.

Facilitative Leadership

The concept of facilitative leadership in Collaborative Governance places leaders as parties who play an active role in facilitating interactions, maintaining working relationships between actors, and overseeing the sustainability of the collaboration process. This indicator is used in this study to analyze how the role of leadership is carried out by key actors in road construction in Molowahu village.

The results of the interviews showed that the village head played a role in facilitating the village deliberation forum, accommodating various community aspirations, and forwarding development proposals to the PUPR Office. This role is supported by the village secretary through administrative management and technical coordination of planning, while the BPD functions to oversee the aspirations of the community so that road construction remains a priority for the attention of the Molowahu Village Government.

In road construction, the PUPR Office plays a leadership role, especially in policy and technical aspects in processing road construction proposals, in accordance with its authority. The leadership carried out tends to be structural and administrative, with a focus on setting priorities, technical planning, and decision-making. In this context, facilitative leadership functions such as mediating intensive dialogue and building joint decision-making with the Molowahu Village Government and the community have not become the main character, in line with the applicable division of authority. On the other hand, contractors have not carried out leadership functions because they have not been directly involved in the implementation of road construction.

In the construction of the Molowahu road, facilitative leadership functions to maintain communication between actors and support the sustainability of the development proposal process. However, this role is still limited to the initial stages, especially planning and coordination. This condition is influenced by the limited authority of the Molowahu Village Government and the dependence on the policies and priorities of the Regency Government through the PUPR Office limits the effectiveness of facilitative leadership in encouraging the realization of road construction.

From the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that facilitative leadership in road construction in Molowahu Village has been carried out by the village head and BPD in facilitating the aspirations of the community. However, this leadership has not had an impact on the realization of road construction due to the limited authority and decision-making system that is in the Regency Government.

Collaboration Process

The Collaborative Governance theory put forward by Ansell and Gash places the collaboration process as the core of the implementation of collaboration between actors, because it directly describes the interaction patterns and dynamics of cooperation that occurs. This process includes face-to-face dialogue, building trust, commitment to the process, mutual understanding, and temporary results. In this study, the indicators of the collaboration process are used to analyze the interaction between the PUPR Office, contractors, the Molowahu Village Government, BPD, and the community in the construction of roads in Molowahu village, although until now the physical construction of the road has not been realized. These five indicators are the basis for the analysis to see the extent to which the collaboration process has been carried out in the context of road construction in Molowahu Village.

Face-to-face dialogue

Face-to-face dialogue in Collaborative Governance is a process of direct interaction between actors to exchange information, convey interests, and build initial understanding before cooperation is implemented. This dialogue is important to create open communication, reduce misunderstandings, and become the foundation for building trust in the development collaboration process.

The results of interviews with the PUPR Office, the Molowahu Village Government, BPD, the community, and contractors show that the initial dialogue has taken place through village deliberations, Musrenbang, and field coordination. Village actors and the community actively conveyed the need for road construction, while the PUPR Office conducted initial verification. The contractor's views describe a dialogue

pattern based on the experience of rural projects.

Overall, the face-to-face dialogue has supported the formation of initial communication between actors and created an open discussion space in conveying aspirations, information, and needs for road construction. However, the dialogue has not continued on the realization of road construction because the follow-up process still depends on the Regency Government's decision.

Building Trust

Building trust in Collaborative Governance is the process of creating trust between actors through information disclosure, consistency of actions, and continuous communication. Trust is an important basis for each party to be willing to work together, share roles, and support common goals in the implementation of development.

Trust between actors in road construction in Molowahu village is formed through continuous interaction. The community entrusts the Molowahu Village Government and BPD to represent their aspirations in the proposal process. This trust grows due to the village's efforts to follow up on proposals through planning procedures. The relationship with the PUPR Office is formed through repeated formal communication. Meanwhile, the contractor does not yet have a strong relationship of trust because they have not been directly involved in road construction.

Overall, trust between actors has been formed in the early stages of collaboration and strengthened through information disclosure, communication intensity, and commitment of each party in the road construction planning process. However, there are still people who are hesitant because they do not understand the regulations, and the lack of road construction affects public trust.

Commitment to Process

Commitment to the process in Collaborative Governance is the willingness of actors to remain involved, follow the agreed stages, and carry out their respective roles consistently in achieving common goals. This commitment is important to maintain the sustainability of cooperation, especially in the development process that involves many parties and administrative stages.

The commitment to the collaborative process is reflected in the sustainability of the efforts of the Molowahu Village Government, BPD, and the community in placing road construction as a priority. The Molowahu Village Government has consistently included road construction proposals into village planning, with the support of BPD which plays a role in guarding the aspirations of the community, while the community continues to voice these needs. At the district level, the PUPR Office shows commitment by accepting and following up on proposals according to formal mechanisms, even though it has not yet reached the realization stage. Meanwhile, contractors are still in a passive position because their involvement depends on the decisions and policies of the District Government.

However, it can be concluded that the achievement of these commitments is still in the planning and administrative aspects. This indicates that the commitments formed have not been fully able to encourage real change at the implementation stage, so that strengthening the commitment is still very much needed through the follow-up of development at the district level.

Mutual Understanding

Mutual understanding in Collaborative Governance shows that there is a common perception between actors regarding the problems, needs, and goals to be achieved in the collaboration process. This common understanding is an important basis for each actor to move in the same direction and minimize differences of views in the implementation of development.

Based on the results of interviews with the PUPR Office, Molowahu Village Government, BPD, the community, and contractors, it can be seen that there is an alignment of views regarding the importance of road construction. The Molowahu Village Government, BPD, and the community understand road conditions as an urgent need that has an impact on mobility and economic activities. PUPR adjusts its understanding through field reviews, while contractors describe technical needs based on the experience of rural development projects.

Overall, all actors have a common understanding of the importance of road construction and have supported it through discussions and proposals. This shows that there is a common perception between actors regarding the urgency of road construction as the main need of the community. However, this understanding has not been realized with concrete actions in the form of realizing road construction.

Provisional Results

Interim results in Collaborative Governance are initial achievements that emerge during the collaboration process before the main goals are achieved. These results are usually seen in the form of strengthening communication, the preparation of planning documents, initial agreements between actors, and increased coordination in the development process.

Regarding the interim results, the collaboration that has been built in the construction of roads in Molowahu village has not yet produced outputs in the form of physical development. The results that have emerged so far are non-physical, such as the existence of a mutual agreement on the priorities of road construction, the

availability of planning documents and proposals, and the establishment of a pattern of communication and coordination between the Molowahu Village Government, BPD, the community, and the PUPR Office.

Overall, the collaboration process has produced initial achievements in the form of strengthening coordination, communication, and the preparation of the road construction planning and proposal process. However, the results achieved are still at the non-physical stage of development, so the benefits of road construction cannot be felt directly by the community.

Based on the findings and analysis, it can be concluded that the collaborative process in implementing Collaborative Governance in road construction in Molowahu Village has taken place through face-to-face dialogue, building trust, process commitment, and mutual understanding between actors. However, the collaboration is still limited to the planning and proposal stages and has not resulted in the physical construction of the road. This shows that although Collaborative Governance has been formally implemented, its effectiveness in encouraging the realization of development is still low due to the limited role of the Molowahu Village Government and the lack of concrete follow-up from the Regency Government.

CONCLUSION

The Regency Government together with the Molowahu Village Government need to prioritize the handling of road damage in a gradual and planned manner, so that the impact on mobility and social and economic activities of the community can be minimized immediately.

It is necessary to strengthen cooperation mechanisms that are more flexible and participatory, so that work patterns not only rely on formal structures and administrative authority, but also open up more effective coordination spaces between stakeholders.

The Regency Government is expected to provide more intensive coordination space to the Village Government in the process of planning and implementing road construction, so that the aspirations of the village community are more accommodated in decision-making.

The dialogue and deliberation forums that have been running need to be followed by a clearer and measurable follow-up mechanism, so that every discussion results do not stop at the planning stage, but can continue to the realization of the program.

Efforts to build public trust need to be strengthened through continuous information transparency, open delivery of program developments, and more intensive socialization of authority and development stages.

Commitment to the development process needs to be realized in concrete steps through synchronization of planning and budgeting, so that it is not only limited to technical assistance and field reviews, but can lead to the implementation of physical development.

The common understanding between stakeholders needs to continue to be strengthened through continuous coordination, so that the perceptions that have been formed can be translated into concrete actions that are in line with the needs of the community.

To produce more tangible changes, a more integrated collaborative strategy is needed between the village government and the district government, so that the results of the cooperation are not only administrative and non-physical, but also able to produce concrete improvements in road conditions.

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