

## REGIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AS A STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN MERANGIN REGENCY



**Santi Nofria Ulfa<sup>1</sup>**  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia  
[santi.nulfa11@gmail.com](mailto:santi.nulfa11@gmail.com)

**Aldri Frinaldi<sup>2</sup>**  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia  
[aldri@fis.unp.ac.id](mailto:aldri@fis.unp.ac.id)

**Lince Magriasti<sup>3</sup>**  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia  
[lincemagriasti@fis.unp.ac.id](mailto:lincemagriasti@fis.unp.ac.id)

**Hendra Naldi<sup>4</sup>**  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia  
[hendranaldi69@yahoo.co.id](mailto:hendranaldi69@yahoo.co.id)

### Abstract

Regional resource management is a crucial aspect in strengthening the capacity and independence of local governments in supporting sustainable development. This article analyzes the role of the Merangin Regency government in managing regional resources in Merangin Regency, which have the potential to support sustainable economic, social, and environmental development, such as in the agriculture, forestry, tourism, and mining sectors. However, the success of this management is still hampered by various challenges and obstacles, such as limited infrastructure, environmental damage, illegal activities, low local economic added value, and the weak capacity of local government institutions to optimally manage potential. Through a literature review method, this study emphasizes that effective resource management can improve community welfare and support regional development oriented towards ecosystem sustainability and community empowerment. Strengthening the role of local governments, including in spatial planning, human resource development, and intersectoral collaboration, is key to optimizing resource potential. Therefore, the success of resource management in Merangin Regency depends heavily on increasing institutional capacity and implementing effective, environmentally and sustainably oriented policies. These obstacles must be addressed comprehensively so that the resource potential in Merangin Regency can be optimally utilized to improve community welfare and the sustainability of its ecosystem.

**Keywords:** Role, Regional Resources, Local Government

## INTRODUCTION

Resource management is essentially an effort undertaken to achieve prosperity and improve the quality of life for the community. In practice, this management activity is an integral part of the development process, as it encompasses various interrelated aspects and is aimed at encouraging a sustainable improvement in the community's standard of living. Regional resource management plays a strategic role in strengthening the capacity and independence of local governments. Through effective management, the potential of each region's resources, including natural, human, and economic resources, can be optimized to support development that is aligned with the characteristics and needs of the region (Marthahudi, 2024). Strengthening the role of local governments is reflected not only in the ability to manage resources efficiently but also in efforts to create transparent, participatory governance that is oriented toward the welfare of the local community (Development, 2010). In the context of regional governance, resource management cannot be separated from the principle of regional autonomy as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. Through this principle, regional governments are given the authority to regulate and manage their own government affairs and the interests of local communities based on their potential, needs, and priorities. The granting of broad autonomy is intended to enable each region to optimize the management of its resources independently and responsibly. Thus, regional resource management is one concrete form of the implementation of regional autonomy, because through locally formulated policies and programs, regional governments can strengthen fiscal independence, increase regional competitiveness, and accelerate the economic and social development of the community (Pratama et al., 2025). This also serves as a manifestation of strengthening the role of local governments in realizing effective, adaptive, and public welfare-oriented governance at the regional level. Merangin Regency is a region with significant natural and human resource potential, and is a region rich in diverse resources, including agriculture, forestry, tourism, and mining. This region is further enhanced by the Merangin Jambi Geopark, which has been designated a UNESCO Global Geopark, demonstrating the region's high geological, cultural, and ecological value (Publikasi, 2023). In addition, the agricultural and plantation sectors contribute significantly to the regional economy, while the mining and tourism sectors are strategic potentials that continue to be developed. However, various challenges still arise, such as illegal mining activities, environmental degradation, weak local economic added value, and limited capacity of local government institutions in managing potential sustainably (Pahrudin et al., 2023). This indicates a gap between the large potential available and the ability to manage resources. This article will discuss how to manage regional resources in general, such as potential and resource management, specifically in the existing study in Merangin Regency in strengthening the role and capacity of local governments and the forms/types of resources in the region which certainly face challenges and obstacles in managing this potential so that it can have an impact on regional development. Therefore, this article aims to examine the form of regional resource management that is expected to contribute to strengthening the function of local government in Merangin Regency.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **The Concept of Regional Government and Regional Autonomy**

Regional autonomy is essentially the authority granted to autonomous regions to independently regulate and manage the interests of local communities based on applicable laws and regulations, including Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. Thus, regions have the opportunity to determine the direction of their policies according to existing local needs (Siallagan & Siregar, 2023). Etymologically, the word "autonomy" comes from the Greek, namely *auto* (self) and *nomos* (rule), which means the ability of a region to regulate itself based on established rules (Suparto, 2017).

In the context of decentralization, regional autonomy serves as a mechanism to transfer some authority from the central government to the regions, so that public services and government management can run more effectively and in accordance with existing local characteristics (Sumardi, 2025). Government affairs are also divided into absolute affairs, general affairs, and concurrent affairs, so that not all authority is handed over to the regions, and there are still limitations in the division of affairs between the center and regions (Hadi et al., 2015).

The main objective of granting autonomy is to empower communities, increase participation and local creativity, achieve equitable development, and enable regional policies to be tailored to local potential and diversity. However, the implementation of regional autonomy is highly dependent on the capacity of the regional government itself, which includes the quality of human resources, regional financial capacity, and the availability of adequate infrastructure. Furthermore, the relationship between the central and regional governments remains necessary, given the existence of national regulations, oversight mechanisms, and the division of authority, which are important constraints to ensure that regional policies remain in line with the nationally established policy framework (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

### **Resource Management**

Regional resources include natural resources (such as land, forests, water, and minerals), human resources, and local economic potential, which are essential assets for regional development. Management of these resources encompasses planning, utilization, environmental preservation, community capacity building, and the formulation of local policies tailored to the needs and characteristics of the region. Within the context of regional autonomy, regional governments are empowered to manage resource potential through regulatory instruments such as Regional Regulations, business permits, environmental monitoring, and the utilization of strategic regional areas for economic activities (Kadarisman & Gemiharto, 2017).

Natural resource management must be based on the principle of sustainability to ensure that utilization does not harm the sustainability of the ecosystem and the future well-being of the community. This is crucial, especially in the context of water resource and environmental management (PAMBUDI, 2025). Success in regional resource management is influenced by various factors, including the fiscal capacity of local governments, institutional capabilities, and budget independence. Regions with low Regional Original Income (PAD) often face limitations in maximizing their potential (Tan, 2020).

Furthermore, good coordination between the central and regional governments is crucial, particularly in addressing cross-regional issues such as those related to the

environment and the mining sector. This significantly impacts the effectiveness of oversight and the implementation of established policies (Pramesti, 2023). Active community participation also plays a crucial role in creating a fair, transparent, and acceptable resource management process for all parties. This minimizes the potential for conflict in resource utilization (Yuhandra et al., 2023).

### **The Role of Local Government in Regional Resources**

The role of local governments in managing resources at the local level is crucial, given that local governments have the authority to utilize, regulate, and develop existing potential in accordance with the applicable principles of regional autonomy (Hadi et al., 2015). The responsibilities of local governments include the provision of public services and the regulation of development policies as outlined in the RPJMD document. (Regional Medium-Term Development Plan) and RKPD (Regional Government Work Plan), as well as managing regional fiscal aspects related to resource management, including tax collection, levies, and regulating business licensing systems. Furthermore, local governments also play a vital role in strengthening democracy and empowering communities through policies tailored to local social and cultural characteristics, enabling communities to participate more actively in managing existing local potential (Sumardi, 2025).

Regional governments can formulate specific regulations, such as Regional Regulations (Perda) on the environment, community mining management, spatial planning, and tourism sector development, to ensure that resource utilization can provide maximum economic benefits while maintaining sustainability (Saleh et al., 2020). However, implementing this role faces various challenges, such as budget constraints, lack of human resource capacity, and fiscal dependence on the central government, which can make it difficult for some regions to manage resources independently. The relationship between the central and regional governments remains crucial in oversight and regulation to ensure that regional policies are aligned with the national legal framework, especially on strategic issues such as forestry, energy, and mining (Pramesti, 2023).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative approach using library research. This approach was chosen based on the research objective, which focuses on an in-depth understanding of the conceptual and empirical dynamics in regional resource management, as an effort to strengthen the role of local government, particularly in Merangin Regency. This approach allows researchers to explore the relationship between the concept of decentralization, local government capacity, and the utilization of natural, human, and economic resources within the context of regional autonomy.

The literature review method used in this article analyzes various relevant conceptual, normative, and empirical sources. This literature review provides researchers with the opportunity to examine theoretical thinking, previous research findings, and regulations governing regional governance and resource management. Through this method, researchers can comprehensively interpret how regional governments position their roles in strategic resource management, particularly in the context of Merangin Regency, which has potential in the agriculture, forestry, tourism, and mining sectors.

The data used are entirely secondary, collected through a search of academic literature, books, scientific journals, articles, research reports, government publications, and credible online sources. Policy documents such as Law Number 23 of 2014 and publications of the Merangin Regency Statistics Agency serve as important references in understanding regional resource management regulations. Data were analyzed using descriptive-qualitative analysis methods. This analysis was conducted by reducing data, grouping issues by theme, and interpreting the relationships between conceptual variables. The focus of this research is to describe how local governments manage strategic resources and strengthen institutional capacity through effective management strategies, as well as to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of regional governance studies.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Role of Regional Government in Managing Resources**

According to (Riyadi, 2003), a role can be understood as an orientation and concept that describes a specific role played by an individual or party within a social system. Through this role, both individuals and organizations act in accordance with expectations from the social environment and other parties around them. Thus, a role reflects a form of structural demand, encompassing norms, expectations, prohibitions, and inherent responsibilities. In this context, a role also functions as a means to facilitate relationships, provide guidance, and support the organizational function within a social system. Therefore, a role can be viewed as a pattern of behavior that applies to both small and large groups without any differences in its implementation. A role can be understood as a form of attitude and action carried out by an individual who occupies a certain position, in accordance with the expectations of society or their environment. Therefore, when linked to the context of regional government, the role encompasses the implementation of the main functions of regional government, namely in the fields of public service, development, community empowerment, and regulation of social life. Thus, a role can be interpreted as a dynamic aspect of a position, where a person or certain party is considered to be carrying out their role if they carry out the rights and obligations inherent in that position (Windasai et al., 2021).

Regional governments play a strategic role in managing and organizing resources within their territories, both natural and human. Resource management is an effort to optimize regional potential to provide sustainable benefits to the community. Through regional autonomy, as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, regional governments are given the authority to regulate and manage government affairs and the interests of local communities based on their aspirations and regional potential.

The main role of local government in managing resources includes several important aspects, including:

#### **1. Natural Resource Planning and Management**

Regional governments are responsible for developing regional spatial planning, environmental management, and sustainable use of natural resources. This aims to ensure that the use of resources such as agriculture, mining, and forestry is not solely exploitative but also considers ecosystem preservation and the well-being of local communities (Wicaksono, 2024).

## 2. Human Resources Development (HRD)

Human resource development is carried out through improving the quality of education, skills training, and community empowerment to enable them to play a role in regional development. Superior human resources are a key factor in the success of regional resource management, particularly in supporting strategic sectors such as agriculture, MSMEs, and tourism (Wahid et al., 2024).

## 3. Regional Economic Empowerment

PemerintahRegional governments have a responsibility to create a conducive economic climate by strengthening local economic sectors. Supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), developing tourism destinations based on local wisdom, and improving market access are essential components of managing regional economic resources to ensure they are competitive at the national and global levels (Jonga, 2022).

## 4. Regulation and Supervision

Regional governments also play a role in establishing policies and regulations governing resource utilization to prevent deviations or inequities in utilization. Oversight of policy implementation, including law enforcement against violations of natural resource utilization, is part of the regional government's responsibility to maintain sustainable development (Azizah, 2022).

## 5. Partnership and Collaboration

In managing resources, local governments need to build collaborations with various parties, including the central government, the private sector, academics, and the community. This collaborative approach is crucial for achieving transparent, participatory, and equitable resource governance (Kurniasih et al., 2023).

## **Definition and Types of Regional Resources**

### 1. Regional Resource

Regional resources represent all the potential possessed by a region that can be utilized to improve community welfare and support sustainable development. This potential encompasses both physical and non-physical aspects, encompassing natural, human, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. Regional resources serve as the primary capital for local governments in planning and implementing development policies that align with local characteristics (Manda, 2024).

Regional resources are the primary capital for local governments in planning and implementing development policies that align with local characteristics, including natural resources, human resources, and economic potential. The utilization of these resources must be directed optimally and sustainably to support improved community welfare, strengthen regional independence, and create competitiveness based on local potential and advantages (Burhanuddin et al., 2024).

According to Riyadi and Bratakusumah (2003), regional resources are the strengths possessed by a region, whether originating from nature or the work of humans, which if managed effectively can provide added value to the regional economy (Riyadi, 2003).

## 2. Types of Regional Resources

Regional resources refer to all the potential within a region that can be utilized to improve community welfare and regional development. This encompasses various categories, including natural resources, human resources, economic resources (especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), institutions, and infrastructure. A comprehensive understanding of these resources is crucial for sustainable development planning and management (Ostapenko, 2022).

### a. Natural Resources

Natural resources refer to the wealth found in a particular area, both renewable and non-renewable. This includes mineral resources such as mines, metals, and energy. Water resources include rivers, lakes, and groundwater, which are essential for life and various human activities. Furthermore, agricultural resources include fertile soil, forests, and agricultural products, which support food security. Biological resources include flora and fauna, which support ecosystems and can be utilized sustainably (Ali & Kamraju, 2023). Within the framework of regional autonomy, natural resource management has become one of the authorities granted to regions following the decentralization process. This aims to increase regional income and the well-being of local communities. Thus, regions play a crucial role in effectively managing natural resources for the economic and social progress of their communities (Risal, 2018).

### b. Human Resources

Human resources (HR) are the most important asset for regional development. The quality and quantity of the population, education level, skills, and public health significantly influence productivity. In the context of regional autonomy, human resource development is crucial, as each region is required to manage its internal affairs independently without relying entirely on the central government (Rachayu, 2019).

### c. Economic Resources

Economic resources include local economic potential, such as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), investment, tourism, and other economic activities. Local governments play a strategic role in strengthening local economies through incentives, mentoring MSMEs, and developing partnerships between the public and private sectors. MSMEs significantly contribute to job creation, poverty reduction, and increased income for local communities (Sierak, 2016).

### d. Institutions and Infrastructure as Resources

Institutions and infrastructure are crucial assets for regional development. Both play a role in creating an environment conducive to economic and social growth. Therefore, institutional strengthening and infrastructure investment must be a primary focus of the regional development agenda. Synergy between these two elements will ensure more sustainable and competitive resource management. Institutions encompass local government organizations, regionally-owned enterprises (BUMD), and local community organizations. Infrastructure encompasses physical infrastructure such as roads,

irrigation, markets, and public facilities that support the optimal utilization of natural and human resources within the context of development (Simanjuntak & Munizar, 2017).

### **Merangin Regency and Regional Resource Potential**

Merangin Regency is an administrative region in Jambi Province, covering an area of approximately 7,679 km<sup>2</sup>, divided into 24 sub-districts, and its administrative center is located in Bangko City. The region's economic structure is dominated by the plantation sector, which contributes approximately 60% to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). Furthermore, Merangin Regency also boasts significant natural resource potential, such as mining and tourism, supported by the Merangin Geopark, a geological region with a history dating back millions of years.

Based on official data from the Merangin Regency Government and UNESCO, the Merangin Geopark area is classified into three main categories: geological sites, biological sites, and cultural sites. Among these three, geological sites are a prominent core component with the overarching theme "The Merangin Jambi Geopark as the Best and Most Complete Representation of Flora Fossils from the Early Permian Period." The three main sub-themes in this category include Jambi Flora Fossils, the Masurai Caldera, and the Karst area. Furthermore, biological sites reflect the high level of tropical biodiversity that plays a vital role in supporting sustainable area management. Meanwhile, cultural sites illustrate the harmonious interaction between local communities and their natural environment, expressed through traditional cultural heritage and historical relics that reflect the relationship between humans and nature. These three pillars not only function to preserve world heritage values but also open up opportunities for the development of local natural resource potential that has both high economic and aesthetic value (Yazid et al., 2024).

The link between the Merangin Geopark and the management of Merangin Regency's regional resources is clearly evident in its natural resources. The existence of geological, biological, and cultural sites not only serves as a world heritage preservation asset but also as a strategic resource that can be optimized to improve the well-being of local communities. (Publikasi, 2023). Geological resources such as the potential of rocks, minerals, and ancient fossils can be developed as objects of scientific research, educational tourism destinations, and conservation study materials with economic value (Jufrida et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the biological resources found in the Merangin tropical forest area play a vital role in maintaining ecosystem balance and opening up sustainable economic opportunities, such as the utilization of non-timber forest products and the development of ecotourism (KPPN Bangko, 2024). Furthermore, the extensive and productive agricultural sector, particularly in the Merangin highlands, demonstrates how communities are sustainably utilizing land potential to support regional food security.

In addition to its natural wealth, the social and cultural resources of the Merangin community are also an integral part of regional management. Local wisdom passed down through generations in managing nature demonstrates the synergy between environmental conservation and regional economic development (Rasid, 2025). Thus, the management of the Merangin Geopark area is not only oriented towards conservation alone, but also becomes part of the strategy to strengthen the sustainable regional resources of Merangin Regency, based on the potential of local nature and culture (Syarif Abdullah, 2021). Synergy of regional resources in natural resource management, human resource empowerment, and strengthening the agriculture, mining, tourism, and MSME sectors is an important foundation

for the sustainability of regional development in Merangin Regency by strengthening the role of local government.

The following is a description of the regional resources of Merangin Regency, which include agriculture and forestry, tourism and mining:

### 1. Potential in the agricultural/plantation sector

Merangin Regency is known as an agricultural region, where the agricultural sector is a key pillar of the local economy. Produced commodities include rice, corn, various vegetables, and fruits, all of which have high market value. Furthermore, the people of Merangin Regency are also involved in smallholder plantations, cultivating superior crops such as coffee, rubber, cinnamon, and oil palm in various strategic locations.

Based on census data and publications issued by (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Merangin, 2023) In Merangin Regency, information is available showing the size of agricultural land, production volume, and the significant number of businesses operating in the agricultural sector. This data reflects the significant potential of Merangin Regency in the agriculture and plantation sectors. Furthermore, specific statistics on annual fruit and vegetable production are also available, providing a clearer picture of the sector's dynamics and development over time.

Thus, Merangin Regency not only functions as a food producer but also as a region that makes a significant contribution to economic sustainability and community welfare through the agricultural and plantation sectors. Efforts to improve the productivity and quality of agricultural and plantation products in this region are crucial, considering the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in the modern era, such as damaged agricultural infrastructure, such as farm roads and irrigation, and agricultural products such as rice and coffee being largely sold raw, resulting in low added value due to minimal post-harvest processing (Jaya et al., 2021).

### 2. Potential in the forestry sector

The Merangin region is located on the border and/or within the activity zone of Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS), making it a region containing primary forest, protected areas, and invaluable biodiversity. TNKS and its surrounding areas serve as a vital ecosystem, providing water sources, wildlife habitat, and a site for research and forest restoration. However, serious challenges, such as encroachment, illegal gold mining, and declining forest cover in several sub-regions, require legal attention and in-depth restoration efforts (Hadinata Karyadi et al., 2018).

### 3. Potential in the tourism sector

Merangin is a region rich in geological diversity, famous for the Merangin Jambi Geopark, which preserves flora fossils, including wood and shellfish. It also boasts beautiful lakes, numerous waterfalls, and fascinating hot springs. The area also boasts valuable karst and prehistoric sites (Geopark Merangin, 2025).

The Merangin Geopark has been developed as an educational and research tourism destination, complete with a museum and information center providing insights into the geosites and available tourism products. The potential for geotourism and ecotourism development in this area is significant. However, it should be noted that access facilities and

infrastructure at several locations still require improvements to enhance the visitor experience. With these improvements, it is hoped that Merangin can become a leading tourist destination, attracting both domestic and international tourists.

#### 4. Potential in the mining sector

Merangin Regency in Jambi Province has significant mining resource potential. It is said that the potential for mining materials such as metal minerals, including iron ore and gold, coal, and petroleum is spread across Merangin Regency (YASMIRAH et al., 2024). Various regional regulations also recognize the existence of this potential. For example, Merangin Regency Regional Regulation Number 9 of 2016 concerning People's Mining Permits states that "natural resource potential includes gold, copper, silver, manganese, and others." Thus, mining can be considered one of the promising resource sectors. However, this sector also faces significant challenges in its implementation. Obstacles that occur in this sector are characterized by the existence of illegal gold mining (PETI) due to weak supervision, suboptimal potential that has environmental impacts such as river damage and also social conflict.

### CONCLUSION

Regional resource management is a key element in strengthening the role of local government, particularly in the context of regional autonomy. Merangin Regency possesses diverse resource potential, encompassing agriculture, forestry, tourism, and mining. Effective management of this potential can drive sustainable economic, social, and environmental development. However, this significant potential has not yet fully benefited the community due to various obstacles such as low added value of local products, limited infrastructure, environmental damage, and illegal mining activities that threaten ecosystem sustainability. The role of local government in managing and organizing resources is crucial through spatial planning, improving human resource quality, empowering the local economy, strengthening regulations and oversight, and fostering collaboration between stakeholders. Therefore, it is hoped that local governments can balance the utilization of economic potential with environmental conservation and community empowerment efforts. Strengthening local government capacity is a key requirement for more effective, adaptive, and public welfare-focused regional resource management. Merangin Regency boasts a wealth of natural, cultural, and geological resources that are part of the Merangin Geopark. This potential supports the development of research, ecotourism, and educational tourism. The agriculture and forestry sectors play a role in food security and conservation, despite infrastructure constraints and low added value of harvested crops. Mining potential is also substantial, but faces obstacles in monitoring and environmental impacts. With synergistic and sustainable resource management, Merangin can improve community welfare and strengthen regional competitiveness.

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