

Public Communication in Collaborative Public Management for Blue Economy Governance in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency

Rezal Hadi Basalamah*

Program Studi Ilmu Administrasi Negara, Universitas Negeri Makassar,
90222, Makassar, Indonesia
rezalbasalamah@gmail.com

Andi Rahmat Nizar Hidayat

Program Studi Ilmu Administrasi Negara, Universitas Negeri Makassar,
90222, Makassar, Indonesia
andirahmatnizarhidayat@unm.ac.id

Muhammad Ishak

Program Studi Ilmu Administrasi Negara, Universitas Negeri Makassar,
90222, Makassar, Indonesia
muhammadishak814@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyzes public communication in collaborative public management for blue economy governance in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, Indonesia. The study responds to the need to understand blue economy development not only as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, or marine economic growth, but also as a governance process involving coordination, participation, equity, inclusiveness, and accountability. A qualitative field case study was conducted from February to May 2026 in Mattiro Bombang, Mattiro Kanja, and Sabalana Villages. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, field observations, focus group discussions, and policy documentation involving 29 informants from local government, village governments, fisher groups, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, academics, and community leaders. Data were analyzed through thematic coding, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by triangulation, member checking, and informant anonymization. The findings show that local government has established public communication programs, Musrenbang, public consultations, fisher group development, coordination with extension officers, and monitoring mechanisms. However, these instruments require stronger proposal follow-up,

wider communication reach, transparent beneficiary selection, and social accountability. Public communication functions as a managerial instrument for information dissemination, dialogue, aspiration absorption, trust building, policy clarification, and feedback. The study proposes the Good Equity and Inclusiveness Collaborative Blue Economy Governance framework as an initial empirically informed framework consisting of island-based diagnosis, inclusive cross-actor forums, a benefit equity matrix, co-production programs, and adaptive accountability. The framework requires further testing, contextual adaptation, and policy validation before operational adoption by local government institutions in practice.

Keywords: Communication; Management; Governance; Accountability; Archipelago.

1. Introduction

Marine development is no longer limited to increasing fisheries production, expanding marine tourism, or attracting investment in coastal sectors. The blue economy has become an important development agenda because it combines marine-based economic growth with ecological sustainability, social justice, and equitable benefit distribution. However, when blue economy development is managed mainly through economic and sectoral approaches, it may create governance risks, including the marginalization of small-scale fishers, unequal access to marine resources, exclusion of vulnerable coastal groups, and uneven distribution of benefit (Bennett et al., 2021; Das, 2023; Reis-Filho et al., 2024).

These risks show the importance of collaborative public management. Contemporary public administration increasingly depends on networks among state and non-state actors, including local governments, village governments, communities, business actors, academics, civil society organizations, and technical institutions (Osborne, 2010; Rhodes, 1997). In blue economy governance, collaboration is needed because marine and coastal problems involve overlapping resources, institutional authority, local knowledge, and community interests. Weak coordination among actors may result in fragmented programs, limited policy follow-up, and development interventions that do not fully respond to island community needs (Das et al., 2024; Grootjans et al., 2022; Lopes & Farias, 2020).

Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency is a relevant empirical context because it combines mainland, coastal, and island characteristics within one administrative area. The regency has significant marine potential in fisheries, aquaculture, sea transportation, and marine tourism, but its island communities face inter-island distance, high logistics costs, uneven digital connectivity, limited access to public services, and dependence on intermediary actors such as village governments and fisher groups. These

conditions indicate that blue economy development in this regency is not only an economic agenda, but also a public management issue related to coordination, participation, information access, benefit distribution, and accountability (Bax et al., 2020; Morrissey, 2021; Nugroho & Andi, 2025; Phelan et al., 2020; Sarangi, 2022).

Previous studies on collaborative governance emphasize formal forums, dialogue, trust, shared commitment, and joint action. Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as a formal decision-making arrangement involving public agencies and non-state actors, while Emerson et al. (2012) explain that collaboration requires principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. In South Sulawesi, Basalamah et al. (2020) show that collaborative dynamics are shaped by dialogue, shared understanding, and actor involvement in development programs. However, these studies have not sufficiently explained how public communication functions as a managerial instrument in collaborative public management, especially in archipelagic blue economy governance where information access, proposal follow-up, and community trust are shaped by geographical distance and institutional capacity (Grootjans et al., 2022; Lopes & Farias, 2020; Vento, 2024).

In this study, collaborative public management and public communication are conceptually distinguished. Collaborative public management refers to the capacity of local government to manage actors, resources, programs, participation, benefit distribution, and accountability in blue economy development. Public communication is positioned not as an independent variable or the sole object of inquiry, but as a managerial instrument and governance indicator that supports information dissemination, dialogue, aspiration absorption, coordination, trust building, clarification, feedback, and social accountability. This distinction is important because public communication in archipelagic areas cannot be reduced to one-way information delivery through government media (Bradley & Mahmoud, 2024; Habermas, 1984; Innes & Booher, 2010; Maziashvili et al., 2022; Vento, 2024; Yang, 2025)

Equity and inclusiveness are also central to collaborative blue economy governance. Formal participation does not always guarantee substantive influence, especially when decision-making is dominated by actors with stronger information, resources, and political access. Rawls (1971) emphasizes justice for disadvantaged groups, while Sen (1999) views development as the expansion of human capabilities. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation also reminds us that participation should be assessed by the extent to which community voices influence public decisions. These principles are relevant because small-scale fishers,

aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, and remote island communities may face unequal access to capital, production facilities, markets, information, and decision-making spaces (Bennett, 2022; Bennett et al., 2021; Gill et al., 2023; Reis-Filho et al., 2024).

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze public communication in collaborative public management for blue economy governance in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency. It examines how local government manages communication, participation, coordination, benefit distribution, inclusiveness, and accountability in blue economy development. The study asks three questions: first, how does public communication support collaborative public management in blue economy governance? Second, how are equity and inclusiveness reflected in benefit distribution and access for island communities? Third, how can the findings inform an initial empirically grounded framework for more responsive blue economy governance in archipelagic areas?

The contribution of this study is threefold. Theoretically, it extends collaborative governance discussions by positioning public communication as a managerial instrument within collaborative public management. Empirically, it provides evidence from Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, where blue economy governance operates within complex mainland-island relations. Practically, it offers an initial empirically informed framework for strengthening coordination, participation, equity, inclusiveness, and accountability. This framework is not presented as a final or validated model, but as a preliminary analytical framework that requires further testing, contextual adaptation, and policy validation.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative field case study design in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This design was selected to examine collaborative public management practices in blue economy governance within an archipelagic context marked by inter-island distance, limited transportation, uneven access to public information, diverse coastal livelihoods, and multiple public and community actors. Public communication was positioned not as an independent variable, but as a managerial instrument and governance indicator that supports coordination, participation, aspiration absorption, trust building, and accountability.

Fieldwork was conducted from March to May 2026 in Mattiro Bombang, Mattiro Kanja, and Sabalana Villages. These villages were selected to represent different characteristics of archipelagic blue economy

governance: Mattiro Bombang represents capture fisheries and fisher group activities; Mattiro Kanja represents marine aquaculture and coastal resource management; and Sabalana represents a relatively remote island area with fisheries potential, connectivity constraints, and marine tourism prospects. This site selection enabled comparison of livelihoods, communication access, public service reach, and government-community interaction across island settings.

Informants were selected purposively because the study required information-rich participants with direct knowledge, experience, and involvement in blue economy governance (Campbell et al., 2020; Palinkas et al., 2015). The inclusion criteria were direct involvement in planning, implementing, receiving, proposing, facilitating, or evaluating blue economy-related programs; knowledge of fisheries, aquaculture, coastal micro-enterprises, public communication, or village development; and willingness to participate voluntarily. The exclusion criteria were lack of direct relevance to the research focus and unwillingness to provide information. The study involved 29 informants from local government, village governments, fisher groups, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, academics, and community leaders.

Table 1. Composition of Research Informants

Informant Category	Number	Description
Local government	7 persons	Regional Development Planning, Research, and Development Agency; Fisheries Office; Tourism Office; Environmental Office; Community and Village Empowerment Office; Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Encryption Office; and Regional Inspectorate
Village government	3 persons	Village governments of Mattiro Bombang, Mattiro Kanja, and Sabalana
Fisher groups and aquaculture farmers	9 persons	Capture fishers, marine aquaculture farmers, and groups receiving or proposing development programs
Coastal women and micro-enterprises	6 persons	Seafood processors, coastal micro-enterprises, and coastal household economic groups

Informant Category	Number	Description
Academics and community leaders	4 persons	Supporting actors for validation, local leaders, and observers of archipelagic development
Total	29 persons	Selected based on involvement in blue economy governance

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, focus group discussions, and policy documentation. Interviews used a semi-structured format and focused on collaborative public management, cross-actor coordination, public communication, community participation, benefit distribution, inclusiveness, and program accountability. Observations were carried out in fisher activity areas, aquaculture sites, seafood processing locations, village meeting spaces, and coastal community forums. Policy documents included planning documents, regional agency work plans, fisher group development data, public communication documents, supervision documents, and marine development data.

Data analysis followed data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Manual thematic coding was used to identify issues such as information access, village government mediation, fisher group proposals, program follow-up, public consultation, communication channels, assistance distribution, women's economic participation, monitoring, and accountability. These codes were grouped into analytical categories: cross-actor coordination, public communication, community participation, benefit distribution, inclusiveness, and program accountability. The coding process was made traceable to strengthen transparency in qualitative analysis (Belotto, 2018).

Analytical rigor was strengthened by comparing interview data, focus group discussions, field observations, and policy documents. Government narratives on public consultation and program implementation were compared with community narratives on proposal follow-up, information access, and perceived program benefits. This comparison helped identify similarities, differences, and contextual contradictions among stakeholder perspectives. Researcher reflexivity was applied by ensuring that major interpretations were supported by more than one source of evidence.

Data saturation was determined when additional interviews and focus group discussions no longer produced substantially new themes.

Saturation was indicated by recurring information on limited information access, the intermediary role of village governments, the need for production facility assistance, uneven proposal follow-up, and the need to strengthen social accountability.

Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Member checking confirmed whether the researcher's interpretation was consistent with informants' explanations (Birt et al., 2016). Triangulation broadened the interpretation through various sources, methods, and perspectives (Farquhar et al., 2020; Schlunegger et al., 2024).

Ethical considerations were applied throughout the research process. Informants were informed about the study purpose, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw. Their identities were anonymized using codes such as IKP, DES, NEL, PEN, BUD, PUM, and INS. Interview and focus group data were used only for academic purposes and presented without revealing sensitive personal identities.

Figure 1 presents the detailed research flow of this study, beginning with problem formulation, literature review, research gap identification, case study design, site selection, informant selection, data collection, data analysis, validity procedures, ethical considerations, and conclusion drawing. The diagram clarifies how empirical data from interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and policy documents were processed through thematic coding into findings on collaborative public management, public communication, equity, inclusiveness, and accountability in blue economy governance.



Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram of Public Communication in Collaborative Blue Economy Governance

3. Results

The findings are organized into two analytical themes. The first concerns collaborative public management and inter-actor dynamics, especially public communication, participation, trust, and coordination. The second concerns equity, inclusiveness, and accountability, especially benefit distribution, resource access, vulnerable groups, feedback mechanisms, and program accountability. This structure follows the thematic coding process described in the Method section and separates empirical findings from theoretical discussion.

3.1. Collaborative Public Management and Inter-Actor Dynamics in Blue Economy Development

Blue economy development in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency requires public management practices that are able to coordinate relations among government institutions, village governments, fisher groups, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, academics, and community leaders. The findings show that collaborative public management does not only depend on the existence of formal programs, but also on how local government manages information, facilitates participation, follows up community aspirations, and maintains trust across island communities.

Across Mattiro Bombang, Mattiro Kanja, and Sabalana, the role of public communication appears as a governance indicator rather than a single causal mechanism. Public communication supports coordination and participation, but its effectiveness is shaped by geographical distance, uneven internet access, the capacity of village governments as intermediaries, and the extent to which community proposals receive clear responses.

3.1.1. Public Communication as an Instrument of Coordination, Participation, and Trust in Blue Economy Governance

Public communication plays an important role in ensuring that blue economy information can be accessed, understood, responded to, and followed up by coastal and island communities. The geographical condition of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency requires different communication patterns. Communities with better access to digital infrastructure can receive information through websites, social media, and WhatsApp groups, while remote island communities still rely heavily on direct meetings, village governments, local figures, and fisher groups.

Institutionally, the Government of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency has implemented the 2025 Public Information and Communication Program. The program includes public information management, public opinion and aspiration monitoring, priority communication agenda setting, public communication media management, public information services, and stakeholder partnerships. These instruments indicate that public communication has been formally integrated into local public management for marine and archipelagic governance.

Table 2. Public Communication Indicators in Collaborative Public Management for Blue Economy Governance in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, 2025

Indicator	Program Evidence	Governance Implication
Information access	Public information and communication services; 100%; IDR 929.5 million	Supports openness in marine and archipelagic development information
Aspiration absorption	Public opinion monitoring and priority communication agenda; 1 document; IDR 0–100 million	Provides an initial channel for identifying community needs and complaints
Communication channels	Public communication media management; 34 documents; IDR 200 million	Expands information distribution but must consider unequal digital access
Public information service	Public information service; 1 document; IDR 200 million	Strengthens transparency and public trust
Stakeholder partnership	Stakeholder partnership; 1 document; IDR 50 million	Supports coordination among government, communities, fisher groups, and business actors

Source: Work Plan of the Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Encryption Office of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, 2025, processed by the researcher, 2026.

Table 2 shows that public communication has formal institutional support through program outputs, communication channels, and budget allocation. However, the table also indicates that the managerial value of public communication cannot be assessed only from administrative outputs. Its effectiveness depends on whether information reaches island communities, whether communication creates dialogue rather than one-way dissemination, and whether community aspirations are recorded and followed up in blue economy programs.

The findings reveal a gap between formal communication instruments and community experience. From the government side, public

communication has been organized through websites, social media, radio, WhatsApp groups, village governments, fisher groups, and direct socialization. From the community side, however, information is more trusted when it is delivered through face-to-face interaction and local intermediaries. An informant from the Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Encryption Office stated:

“For island communities, development information is not enough if delivered only through websites or social media. Information is more easily received when conveyed through village governments, fisher groups, local figures, or direct meetings.” (Informant IKP-1, interview, February 14, 2026).

Community narratives also show that the main problem is not only access to information, but also the clarity of follow-up after proposals are submitted. A head of a fisher group in Mattiro Bombang Village stated:

“We can submit proposals through fisher groups, village governments, or planning forums. After the proposals are submitted, the community does not always know whether they are accepted, postponed, or cannot yet be implemented.” (Informant NEL-1, interview, February 10, 2026).

These findings show that public communication in blue economy governance has two different functions. Administratively, it disseminates information about government programs. Managerially, it should connect information delivery with dialogue, aspiration recording, clarification, and explanation of program decisions. The absence of clear feedback weakens trust because communities may participate in planning forums without knowing how their proposals are processed.

3.1.2. Participation, Trust, and Cross-Actor Coordination in Collaborative Public Management

Community participation is an important element of collaborative public management in blue economy development. The local government cannot formulate marine and fisheries agendas only through a technocratic approach because the needs of island communities are directly related to fisher livelihoods, aquaculture activities, sea transportation, market access, production facilities, and local institutional capacity. Participatory forums, therefore, function as managerial spaces that connect government priorities with coastal community needs.

The 2025 Regional Government Work Plan of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency shows that development planning uses top-down, bottom-up, participatory, political, technocratic, and thematic-holistic-

integrative-spatial approaches. These mechanisms are implemented through village development planning forums, sub-district development planning forums, regional agency forums, and regency-level development planning forums. Formally, these mechanisms provide space for village governments, fisher groups, business actors, academics, and community leaders to submit development proposals.

Table 3. Collaborative Public Management Indicators in Participatory Forums and Fisher Group Development

Indicator	Main Evidence	Implication for Blue Economy Governance
Participatory planning	The 2025 Regional Government Work Plan uses top-down, bottom-up, participatory, political, technocratic, and thematic-holistic-integrative-spatial approaches.	Supports actor, sector, and archipelagic area integration
Tiered coordination forums	Village, sub-district, regional agency, and regency development planning forums	Opens formal channels for coastal communities to express needs
Policy consultation	Public consultations, regional agency forums, pre-development planning forums, and regency development planning forums	Provides a formal coordination arena between local government and communities
Fisher group assistance	2019: 109/757 groups; 2020: 35/772; 2021: 33/832; 2022: 127/856; 2023: 237/667	Shows fluctuating program reach and the need for transparent beneficiary selection and follow-up
Technical coordination	Coordination with fisheries extension officers and regular production data collection	Supports routine communication, technical guidance, data exchange, and program evaluation

Source: Regent Regulation of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Number 12 of 2024 concerning the 2025 Regional Government Work Plan of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, processed by the researcher, 2026.

Table 3 shows that collaborative public management already has an institutional basis through participatory planning forums and fisher group development. However, the fluctuation in Fisher group assistance coverage indicates that formal participation does not automatically produce stable program reach. Assistance coverage declined from 14% in 2019 to 5% in 2020 and 4% in 2021, before increasing to 14.84% in 2022 and 35.53% in 2023. This pattern suggests that government-fisher relations may expand in certain years, but the continuity of collaboration remains influenced by program priorities, budget allocation, administrative capacity, and the mechanism used to select beneficiaries.

The increase in 2023 should therefore be interpreted carefully. It may indicate broader interaction between local government and fisher groups, but it does not automatically prove substantive collaboration. Substantive collaboration requires transparent selection, continuous assistance, feedback to unsuccessful applicants, and opportunities for communities to influence program design. Without these elements, participation may remain formal and program-based rather than collaborative and community-responsive.

Field findings show that community participation is facilitated through public consultations, regional agency forums, and tiered development planning forums. The Head of Mattiro Kanja Village stated: “Community proposals are usually discussed first at the village level, especially the needs of fishers, aquaculture farmers, and coastal communities. After that, the proposals are brought to the development planning forum so that they can be considered in regional development planning.” (Informant DES-2, Head of Mattiro Kanja Village, interview, April 18, 2026).

Trust tends to increase when community proposals receive concrete follow-up. A fisheries extension officer explained:

“Coordination with fisher groups is important because they understand field conditions. When their proposals are followed up on, communities become more trusting and more actively involved in government programs.” (Informant PEN-1, Fisheries Extension Officer of Liukang Tupabbiring District, interview, April 9, 2026).

These findings show two sides of participation. On the one hand, formal planning forums provide an official channel for community proposals. On the other hand, the quality of participation depends on whether proposals are responded to, prioritized transparently, and translated into programs. Thus, the main issue is not merely the existence

of forums, but the capacity of collaborative public management to transform forum participation into coordinated action and accountable follow-up.

3.2. Equity, Inclusiveness, and Accountability in Community-Based Blue Economy Public Management

Blue economy development in archipelagic areas cannot be assessed only through increased fisheries production, marine aquaculture, tourism, or marine economic growth. From the perspective of collaborative public management, development success is also determined by how local government manages benefit distribution, resource access, protection for vulnerable groups, and program accountability. Equity and inclusiveness are, therefore, central because island communities are not homogeneous. Small-scale fishers, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, and remote island communities experience different barriers in accessing programs and development benefits.

3.2.1. Benefit Distribution, Resource Access, and the Position of Vulnerable Groups in Blue Economy Development

Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency have a strong marine economic base. Fisheries and aquaculture contribute significantly to local livelihoods. However, high production figures do not automatically mean that benefits are distributed fairly. The findings show that small aquaculture farmers, women seafood processors, micro-enterprises, and remote island communities still face barriers related to capital, production facilities, technology, transportation, market information, and institutional support.

Table 4. Indicators of Benefit, Equity, and Inclusiveness in Blue Economy Public Management

Public Management Indicator	Main Data/Indicator	Year /Period	Value	Implication for Blue Economy Governance
Marine economic capacity	Fisheries production	2018	336,454.10 tons	Shows fisheries as an economic base for island communities
Production growth	Fisheries production	2021	472,963.10 tons	Indicates major economic potential, but requires equitable access

Public Management Indicator	Main Data/Indicator	Year /Period	Value	Implication for Blue Economy Governance
Economic vulnerability	Fisheries production	2022	427,486.30 tons	Production fluctuation may affect the coastal community's income
Aquaculture role	Aquaculture production	2020	442,581.20 tons	Shows aquaculture as an important livelihood, although access to facilities remains uneven
Ecological protection	Marine protected area	2019–2023	66,870 ha	Supports marine sustainability, but must consider local community access
Marine area scale	Total territorial waters	2019–2023	1,146,998 km ²	Shows the large economic and ecological space requiring cross-actor governance
Balance between use and conservation	Ratio of marine protected area to territorial waters	2019–2023	5.83%	Indicates the need to balance economy, conservation, and equitable access

Source: Regent Regulation of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Number 12 of 2024 concerning the 2025 Regional Government Work Plan, processed by the researcher, 2026.

Table 4 shows that the regency has significant marine economic potential, reflected in fisheries and aquaculture production, marine protected areas, and the large scale of territorial waters. However, these indicators should not be read merely as evidence of economic capacity. From a public management perspective, they raise an important question about who gains access to marine economic benefits, who remains excluded, and which groups require affirmative support.

The production fluctuation from 2018 to 2022 also indicates that coastal livelihoods are vulnerable to changes in environmental conditions, market access, production inputs, and public support. Therefore, blue economy governance requires not only production-oriented programs but

also mechanisms that identify vulnerable groups and ensure that assistance, training, market facilitation, and institutional support reach those who need them most.

Field findings show that marine economic potential has not always been followed by equitable benefit distribution. A seaweed farmer in Mattiro Kanja Village stated:

“Seaweed production is indeed a source of community income, but small aquaculture farmers still face difficulties in accessing capital, seedlings, ropes, and floats. When capital is limited, production is difficult to improve and usually remains dependent on collectors.” (Informant BUD-1, seaweed farmer in Mattiro Kanja Village, interview, March 12, 2026).

Coastal women also contribute to seafood processing, yet not all have received adequate program support. A micro-enterprise actor in Sabalana Village explained:

“Women on the islands help process marine products, but assistance for equipment, training, packaging, and market access is still limited. We hope women’s groups are also involved in programs, not only fisher groups.” (Informant PUM-1, seafood processing micro-enterprise actor in Sabalana Village, interview, March 14, 2026).

These findings reveal that blue economy benefits are not distributed evenly across community groups. Fisher groups may be more visible in formal programs, while women’s groups and micro-enterprises may remain less represented. This indicates the need for a more inclusive public management approach that recognizes different forms of coastal livelihood and not only those directly associated with capture fisheries.

3.2.2. Feedback Mechanisms, Program Accountability, and Adaptive Governance Strengthening

Equitable and inclusive blue economy public management requires concrete feedback mechanisms. Local government should not only design programs, implement activities, and report administrative achievements. Island communities need spaces to express experiences, complaints, evaluations, and suggestions for program improvement. Public communication becomes important because it functions as a channel for dialogue, complaint submission, clarification, and explanation of program follow-up.

Table 5. Feedback and Accountability Indicators in Blue Economy Public Management

Indicator	Mechanism	Governance Implication
Planning feedback	Public consultation, January–July 2025; regency, sub-districts, and urban villages; IDR 21.54 million	Provides formal space for aspirations, but requires a stronger island community reach
Administrative accountability	Compliance audit, performance review, and financial review	Ensures regulatory and budget compliance
Gender inclusiveness	Evaluation of gender-responsive planning and budgeting	Supports the inclusion of coastal women’s needs in planning
Program control	Monitoring and evaluation of regional agencies	Serves as a corrective instrument for program implementation
Social accountability	Community feedback through village governments and related agencies	Requires clearer tracking, response, and public explanation of program follow-up

Source: Work Plan and Budget of Regional Work Units for Fiscal Year 2025; Strategic Plan of the Regional Inspectorate of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency 2025–2029, processed by the researcher, 2026.

Table 5 shows that feedback and accountability mechanisms already have an institutional basis through public consultation, monitoring and evaluation, compliance audits, performance reviews, financial reviews, and gender-responsive planning and budgeting evaluation. However, formal accountability does not automatically guarantee social accountability. Programs may comply with administrative and financial procedures, but still fail to explain who receives benefits, who is not reached, and why certain proposals are prioritized over others.

The findings indicate that feedback mechanisms in island communities still depend largely on village governments as intermediaries. This creates both opportunity and limitation. Village governments can help translate community needs and forward them to related agencies, but they may also become a bottleneck when feedback is not systematically recorded, tracked, and responded to by the local government.

The Head of Sabalana Village stated:

“After activities or development planning forums, communities usually submit feedback to the village government. We then forward it to the sub-district or related agencies, especially when it concerns assistance, training, or the needs of fishers on the island.” (Informant DES-3, Head of Sabalana Village, interview, May 7, 2026).

Program accountability also needs to move beyond administrative compliance. An informant from the Regional Inspectorate of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency stated:

“Program supervision should not only examine administrative and budget compliance, but also how the program benefits are felt by the community. Community input is important as evaluation material so that future programs become more targeted.” (Informant INS-1, Regional Inspectorate of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, interview, May 16, 2026).

These findings show that the weakness of feedback mechanisms is not simply caused by the absence of formal forums. Rather, it is related to the limited connection between community input, agency-level decision-making, and program evaluation. Community proposals may enter formal planning channels, but the response mechanism is not always clear. This condition creates uncertainty among communities and weakens trust in collaborative governance.

Overall, the results indicate that collaborative public management in blue economy governance has been supported by formal instruments such as public communication programs, planning forums, fisher group development, public consultations, and monitoring mechanisms. However, the main challenge lies in transforming these instruments into substantive collaboration. This requires clearer feedback, wider communication reach, more inclusive benefit distribution, and stronger social accountability for island communities.

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that blue economy governance in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency is not merely a sectoral agenda of fisheries production, aquaculture development, marine tourism, or coastal economic growth. It is a collaborative public management issue because its effectiveness depends on how local government manages actors, information, participation, resources, benefit distribution, and accountability across mainland and island communities. Although public

communication programs, Musrenbang, public consultations, fisher group development, coordination with extension officers, and monitoring mechanisms already exist, the findings show a gap between formal institutional availability and substantive collaborative practice.

This finding refines the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008) and Emerson et al. (2012). In archipelagic areas, collaboration cannot be assessed only from the existence of formal forums or stakeholder involvement. It must also be assessed from the ability of local government to overcome geographical distance, unequal information access, weak proposal follow-up, and uneven administrative reach. Collaboration becomes substantive when participatory forums produce clear responses, coordinated action, and program accountability for island communities.

Public communication should not be interpreted as a single causal mechanism that automatically produces collaborative governance. Rather, it functions as a managerial instrument that enables information dissemination, dialogue, aspiration absorption, clarification, trust building, and accountability. This position is consistent with Habermas (1984) and Innes and Booher (2010), who emphasize communication as the basis of mutual understanding and collaborative spaces. However, this study adds that, in archipelagic areas, dialogic communication depends strongly on local intermediaries such as village governments, fisher groups, community leaders, and extension officers. Digital channels are useful, but insufficient when internet access, public service reach, and community literacy remain uneven.

The analysis of participation also indicates that formal involvement does not always equal substantive influence. Arnstein's (1969) The ladder of citizen participation helps explain this finding. Community attendance in Musrenbang, consultations, or village forums may represent consultation, but it does not necessarily reach partnership or citizen influence when proposals are not clearly responded to, prioritized transparently, or translated into program decisions. The increase in fisher group assistance coverage in 2023 may suggest broader interaction between the government and fisher groups, but it cannot be interpreted as complete collaborative success without transparent selection, continuous assistance, community influence on program design, and feedback for unreached groups.

From the perspective of equity and inclusiveness, high marine economic potential does not automatically produce fair benefit distribution. Fisheries production, aquaculture activities, marine protected areas, and marine tourism prospects indicate strong blue economy

potential, but small-scale fishers, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, and remote island communities still face unequal access to capital, facilities, technology, market information, transportation, and institutional support. This finding strengthens Rawls' (1971) argument on justice for disadvantaged groups and Sen's (1999) view that development should expand human capabilities. It also supports blue economy literature that warns against growth-oriented marine development that neglects social justice and community access (Bennett, 2022; Bennett et al., 2021; Gill et al., 2023; Reis-Filho et al., 2024).

The contribution of this study lies in showing that equity and inclusiveness require more than general community participation. Island communities are not homogeneous. Fishers, fisher laborers, aquaculture farmers, women seafood processors, micro-enterprises, local traders, village institutions, and remote island households have different needs and levels of access. Therefore, collaborative public management should include island-based needs diagnosis, targeted assistance, women's economic forums, aquaculture-specific deliberations, transparent beneficiary selection, and market facilitation for vulnerable groups.

The findings also extend the discussion on accountability in collaborative governance. Formal accountability through planning documents, budget reports, monitoring, evaluation, compliance audits, and performance reviews is necessary, but not sufficient. In island communities, accountability must also be social and adaptive. Local government needs to explain who receives benefits, who is not reached, why certain programs are prioritized, and how community complaints are followed up on. Public communication, therefore, becomes part of accountability because it enables the government to clarify decisions, listen to feedback, correct programs, and rebuild trust.

Based on these empirical patterns, this study proposes the Good Equity and Inclusiveness Collaborative Blue Economy Governance framework as an initial empirically informed framework. It is derived from five main findings: unequal access to information and public services, weak follow-up in formal participatory forums, uneven distribution of blue economy benefits, the strategic role of local intermediaries, and the need to move from administrative reporting toward social and adaptive accountability. Therefore, the framework should not be understood as a final or validated policy model, but as a preliminary analytical framework that requires further testing, contextual adaptation, and policy validation.

Figure 2 visualizes the relationship among the main empirical themes, namely public communication, inclusive forums, benefit equity, co-

production, and adaptive accountability, as a process of strengthening collaborative blue economy governance.



Figure 2. Good Equity and Inclusiveness Collaborative Blue Economy Governance Model

Table 6. Components of the Good Equity and Inclusiveness Collaborative Blue Economy Governance Model

Model Component	Main Function	Operational Instrument
Island-based diagnosis	Mapping specific problems of each island and community	Field observation, problem mapping, fishbone analysis, island socio-economic data, and information access mapping
Inclusive cross-actor forum	Ensuring community voices enter decision-making	Island-based focus group discussions, thematic deliberations, regional agency forums, coastal women’s forums, and public dialogue
Benefit equity matrix	Assessing benefit distribution and disadvantaged groups	Benefit equity matrix based on location, gender, business scale, and vulnerability

Model Component	Main Function	Operational Instrument
Co-production program	Involving communities in program design and implementation	Joint working groups, pilot projects, community assistance, and cross-actor coordination
Adaptive accountability	Correcting programs based on community feedback	Complaint channels, participatory evaluation, community monitoring, and public reporting

Source: Processed by the researcher, 2026.

This framework emphasizes that blue economy governance must begin with an understanding of different island characteristics. Inclusive forums are needed to ensure that government, village institutions, fisher groups, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, academics, and community leaders can participate meaningfully. The benefit equity matrix helps assess whether development benefits reach different groups fairly, while co-production and adaptive accountability encourage communities to become partners in program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Instead of presenting a long policy decision tree, this study suggests a simplified policy decision logic as a practical heuristic. Local government should assess whether a blue economy program affects island communities, whether target groups face barriers to capital or information, whether economic benefits are distributed fairly, whether ecological risks exist, whether cross-sector coordination is needed, and whether feedback mechanisms are available. This logic is intended to guide policy reflection, not to replace political deliberation, technical assessment, or formal policy evaluation.

Theoretically, this study contributes to collaborative governance literature by integrating public communication, equity, inclusiveness, and social accountability into collaborative public management for blue economy governance. It shows that collaboration in archipelagic areas is not only a matter of bringing actors into formal forums, but also of ensuring that communication reaches remote communities, participation influences decisions, benefits are distributed fairly, and accountability responds to community experiences.

This study has several limitations. It is based on a qualitative case study in three villages of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, so the findings should not be generalized directly to all archipelagic regions. The

proposed framework has not yet been tested quantitatively or applied as an operational policy instrument. Future research should test this framework in other coastal and archipelagic regions and develop measurable indicators for equity, inclusiveness, communication quality, and adaptive accountability.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that blue economy governance in Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency is a collaborative public management issue, not merely a sectoral agenda of fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, or marine economic growth. Although local government has established public communication programs, Musrenbang, public consultations, fisher group development, coordination with extension officers, and monitoring mechanisms, their effectiveness depends on clear proposal follow-up, substantive participation, equitable benefit distribution, and social accountability for island communities.

Public communication functions as a managerial instrument that supports information dissemination, dialogue, aspiration absorption, coordination, trust building, policy clarification, and accountability. In archipelagic areas, communication is effective when it reaches remote communities, involves village governments and local intermediaries, and provides clear feedback on community proposals and program decisions.

The findings also show that equity and inclusiveness remain central challenges. Small-scale fishers, aquaculture farmers, coastal women, micro-enterprises, and remote island communities still require stronger access to capital, production facilities, training, markets, and institutional support. Therefore, the proposed Good Equity and Inclusiveness Collaborative Blue Economy Governance framework should be understood as an initial empirically informed framework, not as a final or validated model. It requires further testing, contextual adaptation, and policy validation.

This study is limited to a qualitative case study in three villages of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency, so its findings are context-specific. Future research should test the framework in other coastal and archipelagic regions and develop measurable indicators for equity, inclusiveness, communication quality, and adaptive accountability.

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