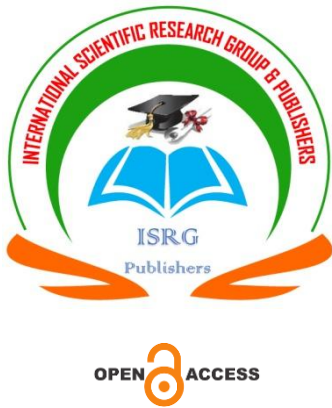


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When the Gate Outpaces the Road: Accelerating Border Area Development at the Yetetkun Cross-Border Post on the Indonesia–Papua New Guinea Frontier

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Abstract

Indonesia's Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019 sought to accelerate the construction of eleven integrated cross-border posts (PLBN) and their supporting infrastructure, yet finished buildings do not automatically become functioning border development. This study analyses how the policy was implemented at the Yetetkun PLBN, Boven Digoel Regency, South Papua, and identifies its supporting and inhibiting factors using George C. Edwards III's model of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. A qualitative descriptive case study was conducted with seven purposively selected informants from the local government, post management, cross-border service agencies, and community users; interview, observation, and documentary data were analysed interactively. Routine coordination, adequate core facilities, committed implementers, and clear operating procedures sustain daily border services. Implementation is nevertheless constrained by uneven staffing, the absence of permanent health personnel, poor road access and transport, limited local budgets and community capital, language barriers, and weaker infrastructure on the Papua New Guinea side. The analysis reveals a clarity paradox: the precise allocation of authority that prevents overlap inside the post fragments responsibility for the surrounding area. Acceleration therefore depends less on further construction than on measurable cross-sectoral follow-up mechanisms.

Keywords: policy implementation; Edwards III; border area development; cross-border post; inter-agency coordination.

1. Introduction

Border areas occupy a distinctive position in the governance of a state because they bring together sovereignty, territorial security, public service delivery, and the welfare of communities living at the territorial edge. A border is not merely a line that separates Indonesia from its neighbours; it is the front yard in which the presence of the state becomes visible to citizens and foreigners alike. Contemporary border scholarship has long abandoned the

view of borders as static lines and instead treats them as institutions and spaces of interaction whose functioning depends on governance arrangements, local political clout, and cross-border relations (Brunet-Jailly, 2005; Newman, 2006). For Indonesia, this reorientation has translated into a policy narrative of “developing from the periphery”, in which border areas are repositioned from security buffers into development priorities.

The legal foundation for this shift is Law No. 43 of 2008 on State Territory, which assigns the government responsibility for managing state territory and border areas through policy setting, infrastructure provision, territorial supervision, and the improvement of community welfare (Republic of Indonesia, 2008). Because authority over border development is dispersed across ministries, agencies, and subnational governments, the government established the National Border Management Agency (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan [BNPP]) as a coordinating body (Republic of Indonesia, 2010, 2017). The agency's role is essentially integrative: it does not replace sectoral mandates but attempts to align them towards a border area that is secure, orderly, served, and developing.

One of the most consequential instruments in this agenda is Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019 on the Acceleration of the Development of Eleven Integrated Cross-Border Posts and Supporting Infrastructure in Border Areas (Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Issued on 17 January 2019, the instruction directs ministries, agencies, and regional governments to take accelerated measures within their respective mandates. Its scope extends well beyond the main post building to include inspection facilities, access roads, electricity, clean water, telecommunications, staff housing, and supporting area facilities. Acceleration, in this sense, is not merely a matter of shortening construction schedules; it concerns the capacity of government to synchronise cross-agency action, resolve field-level obstacles, and ensure that what has been built is actually used.

The Yetetkun State Border Crossing Post (*Pos Lintas Batas Negara*, PLBN), located in Ninati District, Boven Digoel Regency, South Papua Province, is one of the posts targeted by the instruction. Facing its Papua New Guinea counterpart at Ningerum, the post performs the inspection of persons and goods, security supervision, cross-border administrative services, and the symbolic function of state presence. It was inaugurated on 2 October 2024 together with six other integrated posts, at a construction cost of approximately IDR 127 billion (Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 2024). The surrounding area has since been designated as a gateway service centre in the detailed spatial plan for the Yetetkun border planning area (Republic of Indonesia, 2023), and the national master plan for border management frames such posts as nodes of area development rather than isolated checkpoints (Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

The inauguration signalled that the physical phase had been completed, but it also opened a more demanding question: whether the policy has been translated into services and area management that function effectively. Implementation research has repeatedly warned that the stage between a policy decision and its consequences is where intentions are most easily diluted, particularly when many organisations must act jointly (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; O'Toole, 2000). Preliminary observations at Yetetkun suggested precisely this kind of configuration. Monthly coordination meetings between the post management and the Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, and Security (CIQS) agencies were taking place, daily operational information was exchanged through instant messaging, and core facilities were reported to be in good working order. At the same time, the post had only one customs officer and no permanently stationed health worker, the road from the regency capital of Tanah Merah required roughly three hours by four-wheel-drive vehicle, three of the nine kiosks

provided for local traders remained empty, and access on the Papua New Guinea side still forced many crossers to walk.

Studies of other Indonesian border posts have documented comparable tensions. Research at Motaain, Wini, Aruk, Badau, and Marore shows that new posts can stimulate trade, market access, and employment, but also face shortages of personnel, uneven service quality, and an unequal distribution of benefits (Bara Lay & Wahyono, 2018; Firdaus, 2018; Kause et al., 2024; Tefa & Thaal, 2019; Umar & Kakampu, 2022). Most of these studies, however, assess economic impact, institutional performance, or development strategy at long-established posts on the borders with Timor-Leste and Malaysia. Few examine how an acceleration policy is implemented at a newly operational post on the Indonesia–Papua New Guinea land border, where distances are greater, connectivity is weaker, and the counterpart state's infrastructure lags behind. This gap matters because the early operational period is when the distance between physical completion and functional implementation first becomes observable.

Against this background, this article pursues two objectives: first, to analyse and describe the implementation of the policy for accelerating border area development at the Yetetkun PLBN; and second, to identify the factors that support and inhibit that implementation. The analysis employs George C. Edwards III's (1980) model, which explains implementation through communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Theoretically, the study shows how a model developed for single-government settings behaves when applied to a multi-agency, multi-level, and cross-national implementation space. Practically, it offers evidence for the BNPP, the CIQS agencies, and the Boven Digoel Regency Government on which components of the policy already work and which require reinforcement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Public Policy and Policy Implementation

Public policy has been defined broadly as whatever governments choose to do or not to do (Dye, 2017). The breadth of this definition is useful because it reminds analysts that inaction also has public consequences, yet it requires qualification: not every government act is a policy unless it carries a purpose, a basis of authority, a target group, and instruments for its execution. Anderson (2015) accordingly describes policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern, and situates it within a cycle of agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019 fits this definition: it is a purposive directive, issued by the head of government, that assigns tasks to multiple organisations and commits public resources to a defined territorial objective.

Implementation is the stage that connects such decisions to observable changes. The literature has developed through several generations. Top-down models emphasise the extent to which implementers carry out the intentions of policymakers and identify variables that condition compliance, such as policy standards, resources, inter-organisational communication, the characteristics of implementing agencies, and the economic, social, and political environment (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Grindle (1980) adds that implementation outcomes in developing countries depend on both the content of a policy and the context in which it is administered, including the interests affected and the power of the

actors involved. Bottom-up scholars, in contrast, argue that policy is often reshaped by the networks of actors who actually deliver it, and propose “implementation structures” spanning several organisations as the appropriate unit of analysis (Hjern & Porter, 1981). Later syntheses have stressed that neither perspective alone is sufficient and that implementation must be understood as a form of operational governance occurring across levels and organisations (Hill & Hupe, 2014; O’Toole, 2000).

A particularly useful bridge between these perspectives is Matland’s (1995) ambiguity–conflict model. Where policy goals and means are clear and conflict among actors is low, implementation is “administrative”, and outcomes are determined chiefly by the availability of resources. Where ambiguity or conflict increases, implementation becomes political, experimental, or symbolic. This distinction helps explain why a policy that is uncontested and clearly worded may still underperform: in administrative implementation, gaps in resources and coordination become the decisive variables.

2.2 George C. Edwards III’s Model of Policy Implementation

Edwards III (1980) treats implementation as the process occurring between the establishment of a policy and its consequences for target groups, and identifies four interacting factors: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The model has been widely applied in Indonesian public administration research because it translates abstract implementation problems into observable organisational conditions. Its central insight is interdependence: good communication is insufficient without resources; adequate resources do not guarantee effective action without committed implementers; and committed implementers may be blocked by fragmented structures or inflexible procedures.

Communication concerns whether policy decisions and instructions reach those who must implement them. Edwards III (1980) disaggregates it into transmission, clarity, and consistency. Transmission may be impeded by long bureaucratic chains, multiple organisations, staff turnover, or limited coordination forums; clarity suffers when objectives are general or technical guidelines are absent; and inconsistency arises when instructions change or conflict across implementers. *Resources* encompass staff in adequate number and competence, information on how to implement and on compliance, authority to make decisions and mobilise other actors, and facilities ranging from buildings and equipment to vehicles, roads, and operating budgets. Edwards III (1980) emphasises that even clearly transmitted orders fail when implementers lack these means.

Disposition refers to implementers’ understanding, acceptance, and commitment, which shape both the intensity and the direction of action. It is influenced by staffing decisions and incentives, and it should be assessed through actions rather than formal statements alone. *Bureaucratic structure* involves standard operating procedures (SOPs) and fragmentation. SOPs promote consistency in routine tasks but may hamper responses to unusual situations, while fragmentation, the dispersion of responsibility across multiple units, can create specialisation but also coordination difficulties, divergent priorities, and delays in follow-up. The present study retains Edwards III’s model as its analytical lens, consistent with the original thesis, and uses the wider literature to interpret the patterns it reveals.

2.3 Borders, Border Areas, and Cross-Border Posts

Border studies distinguish between a *boundary*, the juridical line established by treaty or law; a *border*, the zone shaped by interactions around that line; and a *frontier*, an advancing area still being incorporated into state administration (Prescott, 1987). The distinction matters for policy because a line can be fixed by survey markers, whereas a border area must be governed. Newman (2006) argues that borders continue to separate even in a supposedly borderless world, functioning simultaneously as instruments of control and as spaces of social, cultural, and economic exchange. Brunet-Jailly (2005) further shows that border regimes are shaped by four interacting lenses: market forces and trade flows, policy activities of multiple levels of government, the political clout of borderland communities, and the specific culture of those communities. This framework implies that a border post cannot perform well if only one side of the border, or only one level of government, is investing in it (Wilson & Donnan, 2012).

In Indonesian law, the border area is the part of state territory located on the inner side of the boundary, which for land borders corresponds to the district (*distrik* in Papua) level (Republic of Indonesia, 2008). The BNPP defines a PLBN as a place for the supervision and service of cross-border movement within the border area (BNPP, 2021), building on an earlier guideline that defined it as a place of inspection and service (BNPP, 2017). PLBN functions can thus be grouped into supervision, service, security, administration, coordination, and the role of an area gateway. Services are delivered by the CIQS agencies, each retaining its own legal basis, leadership, personnel, budget, and procedures. Integration therefore does not erase agency mandates; it places different services in one compound and links them through shared flows, facilities, SOPs, and coordination led by a BNPP administrator.

2.4 Development and the Acceleration of Border Area Development

Development is understood here as a planned process of change aimed at improving the capacity of society and government. Siagian (2008) describes it as a conscious series of efforts towards growth and change undertaken by a nation and its government in the course of nation-building, while Todaro and Smith (2015) emphasise its multidimensional character, involving changes in social structures, institutions, inequality, and the quality of life. Both views imply that infrastructure alone is an incomplete measure of development: buildings must be connected to services, institutions, access, and people’s ability to use them.

In the policy framework formed by Law No. 43 of 2008, Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019, Presidential Regulation No. 118 of 2022, and Presidential Regulation No. 69 of 2023, acceleration has four interdependent dimensions: physical acceleration (buildings, utilities, housing, access roads); operational acceleration (personnel, SOPs, equipment, maintenance budgets); institutional acceleration (task division, coordination, information exchange, resolution of cross-jurisdictional problems); and area acceleration (connectivity, basic services, spatial planning, and facilities beyond the core zone). The relationship between central and regional governments in this framework is one of alignment rather than substitution: the regency does not perform customs or immigration functions, and the post administrator cannot take over regency roads or health services.

2.5 Previous Studies

Earlier research on Indonesian cross-border posts converges on three observations. First, posts and border areas are treated as strategic spaces linking state services, cross-border mobility, infrastructure, and inter-agency relations. Second, most studies

adopt qualitative approaches because border issues require an understanding of implementers' experiences, geography, and institutional constraints. Third, the existence of a building does not by itself guarantee that services and area development will function optimally. Table 1 summarises the studies most relevant to the present research and identifies the points of departure.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies

No.	Author(s), Method, and Main Findings	Similarities	Differences
1	Timisela (2015); SWOT analysis, Muara Tami District (Indonesia–PNG border). Dependence of PNG communities on Indonesian products opens trade opportunities, but much trade remains informal and poorly managed.	Indonesia–PNG border context; geography and accessibility treated as central to understanding the border area.	Focuses on cross-border trade and local economy; this study analyses implementation of Presidential Instruction No. 1/2019 using Edwards III.
2	Bara Lay & Wahyono (2018); qualitative case study, PLBN Motaain (Indonesia–Timor-Leste). Post development changed trading actors, flows, facilities, crossing intensity, trade costs, and incomes.	Treats the PLBN as an instrument of border development; qualitative approach; links physical development to area change.	Focuses on development impacts at Motaain; this study examines the implementation process at Yetetkun.
3	Firdaus (2018); descriptive study, PLBN Aruk, Sambas. Post construction produced social and economic impacts mediated by supporting and inhibiting factors.	Attention to PLBN development policy and to supporting and inhibiting factors.	Emphasises socio-economic impact; this study analyses implementation with Edwards III without treating economic change as the main variable.
4	Tefa & Thaal (2019); performance study, PLBN Wini (Indonesia–Timor-Leste). Performance shaped by services, institutions, staffing adequacy, and technical conditions.	Examines PLBN functions, multiple agencies, staffing, and operational conditions.	Assesses general performance; this study analyses an acceleration policy at a newer post with a different counterpart state.
5	Tiya, Yuniarti, & Pratiwi (2019); area development analysis, PLBN Badau, Kapuas Hulu. Posts need strategies linking services to local potential and infrastructure to become development nodes.	Views the PLBN as part of area development; links core and supporting infrastructure.	Formulates development strategy; this study analyses how the policy has been implemented and what supports or inhibits it.
6	Umar & Kakampu (2022); qualitative study, cross-border services at Marore. Services shaped by service-time consistency, organisational position, incentives, geography, weather, and technical support.	Implementation in a border area; organisational, staffing, and geographic factors; qualitative approach.	Focuses on cross-border services in an island setting; this study covers broader area development, regional government roles, and post-operation follow-up.
7	Carrisa, Ganafiqih, Rahmawati, & Arisdiyoto (2024); qualitative descriptive, PLBN Aruk. Public services not optimal because personnel numbers did not match service hours and peak-day demand.	Policy implementation at a PLBN; qualitative descriptive; staffing, service quality, and task division.	Examines Government Regulation No. 96/2012 on public services; this study examines Presidential Instruction No. 1/2019 including supporting facilities and area coordination.

No.	Author(s), Method, and Main Findings	Similarities	Differences
8	Kause, Tiwu, & Kiak (2024); qualitative descriptive with SWOT, PLBN Wini. Development improved access to facilities, markets, and jobs, but product development and community skills remain necessary.	Attention to PLBN development and conditions enabling or hindering facility use; qualitative approach.	Measures development impact; this study explains implementation at Yetetkun in its early operational phase.

Source: Compiled by the authors from previous studies (2026).

Compared with these studies, the present research differs in location, policy object, timing, and analytical angle. It focuses on a post on the Indonesia–Papua New Guinea land border that had only recently begun operating; it takes Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019 explicitly as the policy object; and it examines the implementation process rather than economic impact or development strategy. Its novelty lies in capturing the early operational phase, when the relationship between completed infrastructure and functioning implementation is first tested.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) begins with Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019 as the policy mandate and the

acceleration of border area development at the Yetetkun PLBN as the research object. Implementation is analysed through Edwards III's four dimensions, each operationalised into indicators. The interaction of these dimensions is then examined to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in terms of institutional conditions, coordination, personnel, facilities, authority, accessibility, and local government support, leading to an assessment of which components already function and which require reinforcement.

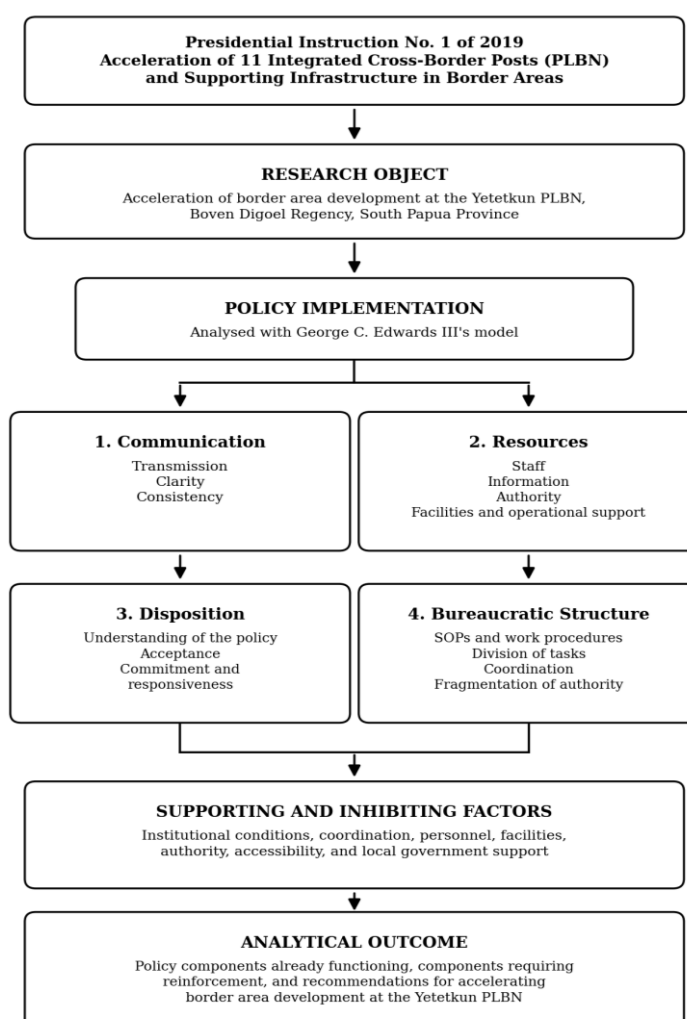


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from Edwards III (1980) and the research design (2026).

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method and case study characteristics. A qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring the meanings that individuals and groups ascribe to a social or public problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and for understanding implementation processes involving organisations with different mandates and experiences. The descriptive method was used to portray the implementation of the policy systematically and factually, while the case study character is reflected in the focus on one policy and one site. The boundaries of the case include the management and services of the post, the working relationships among the post management, the CIQS agencies, and the regency government, the use of supporting facilities, and the handling of problems arising after the post became operational.

3.2 Research Site and Focus

The research was conducted at the Yetetkun PLBN in Ninati District, Boven Digoel Regency, South Papua Province. The site was selected for four reasons: it is a concrete manifestation of a national acceleration policy on the Indonesia–Papua New Guinea border; it was in its early operational period following the October 2024 inauguration; development of the surrounding area involves numerous agencies with different mandates; and persistent issues

regarding road access, transport, staffing, and health services had been observed. The research focus followed Edwards III's (1980) four dimensions: communication (transmission, clarity, consistency, coordination mechanisms, and communication with local government and service users); resources (personnel, information, authority, budget, facilities, vehicles, communication networks, health facilities, and area infrastructure); disposition (understanding, acceptance, commitment, and responsiveness); and bureaucratic structure (SOPs, division of tasks and authority, coordination, fragmentation, and central–regional relations). Supporting and inhibiting factors were identified across these dimensions.

3.3 Informants

Informants were selected through purposive sampling, which targets information-rich sources capable of illuminating the research focus rather than statistically representing a population (Patton, 2015). Snowball referrals were permitted where previous informants pointed to further knowledgeable actors, and data collection continued until saturation, that is, until new interviews no longer produced substantively new information. Seven informants participated, as summarised in Table 2. To preserve confidentiality, interview excerpts are attributed by group code: PD for the regional government, KP for the post management, PL for cross-border service officers, and MS for community users.

Table 2. Research Informants

No.	Informant	Role / Selection Criteria	Number
1	Head of the Regional Border Management Agency, Boven Digoel Regency (PD)	Represents the regional government; knowledge of regional support, land provision, permits, and area infrastructure	1
2	Head of Division, Yetetkun PLBN (KP)	Knowledge of the policy, post management, coordination, facilities, personnel, SOPs, and relations with other agencies	1
3	Officers of Immigration, Customs, Quarantine, security, and health functions (PL)	Knowledge of service procedures, staffing adequacy, division of tasks, and operational constraints	3
4	Service users / surrounding community (MS)	Perspective on access, distribution of benefits, and community needs	2
	Total		7

Source: Research data (2026).

3.4 Data Sources and Collection

Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews and direct observation of service activities, facility conditions, accessibility, staff placement, use of supporting facilities, and the post environment, including observation on market and non-market days. Secondary data comprised legislation and regulations, the presidential instruction, crossing SOPs, organisational structures, personnel data, activity reports, crossing data, regional programme documents, official government news releases, statistical publications (BPS Kabupaten Boven Digoel, 2025a, 2025b), and previous studies. The researcher acted as the key instrument, supported by interview and observation guides, a document checklist, audio recording, photography, and field notes. Informed consent was obtained before interviews and recordings.

3.5 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analysed using the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014). These activities ran concurrently from the start of data collection through to reporting, with interview transcripts coded according to the four Edwards III dimensions and then re-read to identify cross-cutting patterns. Trustworthiness was established using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), operationalised as shown in Table 3. Divergent accounts among informants were not treated as errors but recorded and analysed, as they may reflect differences in interests, authority, experience, or access to information.

Table 3. Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness

Criterion	Technique	Application in This Study
Credibility	Source triangulation	Comparing accounts from the BNPP unit, service agencies, regional government, traders, workers, and community members
Credibility	Technique triangulation	Comparing interview data with observation and documents
Credibility	Member checking	Confirming summaries or key parts of interviews with the relevant informants
Credibility	Adequate observation	Observing the site on market and non-market days and at different service times
Transferability	Thick description	Describing the Yetetkun context, informant characteristics, and research process so readers can judge applicability
Dependability	Audit trail	Retaining guides, field notes, transcripts, codes, analytical decisions, and revisions
Confirmability	Evidence and reflexivity	Linking conclusions to quotations, observations, and documents, and recording the researcher's position and assumptions

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985) and the research protocol (2026).

4. Results

4.1 Research Setting

The Yetetkun PLBN lies in Yetetkun Village, Ninati District, on Indonesia's land border with Papua New Guinea in the southern part of the island of New Guinea. The surrounding landscape is dominated by lowlands, tropical forest, and swamps, a terrain that shapes settlement patterns, transport access, public service provision, and the distribution of basic goods. Travel from Tanah Merah airport to the post takes approximately three hours by four-wheel-drive or double-cabin vehicle, depending on road, weather,

and vehicle conditions. During a BNPP visit in February 2026, the post was described as a type C PLBN facing infrastructure and narcotics-related concerns (BNPP, 2026). The agency has reported an average of about 80 people crossing daily in both directions (BNPP, 2025). Regency-level data (BPS Kabupaten Boven Digoel, 2025a) were used only as general context, since regency conditions cannot be assumed to represent the village and district surrounding the post (BPS Kabupaten Boven Digoel, 2025b).

The post compound is organised into zones in line with BNPP regulations (BNPP, 2021). Table 4 summarises the facilities and their observed status, and Table 5 presents the personnel composition, which became a recurring theme in the interviews.

Table 4. Facilities of the Yetetkun PLBN by Zone and Observed Status

Zone	Facilities	Observed Status
Core zone	Main building, integrated inspection area, CIQS buildings, security posts, power house, X-ray equipment, thermal detection	Available and functioning; electricity, water, internet, and workspaces rarely disrupted; backup generator in place
Supporting zone	Nine kiosks for local traders; terrace used as an informal market (busiest on Tuesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays)	Six kiosks occupied, three vacant; no organised market facility yet
Sub-core zone	Staff housing and Wisma Indonesia guesthouse	Available
Outside the compound	Access road from Tanah Merah (approx. 3 hours); nearest health centre in Ninati (approx. 20 minutes); PNG-side access	Final stretch gravel and rock, prone to mud and landslides; no scheduled public transport; approx. 15 km of forest on the PNG side without road access

Source: Interviews, observation, and documentation (2026).

Table 5. Personnel Composition at the Yetetkun PLBN

Unit / Function	Personnel	Remarks
BNPP post management	9	1 Head of Division, 2 Heads of Subdivision, 6 staff; considered sufficient for the time being
Immigration	4	Controls the movement of persons
Customs	1	Single officer for supervision of goods; described as very insufficient
Quarantine	2	Protection against diseases, pests, and biological contamination
Health (Ministry of Health)	0	No permanently stationed health worker; nearest community health centre approx. 20 minutes away
Local workers (security)	10	Recruited from the surrounding community
Local workers (cleaning)	13	Recruited from the surrounding community
Local workers (technicians)	3	Recruited from the surrounding community

Source: Interviews with KP and PL informants and documentation (2026).

4.2 Implementation Stages

Interviews indicated that the policy had been implemented through three broad stages: planning and construction (2019–2024), inauguration, and operation. The regional government understood the instruction as “a directive from the central government to accelerate the development of the Yetetkun PLBN in an integrated manner together with its supporting facilities and infrastructure” (PD). Its contribution during preparation was the provision of construction-ready land and the acceleration of permits. The post management summarised the outcome of the construction stage as the completion of “the main building, supporting facilities, guard posts, the integrated inspection area, and buildings for Immigration, Customs, and Quarantine” (KP), with document inspection services operating regularly after inauguration. Once the post entered operation, the focus of implementation shifted from the availability of buildings to the continuity of services, staffing adequacy, inter-agency coordination, facility maintenance, and the link between the post and regional government support.

4.3 Communication

Communication operated along two axes. Vertically, each agency received policy and technical instructions through its own chain of command; as one officer explained, policy “is usually delivered in stages through the respective ministries or agencies and then forwarded to field units, through circular letters, technical guidelines, coordination meetings, and periodic supervision” (PL). Horizontally, the post management convened monthly evaluation and coordination meetings with the CIQS agencies and used a WhatsApp group, internal radio, and ad hoc meetings for urgent matters. The head of the post assessed this coordination as “quite good”, noting that matters requiring joint handling “can be conveyed through the WhatsApp group or by holding a meeting” (KP). When an agency detected forged documents, smuggled goods, or a traveller showing symptoms of an infectious disease, it contacted security personnel and the post management immediately via internal radio rather than waiting for the monthly forum (PL). Communication between the regional government and the post was channelled through the head of the post, who

forwarded matters requiring national action to the BNPP headquarters (PD).

Communication with service users presented a different picture. Officers reported that many traditional crossers from Papua New Guinea were not fluent in Indonesian or English and did not fully understand immigration and customs rules, so procedures had to be explained “slowly and persuasively” (PL). A community informant appreciated that counter staff explained inspection steps patiently so that villagers unfamiliar with digital systems did not feel confused or afraid, but added that officers were “sometimes a bit irritated, perhaps because they are tired of explaining over and over to different people” (MS). Information asymmetry also extended across the border: because of weak signal coverage and the absence of an equivalent inspection post on the Papua New Guinea side, officers had “no advance manifest data on the time and number of groups of crossers arriving” (PL).

4.4 Resources

Physical resources inside the compound were consistently described as adequate. The head of the post stated that “all facilities are available, and their maintenance is included in our annual budget” (KP), and service officers concurred that the facilities “support every CIQS task” (PL). When power or internet outages occurred, the technical team activated backup generators so that passport inspection and X-ray scanning were not interrupted for long (PL). Central government financing through the national budget was credited with keeping construction on schedule and covering not only the main building but also water supply and drainage (KP).

Human resources were less evenly distributed. The BNPP unit of nine civil servants was considered sufficient “for the time being”, but CIQS staffing was not: “Customs has one officer, Immigration four, Quarantine two, and the Ministry of Health none” (KP). Service officers described the number of personnel as “still very insufficient” (PL). The nearest health facility, the Ninati Community Health Centre, is about twenty minutes away, and the post management relied on its operational vehicle to transport people in need of care.

Beyond the fence, resource constraints became more pronounced. The regional government was improving roads connecting villages and districts to the main road built by the Ministry of Public Works, but acknowledged that the route from Tanah Merah to Ninati remained “partly dominated by rocky, gravelled roads prone to landslides”, slowing the distribution of materials and basic goods while regional budgets remained limited (PD). A community informant described the last hour of the journey as “gravel and rough stone that becomes muddy or slides during the rainy season” and noted that there was “no scheduled public transport route or official terminal from Tanah Merah directly to the PLBN gate” (MS), leaving residents dependent on costly chartered vehicles. On the opposite side, “road access of about fifteen kilometres from the boundary marker into Papua New Guinea is still forest”, which prevented the volume of official crossers from growing (KP). Kiosk use illustrates the same pattern: although kiosks were provided free of charge and prioritised for local residents, community members said they were “very limited in capital to open a kiosk because most people work as farmers and sell forest products” and called for soft credit, training, and empowerment programmes (MS).

4.5 Disposition

Implementer disposition was predominantly positive. The regional government declared that it “will always be ready to help the PLBN when needed”, citing its protocol support for central officials attending the Independence Day ceremony at the post (PD). The post management reported that all CIQS agencies served “according to their respective SOPs” and that it was gradually socialising orderly administration to crossers, “because many crossers still do not have complete documents” (KP). Officers explained that most crossers were local residents with close kinship ties across the border and were therefore served “in a friendly and communicative way, using language easily understood by traditional crossers” (PL). The post also prioritised local employment, with ten security guards, thirteen cleaners, and three technicians recruited from the surrounding community. Customary landowners were described as cooperative during construction, which minimised social conflict (KP). The limits of disposition appeared where it had to compensate for missing resources: repetitive explanation produced fatigue, and the management’s willingness to give kiosks to local residents did not, by itself, fill those kiosks.

4.6 Bureaucratic Structure

Within routine services, the division of tasks was clear. The regional government stated that authority “is clearly written in Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019, so the possibility of overlap is very small” (PD), and the head of the post confirmed that the post management and CIQS agencies “each have their own duties and authority, so there is no overlap” (KP). Immigration controls the movement of persons, Customs supervises goods and fiscal matters, Quarantine protects against diseases, pests, and biological contamination, and security units maintain order and physical sovereignty at the boundary line (PL). The one-gate design placed counters close together, which officers said meant that “we do not need to move locations to coordinate” (PL). Procedures were also intelligible to users; a resident listed the requirements for a cross-border pass as an identity card, family card, photograph, and a recommendation letter confirming residence in the border area and family ties on the Papua New Guinea side (MS). The BNPP was described as “a bridge of coordination, so that sectoral interests among agencies can be tempered” (PD).

Outside routine services, however, the same structure revealed fragmentation. Road repair, public transport, health staffing, market development, business capital, and relations with Papua New Guinea all fall within the authority of different ministries, agencies, the regency government, or a foreign state. The head of the post could identify these needs but not resolve them, and suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs “needs to encourage the Papua New Guinea Government to build access roads and proper inspection posts” and that trade arrangements facilitating the types and quotas of goods for traditional crossers were required (KP). The regional government similarly observed that area activity “is difficult to stimulate in a balanced way because roads and inspection posts on the Papua New Guinea side have not been built on a par with the Indonesian side” (PD).

4.7 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Table 6 consolidates the factors identified across the four dimensions. Supporting factors were concentrated in the clarity of the policy mandate, central financing, core facilities, routine coordination, implementer commitment, and community acceptance. Inhibiting factors were concentrated in resources and in the fragmentation of authority for issues located outside the post’s routine service domain.

Table 6. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors by Edwards III Dimension

Dimension	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Communication	Monthly CIQS evaluation meetings; WhatsApp group, internal radio, and ad hoc meetings; hierarchical transmission via circular letters, technical guidelines, and supervision; one-gate design enabling direct coordination	Language barriers and limited understanding of immigration and customs rules among traditional crossers; repetitive oral explanation; no advance manifest data from the PNG side; weak signal coverage
Resources	National budget financing kept construction on schedule; adequate core facilities with annual maintenance budget; backup power; land and permits provided by the regency	Uneven staffing (one customs officer, no health worker); rocky, landslide-prone roads; no scheduled public transport; limited regional budget; limited community capital for kiosks; inadequate road and post on the PNG side

Dimension	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Disposition	Acceptance and commitment of regional government, post management, and officers; persuasive, friendly service; prioritisation of local labour and kiosks; cooperation of customary landowners; most crossers follow instructions	Officer fatigue from repeated explanations; part of the community not yet able to use facilities; some crossers lack complete documents
Bureaucratic structure	Clear division of authority under the instruction; SOPs and technical guidelines; BNPP as coordination bridge; national priority status	Fragmentation of authority over roads, health, transport, capital, markets, and PNG relations; multi-level follow-up not within the post's control

Source: Analysis of research data (2026).

5. Discussion

Read dimension by dimension, the findings could be summarised conventionally: communication is fairly good, resources are mixed, disposition is positive, and structure is clear but fragmented. Such a summary, however, misses the pattern that runs through all four dimensions. In every dimension, the evidence divides along the perimeter fence of the post. Inside the compound, implementation

is close to what the presidential instruction envisaged; beyond it, the same policy dissolves into a set of unassigned or under-resourced tasks. The Yetetkun case is therefore best understood not as a policy that is partly implemented, but as a policy that is implemented in two distinct regimes simultaneously. Table 7 makes this division explicit.

Table 7. Two Implementation Regimes at the Yetetkun PLBN

Dimension	Inside the Post (Routine Services)	Beyond the Post (Area Development)
Communication	Dense and responsive: monthly meetings, messaging group, internal radio, co-located counters	Information is relayed upwards (post to BNPP headquarters; regency to centre) but rarely converted into commitments by other agencies; no data flow from the PNG side
Resources	Facilities adequate and maintained; staffing gaps in specific functions	Roads, transport, health services, regional budget, and community capital insufficient
Disposition	Positive and adaptive; increasingly stretched by unmet needs	Supportive statements by all parties, but goodwill cannot mobilise resources held by other mandates
Bureaucratic structure	Clear mandates, SOPs, and no meaningful overlap	Responsibility dispersed across sectors, levels, and a foreign state; no body with authority to assign tasks, budgets, and deadlines
Mode of implementation (Matland, 1995)	Administrative: low ambiguity, low conflict; outcomes depend on resources	Experimental: low conflict but high ambiguity about means and responsibility; outcomes depend on which actors become engaged

Source: Authors' analysis based on interview, observation, and documentary data (2026).

5.1 The Clarity Paradox

The most striking element of this divide is that the condition which makes the inner regime work is the same condition that weakens the outer one. Informants from both the regional government and the post management cited the clarity of the instruction's division of authority as the reason why overlap was "very small". Edwards III (1980) would recognise this as a structural strength: clear mandates reduce conflict and allow SOPs to function. Yet clarity of *who does what* inside the post coexists with an absence of clarity about *who closes the gaps between mandates* outside it. Each agency knows precisely what it is responsible for; no agency is responsible for the connection between a well-equipped post and a road that becomes impassable in the rainy season, or between a free kiosk and a farmer who lacks the capital to stock it. We term this the clarity paradox: the sharper the boundaries of sectoral

responsibility, the more the residual, cross-cutting tasks of area development fall between them.

This pattern is anticipated in several strands of the implementation literature. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) showed that the probability of successful joint action declines rapidly as the number of required clearances increases, even when every participant agrees with the goal. At Yetetkun, agreement is not in doubt; what multiplies is the number of separate decision points needed to turn a post into a functioning area: the regency public works office, the health office, the transport sector, credit and empowerment programmes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Papua New Guinea government. Edwards III's (1980) notion of fragmentation captures this dispersion, but the case suggests a refinement: fragmentation is not uniformly harmful. Within the post, functional specialisation among the CIQS agencies is

precisely what allows a one-gate system to operate. Fragmentation becomes an impediment only where tasks require integration across organisations that have no shared plan, budget line, or deadline.

Matland's (1995) ambiguity–conflict model sharpens this interpretation. For routine border services, ambiguity and conflict are both low, which places them in the domain of administrative implementation, where outcomes depend on resources; this is consistent with the finding that service quality at Yetetkun is constrained mainly by staffing rather than by disagreement or confusion. For area development, conflict remains low, but ambiguity about means and responsibility is high. In Matland's terms, this moves implementation towards an experimental mode, in which outcomes depend on which actors happen to be active and engaged in a given setting. That description fits the observed dependence of road repair on the regency's limited budget and of cross-border infrastructure on diplomatic initiative. The coordination literature makes a similar point: coordination problems in public administration are often less about conflict than about the absence of mechanisms that convert shared information into joint decisions (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Peters, 2018). Yetetkun has forums that circulate information efficiently, but the forum that matters most, one that would assign responsibility, schedules, and targets across sectors, does not yet exist.

The bottom-up tradition helps explain why. Hjern and Porter (1981) argued that multi-organisational programmes are actually delivered by "implementation structures", pools of actors from different organisations whose cooperation is not guaranteed by any single hierarchy. The CIQS compound is such a structure, held together by co-location, monthly meetings, and an administrator with a clear convening role. The wider area-development structure, by contrast, has no equivalent convenor: the post administrator can relay needs to the BNPP headquarters, and the regency can relay needs to the central government, but neither can bind the other. Bardach's (1977) depiction of implementation as a set of loosely coupled games in which each participant protects its own resources is apt here, not because actors are obstructive, but because their mandates give them no reason to invest in tasks that belong formally to someone else.

5.2 Disposition as a Substitute Resource

A second implication concerns the relationship between disposition and resources. Edwards III (1980) treats them as distinct dimensions, but the Yetetkun data suggest that, at the frontline, positive disposition is being consumed as a substitute for missing resources. Where there are no interpreters, no visual service guides, and no advance manifest from the other side, officers fill the gap with patience and repeated oral explanation. The community's observation that officers sometimes become irritated after explaining the same procedure many times is not evidence of weak commitment; it is evidence that commitment is being drawn on beyond its sustainable limit. Lipsky's (2010) analysis of street-level bureaucracy describes exactly this dynamic: frontline workers facing chronically inadequate resources develop coping routines, and their discretion, however well intentioned, becomes the de facto policy experienced by citizens. The implication is that strengthening disposition through exhortation or training will yield limited returns unless the resources that commitment is currently replacing are supplied.

The kiosks provide a parallel illustration in the economic domain. The post management's decision to offer kiosks free of charge and to prioritise local residents and local labour reflects a disposition aligned with the developmental intent of the policy. Yet three of nine kiosks remain empty because the binding constraint lies in capital, supply chains, and transport, none of which the post can provide. Good will at the gate cannot substitute for programmes that sit in other mandates. This finding reinforces the observation by Kaue et al. (2024) at Wini and by Bara Lay and Wahyono (2018) at Motaain that post development opens economic opportunities whose realisation depends on complementary skills and capital, and it echoes Tiya et al.'s (2019) argument that a post can serve as a development node only if it is deliberately connected to local potential and infrastructure.

5.3 An Asymmetric Border

The third element of the divide is international. Brunet-Jailly (2005) argues that border regimes reflect the interplay of market flows, multilevel policy, local political clout, and borderland culture on both sides of a boundary. At Yetetkun, Indonesia has invested heavily in the policy dimension on its own side, while the Papua New Guinea side lacks a comparable road and inspection post. The consequences are tangible: crossers arrive on foot through forest, officers receive no advance information, and the volume of formal crossings remains modest relative to the facility's capacity. Newman's (2006) observation that borders persist as lines of separation even where states seek to promote interaction is visible here in material form: the boundary separates not only jurisdictions but also levels of infrastructure. This international asymmetry shows that a national acceleration policy, however well implemented domestically, cannot by itself determine the performance of a border post. It also explains why the strong kinship ties of traditional crossers, a social asset emphasised by officers, coexist with low procedural familiarity: the formal crossing regime is new, and its counterpart on the other side is incomplete.

5.4 Comparison with Previous Studies and Theoretical Implications

The staffing findings align closely with earlier research. Carrisa et al. (2024) found that services at the Aruk post were not optimal because personnel numbers did not match service hours and peak-day demand; Tefa and Thaal (2019) linked the performance of the Wini post to staffing adequacy and technical conditions; and Umar and Kakampu (2022) identified organisational position, incentives, and geography as determinants of cross-border service quality at Marore. Yetetkun adds a further dimension: the shortage is uneven across functions, with a single customs officer and no health worker, so aggregate staff numbers conceal functional gaps. Firdaus (2018) and Timisela (2015) highlighted supporting and inhibiting conditions that shape the distribution of post-related benefits; the present study shows that, in the early operational phase, these conditions are less about the post itself than about the infrastructure and programmes surrounding it.

Theoretically, the case suggests that Edwards III's (1980) model remains useful for diagnosing implementation at a multi-agency border post but benefits from a spatial reading. Applying the four dimensions separately to the inner service regime and to the outer area-development regime reveals that the same policy can score well and poorly on the same dimension at once. This reading complements the call by Hill and Hupe (2014) and O'Toole (2000)

to analyse implementation across levels and organisations, and it suggests that the boundary of a facility can serve as a practical analytical boundary between administrative and experimental implementation. Van Meter and Van Horn's (1975) attention to inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities is also relevant: what Yetetkun lacks is not communication per se, but enforcement-like follow-up mechanisms that convert communicated needs into commitments by other organisations.

Practically, the analysis implies that further acceleration at Yetetkun depends less on additional construction inside the compound than on governance arrangements outside it. The most valuable instrument would be an integrated post-construction action plan that assigns each area-development task (road upgrading, scheduled transport, a permanent or on-call health service, kiosk capital and training, and bilateral negotiation over the Papua New Guinea access road and crossing arrangements) to a named responsible agency with a budget source, timeline, and monitoring indicator. Such a plan would give the existing coordination forums a decision-making function rather than an information-sharing one, and would translate the clarity of the presidential instruction from the inside of the post to the area it is meant to develop.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to analyse the implementation of the policy for accelerating border area development at the Yetetkun PLBN and to identify its supporting and inhibiting factors. The policy has been implemented through the completion of the main building, integrated inspection facilities, CIQS buildings, security posts, utilities, and supporting facilities, followed by the operation of document inspection, supervision of the movement of persons and goods, and inter-agency coordination. In terms of communication, internal transmission through hierarchical channels, monthly meetings, messaging groups, and internal radio functions well, but clarity for service users is limited by language differences, low familiarity with formal procedures, and the absence of advance information from the Papua New Guinea side. In terms of resources, core facilities are adequate and maintained, whereas staffing is uneven, with one customs officer and no permanent health worker, and area resources such as roads, public transport, regional budgets, and community capital remain insufficient. Disposition is generally positive across the regional government, post management, and service officers, but it is increasingly used to compensate for missing resources. Bureaucratic structure is clear and effective for routine services, yet fragmented for area-development tasks that lie outside the post's authority.

The supporting factors are the clarity and national priority status of Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2019, central government financing, integrated service facilities, routine coordination, the BNPP's bridging role, implementer commitment, and the acceptance of local communities and customary landowners. The inhibiting factors are language barriers and limited procedural understanding, uneven staffing, the absence of health personnel, rocky and landslide-prone roads, the lack of scheduled public transport, limited regional budgets and community capital, inadequate roads and inspection facilities on the Papua New Guinea side, and dispersed authority. In Edwards III's terms, the dominant obstacles lie in resources and in structural fragmentation.

The central contribution of the study is the identification of a clarity paradox: the precise allocation of sectoral authority that

prevents overlap in routine services simultaneously leaves cross-cutting area-development tasks without an owner. Strengthening implementation therefore requires an integrated post-construction action plan with named responsible agencies, budgets, schedules, and monitoring; staffing adjustments based on functional workload, particularly for customs and health; simple, visual, and locally interpreted service information; regency programmes for road access, transport, and community business capital; and bilateral engagement with Papua New Guinea on access roads, inspection facilities, data exchange, and traditional trade arrangements. The study is limited by its single-site design, its small number of informants, and its timing in the early operational period. Future research could compare posts inaugurated under the same instruction, incorporate the perspectives of Papua New Guinea authorities and crossers, and trace whether coordination forums evolve into decision-making mechanisms over time.

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