

Policy Brief

Empowering Local Resilience: A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Slow-Onset Disaster and Climate Change Impacts in Indonesia's Policy Landscape

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Memberdayakan Ketahanan Lokal: Pendekatan Komprehensif untuk Menanggulangi Slow Onset Disaster dan Dampak Perubahan Iklim dalam Lanskap Kebijakan Indonesia

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Summary

Slow-onset disasters, such as sea-level rise, have significant impacts in Indonesia. However, Law No. 16 of 2016 about the Ratification of the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change does not yet address the management of slow-onset disasters, particularly in responding to human mobility issues such as displacement, migration, and relocation resulting from climate change. Addressing the impacts of climate change and slow-onset disasters requires support from a more vertically integrated climate change framework. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen policy integration at the local level, enhance social protection, and conduct regular data monitoring.

Local governments are crucial in translating national policies on slow-onset disasters and climate change into local actions. Their limited awareness and commitment to addressing these issues highlight the need for concrete steps, such as developing adaptation frameworks, integrating development plans with climate change strategies, and strengthening social protection measures. Moreover, regular monitoring of policy implementation will help determine anticipatory efforts for the future.

Keywords: Climate Change, Slow-Onset Disaster, Migration, Adaptation and Mitigation, Local Resilience



The Importance of Policies Supporting Adaptation Strategies to Address the Impacts of Climate Change and Slow-Onset Disasters

Long-term climate change events can result in various impacts, including the emergence of slow-onset disasters. Slow-onset disasters, which develop gradually, interact with climate change and other factors, leading to hydrometeorological hazards such as sea-level rise, increased temperatures, higher salinity, seawater intrusion, land and forest degradation, and ecosystem damage (UNFCCC, 2012).

In Indonesia, sea-level rise poses a significant threat to communities, as seen in areas like Kandanghaur Subdistrict, Indramayu Regency, on Java's northern coast. This phenomenon has resulted in declining land and marine productivity, infrastructure and building damage, and coastal erosion (Dasanto, 2010). Elsewhere, climate change has reduced rainfall intensity and frequency in East Sumba Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The lack of groundwater supply for irrigation has caused declining yields of soybean, mung bean, cassava, and sweet potato since 2019, as Latifa et al. (2023) reported.

The impacts of climate change significantly alter environmental profiles and reduce community resilience over time. These effects also decrease the habitability of specific areas, often triggering human mobility, such as displacement, migration, and relocation. Although climate change adaptation and mitigation policies have begun to be implemented, RDI emphasises the need to strengthen cross-jurisdictional integration. One key area of concern is slow-onset disasters. Given their strong interconnection and the fact that climate change can influence both sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters, this strengthening effort should take into account disaster risk reduction strategies as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation frameworks.

The National Government's Commitment to Addressing Internal Displacement due to Climate Change and Slow-Onset Disasters

In Indonesia, climate change policies have been significantly influenced by the ratification of Law No. 16 of 2016 about the Ratification of the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which

aligns with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. This commitment aims to strengthen highly vulnerable regions in Indonesia against the impacts of climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures. While national-scale plans have been developed and integrated into the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024, they have yet to prioritise the issue of internal population displacement caused by climate change.

Indonesia's climate change policy development, initiated in 2009, has not explicitly provided solutions to address slow-onset disasters or internal displacement caused by climate change. Disaster risk reduction efforts governed by Law No. 24 of 2007 about Disaster Management also do not explicitly address slow-onset disasters or the resulting displacement.

The issue of internal displacement due to climate change remains underrepresented in national policies. Related regulations, such as Head of National Disaster Management Agency (BNPb) Regulation No. 3 of 2018 about Handling of Displaced Persons in Disaster Emergency Situations and Government Regulation No. 57 of 2009 about Amendment to Government Regulation Number 27 of 1994 Concerning the Management of Population Development, only address short-term adaptation to sudden-onset disasters, without adequately considering the needs of displaced persons and migrants affected by disasters and climate change.

The Role of Local Governments in Managing the Impacts of Climate Change and Slow-Onset Disasters

Local governments play a key role in formulating policies translating national government regulations, such as the climate change roadmap and the National Action Plan for Climate Change

Adaptation (RAN-API), into short—and long-term regional development plans and strategies. They are responsible for planning and implementing these strategies at the local level while coordinating with relevant stakeholders.

However, local governments' commitment to addressing these issues remains suboptimal. Data from the Regional Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (RAD-API) indicates that few regions have integrated climate change issues into their development planning documents. According to the public adaptation document monitoring platform, only 55 climate change adaptation documents from 11 provinces exist, leaving other 27 provinces without such documents.

For example, the Indramayu Regency lacks a regional climate change adaptation document, while the East Sumba Regency has established adaptation plans covering agriculture, water resources, and livelihoods. Increasing the number of adaptation planning documents and ensuring their equitable distribution is crucial, particularly in regions vulnerable to climate change and disasters.

Strategies to Strengthen Local Governments to Manage the Impacts of Climate Change and Slow-Onset Disasters

Local governments face challenges in addressing the impacts of climate change and slow-onset disasters due to suboptimal climate change adaptation frameworks at the regional level. Inefficiencies in implementing national-level climate change and disaster policies hinder the integration of national plans with local initiatives. Moreover, managing slow-onset disasters requires integrating disaster management plans

with climate change strategies, as these disasters differ significantly from sudden-onset events.

Recognising the importance of policy implementation to address climate change impacts and slow-onset disasters in Indonesia, particularly concerning internal displacement issues, we have identified several strategies, including:

a. Encouraging the Integration of Slow-Onset Disaster Issues into Climate Change Adaptation Plans

Indonesia has developed various policies addressing the impacts of climate change, including roadmaps, National Action Plans (RAN), development plans, and regulations on disaster risk management and social welfare. Slow-onset disaster impacts need to be integrated with other policies, such as climate change adaptation plans, as these issues often overlap and require a holistic approach to address them.

When formulating development plans, the integration of climate change and disaster management documents should be considered. These integrated plans can later serve as a clear reference for local governments in developing regional policies that address the impacts of climate change and slow-onset disasters.

b. Mainstreaming and Integrating Adaptation Plans into Development Plans

Local governments can integrate climate change and slow-onset disaster issues into regional development policy documents such as the Regional Long-Term Development Plans (RPJPD), Regional Medium-Term Development Plans (RPJMD), Regional Action Plans (RAD), and the Regional Spatial Plans (RTRW), to serve as a basis for making

strategic decisions in managing slow-onset disasters in their regions. This can be achieved through strategies such as spatial planning adjustments, social protection measures, and disaster response actions. Currently, the integration of climate and development data is carried out at the national level within climate change adaptation strategies and national development plans, but the integration at the local level still needs improvement.

Local governments must also effectively translate the national RAN-API to ensure its relevance and alignment with local contexts. As national policies require collaboration across sectors, local governments play a similar role in monitoring and coordinating their implementation at the local level.

Both the government and local communities have a comprehensive understanding and detailed experience regarding the hazards and risks of climate change at the local level, making their involvement irreplaceable in developing local development plans that are integrated with climate change adaptation. One approach, described by Robinson et al. (2021), is Climate Compatible Development, which refers to development policies that are responsive to climate change challenges, including slow-onset disasters.

c. Strengthening Social Protection for Communities Potentially Affected by Slow-Onset Disasters

Social protection policies are crucial because the impacts of disasters and environmental changes can disrupt livelihoods, access to basic infrastructure, and the fulfilment of other basic needs. Policies such as those outlined in the Social Welfare

Law have reached communities affected by disasters, but they have been focused on emergency response phases and have not yet addressed the threats of slow-onset disasters. Social protection strategies need to be clarified regarding slow-onset phenomena because their threats do not follow a clear pre-disaster, during-disaster, or post-disaster phase, making it difficult to determine when vulnerable communities should receive assistance.

Indonesia's National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) can manage the slow-onset phenomenon. This plan can initiate an Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) framework aimed at expanding social protection coverage for communities affected by or at risk of disasters and climate change. Strengthening protection should not only focus on disaster occurrences but also on post-disaster recovery periods and communities that are forced to relocate due to climate change and other environmental changes.

Regarding displacement caused by slow-onset disasters, there are concerns about the failure of in-situ adaptation efforts, leading communities to migrate. Interventions from external actors, such as the government or private sector, can boost community capacity to address these challenges and improve overall well-being. In this context, integrating and mainstreaming migration issues as an ex-situ adaptation to climate change and slow-onset disasters is essential. This includes cross-sectoral development, such as providing habitable locations, empowering communities with livelihood strategies, employment opportunities, and supporting infrastructure in new settlements.

d. Enhancing the Availability, Expanding Access, and Strengthening Regional Capacity in Utilising Disaster Risk and Climate Change Data for Development

Limited data, access, and capacity to use climate change projection data hinder the integration of climate change impacts into development policies. While disaster data is widely available and easily accessible, such as through the InaRISK platform, detailed and open climate change projection data is still lacking. This results in insufficiently considering climate change projection data in development planning, making it difficult for local governments to take appropriate policy actions to respond to slow-onset climate change impacts in their regions.

Therefore, it is crucial to enhance efforts in collecting and analysing climate change projection data and improve its accessibility for local use. Strengthening the capacity of local governments is also necessary to ensure the effective integration of climate change data into planning and decision-making processes. By addressing these data challenges, it is expected that the integration of climate change data into development policies can be carried out more effectively and efficiently (Pilato et al., 2018). Development approaches that consider climate conditions, or Climate Compatible Development (CCD), can reduce the impacts communities face while optimising resilient economy and community development (Bickersteth et al., 2017).

a. Implementing an Appropriate Approach, and Regular Monitoring and Evaluation of Climate Change, Disaster, and Migration Issues

Slow-onset disasters are dynamic threats that can affect the

implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies that have been formulated. Monitoring efforts can be conducted to assess the relevance of existing interventions regularly and can help forecast future needs, including migration. The differences between sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters highlight the need to establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms tailored to the disaster phases (pre-disaster, during-disaster, and post-disaster). The distinct nature of these two types of disasters creates confusion regarding the ideal timing for implementing interventions (WFP, 2021).

Conclusion

The issue of climate change and slow-onset disasters presents various challenges for the Government of Indonesia in its efforts to reduce local impacts at the regional level. The first problem is the slow-onset disaster, which impacts local communities differently. Although disaster frameworks have started to be developed at the national level, the policies are still not focused on events that generate gradual and continuous impacts. Addressing slow-onset issues requires an appropriate framework that needs to be integrated with disaster management and climate change adaptation documents. Furthermore, assistance for communities vulnerable to slow-onset disasters must also be prepared. While the national government is already aware of the framework to address climate change, implementation, monitoring, and its application at the regional level still need to be encouraged. This is linked to mitigating the potential impacts that slow-onset disasters may generate at the local level, including potential impacts to displacement and migration.

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