



PORANG FARMERS EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY IN BALANGAN REGENCY

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Abstract

Empowerment of porang farmers today is absolutely necessary. The magnitude of the potential of porang is not matched by the ability of farmers to improve their agriculture into a farming business that is able to prosper. This is because porang as a new commodity makes it difficult for farmers to cultivate, process, and market it. The main purpose of this research is to find out what factors influence the empowerment efforts and strategies for empowering porang farmers that must be carried out by the Balangan Regency Government. The research method used is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observations, interviews, FGDs, and documentation searches related to secondary data to support this research. SWOT analysis is used in formulating a strategy for empowering porang farmers where the object is the Balangan Regency Government. The results of the SWOT analysis show that there are several factors that influence empowerment efforts, namely eight strength factors, eight weakness factors, five opportunity factors, and five threat factors. These factors with SWOT analysis resulted in 7 comparative Advantages strategies, 5 mobilization strategies, 6 divestment/investment strategies, and 1 damage control strategy. Through an analysis of strategic environmental issues, a weakness-opportunity (WO) strategy is established as the main strategy in empowering porang farmers. The strategies are; 1) Designing regulations and policies on the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers. 2) Establish partnerships and expand networks to get new markets in porang marketing. 3) Creating technology-based applications that can facilitate access to information regarding the development and farming of porang. 4) Improve research on appropriate technologies that are easily replicated by farmers related to post-harvest development and processing. 5) Innovate on the development of porang so as to produce diversified products that can be marketed domestically.

Keywords: Farmer Empowerment, Porang, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Law Number 19 of 2013 mandates that the state is obliged to carry out farmer empowerment in a planned, directed, and sustainable manner. Empowerment of farmers is carried out to carry out better farming activities through education and training, counseling and assistance, development of agricultural systems and infrastructure, consolidation and guarantee of agricultural land area, easy access to knowledge, technology and information as well as extension of farmer institutions (Djunedi, 2016). ; Prayoga & Nurfadillah, 2018; Sidiq & Sulistyani, 2017).

On the basis of this law, it is important for the government to empower farmers, considering that most Indonesians work and depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods (Fitriani, 2017). Therefore, development in the agricultural sector really needs to be considered by the government (Simanjuntak & Erwinsyah, 2020; Purwahita et al., 2021; Fitriani, 2017). Through the development of the agricultural sector, it is hoped that it will become a driving force for the development of other fields, including in the field of economic development (Bawia et al., 2015; Miranti, 2016). This makes the agricultural sector very potential in improving the welfare of the community, especially farmers

One of the leading commodities in Balangan Regency which is now starting to be seriously worked on by farmers is the porang plant. The large market share of Porang, especially for export needs, has resulted in currently in Balangan Regency starting a program for cultivating, utilizing, and developing porang plants. This program was held because Porang is found growing wild and there are many requests for orders from outside the region and abroad in the form of chips (thin and dry slices).

The Department of Food Security, Agriculture and Fisheries as the leading sector for the empowerment of porang farmers is obliged to carry out protection and empowerment efforts in accordance with the mandate of the Act. Where the empowerment approach is carried out, the focus is not only on the involvement of the recipient in the development process but also on enabling the community to monitor it in order to improve the welfare of their lives. Empowerment of farmer groups must be carried out with appropriate handling steps. This is important because it is useful for improving the quality of farmers' human resources. According to Kause et al. (2013) improving the quality of human resources is done by shaping and changing the behavior of farming communities through the development of their potentials.

The results of the initial survey through interviews with agricultural extension workers and the chairman of the Porang Farmers Association of Balangan Regency, empowerment of porang farmers so far has not been optimally carried out. The Department of Food Security, Agriculture and Fisheries only provides counseling related to porang marketing. Meanwhile, from Bapeddalitbang there is a program of borrowing and using cutting tools, dryers, and flours as well as training on Porang processing as an alternative food product for farmer groups.

These programs have not been able to contribute significantly to porang farmers, considering that Balangan district is currently one of the largest porang-producing districts in South Kalimantan. Porang in Balangan Regency donate 10 tons per week or 50% of the total shipments throughout South Kalimantan which amounted to 20 tons to be sent outside Kalimantan. The area of porang plantations in Balangan Regency currently has reached 810 hectares. Until now, Porang has not been used by the community as an alternative food ingredient that has added value and higher selling value. Porang farmers only sell in raw form, so the selling value is still low.

Porang sales are limited because farmers still do not have the skills in processing derivative products. In addition, the Porang processing pattern is still done manually, such as cutting tubers

into chips, drying which is done naturally and there are still few farmers who do not understand how the cultivation and processing process for increase the economic value of the Porang.

The lack of knowledge of Porang farmers and lack of technology in cultivation and increasing economic value and yields are indications of the need for empowerment of porang farmers. Empowerment of porang farmers aims to improve the ability and capacity of farmers in running a productive, advanced, modern and sustainable farming business. It is hoped that the empowerment efforts carried out for porang farmers can improve the level of welfare, quality and a better life. Therefore, the government is expected to have a reliable strategy in empowering Porang farmers, both cultivation, planting, post-harvest, to product processing and sales.

The strategy that can be done to improve the quality of welfare and a better life as well as the independence of farmers is to empower farmers (Hendrastomo, 2011; Hariance, 2020; Syahputra, 2022). Farmer empowerment is a concept developed to strengthen the independence of farmers (Anah, 2017), make it easier for farmers to solve existing problems (Lekatompessy, 2013), and make farmers' farming more organized and focused so that farmers can be more creative and independent in their work. manage their agriculture (Deperiky & Santosa, 2019). Farming that is managed creatively, directed, and independently can certainly increase agricultural production as much as possible. Empowerment of farmers includes increasing the ability and skills of farmers through counseling and training,

One of the government's efforts to increase the independence of farmers is through empowerment efforts in all scopes (Widyatmoko, 2020; Hendrastomo, 2011). Empowerment of farmers should not only focus on developing the capacity of individual farmers. Porang as a commodity that has high economic value provides an opportunity for the government to empower farming businesses (Maru et al., 2021; Djunedi, 2016). Farming business development through empowerment efforts carried out by the government is one of the efforts to accelerate targets in the agricultural sector.

Data from the Department of Food Security, Agriculture and Fisheries in 2022 noted that the current number of porang farmers in Balangan Regency is 526 people with a total land area of 210.96 Ha. The large distribution of porang farmers, the lack of knowledge of farmers about cultivation, processing and marketing as well as the lack of technology that can increase the economic value of porang demands an active role from all parties, considering that porang in Balangan Regency is now a very potential sector to be developed.

Empowerment of farmers is carried out based on the following provisions: first, the program must be able to raise awareness for farmers and involve the community in the process; second, the activities are participatory in nature based on deliberation; third, farmer empowerment must be able to increase the economic value of farming so that empowerment activities are expected to be connected with other activities; fourth, the empowerment method aims to improve the welfare and independence of farmers.

Many researches on farmer empowerment have been carried out. However, empowerment specifically for porang farmers has not been widely studied. This is because porang is an agricultural commodity that is still new and has not been widely cultivated by farmers. Most research related to the empowerment of porang farmers is not on the empowerment of farmers, but on the processing of porang itself. The empowerment of porang farmers has been studied by Sukartono, Suwardji, Kusumo, Bakti, & Edwin (2020) which focuses on strengthening the capacity of farmer groups. The strengthening of the capacity of the porang farmer groups is based on the lack of knowledge of farmers about porang cultivation techniques, the need for partners to access capital and markets, and the lack of understanding of farmers about the added

value of processed porang tubers. Other research on porang farmers has been investigated by Putri, Isharjadi, & Yusdita (2021) which focuses on the financial management of farmer groups.

The research in this thesis is different from previous research that has existed. This study focuses on strategies for empowering porang farmer groups in the aspect of awareness and capacity building, either individually, institutionally, or in a network. Syafari (2017) stated that to make the community empowered and independent, it was carried out through a comprehensive empowerment process, namely the process of awareness and capacity building consisting of three aspects, namely strengthening individual, institutional and networking capacities.

In connection with these problems, it is important to analyze empowerment strategies for Porang farmer groups in Balangan Regency. The Government of Balangan Regency needs to find an appropriate empowerment strategy so that the process of empowering farmers which aims to promote and develop mindsets, work patterns for improving farming businesses, as well as growing and strengthening farmer institutions can be achieved.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach, namely a research method by revealing existing problems and then processing data, analyzing, researching and interpreting related strategies for empowerment of Porang farmer groups in Balangan Regency as well as making conclusions and providing suggestions which are then arranged in a systematic discussion so that problems in the community society can be understood. The various uses of the qualitative approach that have been described above make this research able to reveal the phenomenon of the usual habits of community participation in empowering farmer groups.

The research location was conducted in eight sub-districts of Balangan Regency, namely Paringin, South Paringin, Lampihong, Batumandi, Awayan, Halong, Juai, and Tebing Tinggi sub-districts. Resource persons as sources of data in qualitative research play a very important role in providing information. According to Bungin (2012) informants in qualitative research relate to how the steps taken by researchers so that data or information can be obtained. The selection of informants as data sources in this study is based on the principle of subjects who master the problem, have data, and are willing to provide complete and accurate information. Informants who act as sources of data and information must meet the requirements to become key informants. The informants in this study were groups of porang farmers in eight sub-districts of Balangan Regency.

Data sources are divided into primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with informants (practitioners, experts and stakeholders) to obtain information about the empowerment strategy of Porang farmer groups and through the Group Discussion Forum (FGD). Interviews and SWOT questionnaires were also conducted to key informants including the head of the Balangan Regency Agriculture Office, the Head of Bappedalitbang in Balangan Regency, the Head of the Food Crops Division, and the Head of the Balangan Regency Porang Association Group. Meanwhile, the FGD participants were porang farmers in Balangan Regency. Secondary data is obtained by digging up information from various written sources such as books, research reports, laws and regulations, best practice studies from other countries, and other written references relevant to the research topic.

Data collection techniques used in this study were conducted through interviews, observation, focus group discussions, and literature. Data collection by direct observation or by direct observation is a way of collecting data using the eyes without the help of other standard tools for this purpose. Observations will be classified as data collection techniques if the

observations have criteria related to the research objectives, are used for research and are planned systematically, the observations are recorded systematically and are associated with general propositions. In-depth interviews are repeated face-to-face meetings between researchers and research subjects in order to understand the views of research subjects on the research problems raised. Interviews in this study are the main data collection tool that aims to reveal and obtain information related to the empowerment strategy of porang farmer groups in Balangan Regency. Forum Group Discussion (FGD) is a data collection technique that is generally carried out in qualitative research with the aim of finding the meaning of a theme according to the group's understanding. FGD is intended to avoid the wrong meaning of a researcher to the focus of the problem being studied. FGD is a discussion where the FGD method is a research method that has the characteristic of interaction between researchers and informants and informants with other informants. The results of this FGD are expected to be able to explore ideas, identify, formulate problems and find alternative solutions that are effective and efficient. The FGD that will be carried out in this study includes several participants consisting of representatives of farmer groups in 8 sub-districts of Balangan Regency. Literature study is the collection of data from books, scientific journals, research results and other sources relevant to this research.

Data processing and analysis in this study consisted of strategic environmental analysis in the form of internal and external factors and SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis technique consists of two strategic factors, namely internal containing strengths and weaknesses and external containing opportunities and threats. The analysis using the SWOT matrix aims to identify strategic alternatives that are intuitively felt to be feasible and suitable to be implemented (Tripomo & Udan, 2005). One of the reasons it is necessary to identify internal and external factors is that the determination of a SWOT analysis is carried out after knowing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that exist. The elements of SWOT include strength (S) which means referring to competitive advantage and other competitions; weakness (W) which is an obstacle that limits choices in strategy development, opportunity (O) which describes favorable conditions or opportunities that limit barriers, and threat (T) which relates to conditions that can hinder or threaten to achieve goals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Balangan Regency

Balangan Regency has an area of 1,878.3 Km² or 5% of the total area of South Kalimantan Province. Balangan Regency is divided into 8 (eight) sub-districts, namely Paringin, South Paringin, Lampihong, Batumandi, Awayan, Juai, Halong, and Tebing Tinggi districts. BPS data (2020) notes that Halong District is the sub-district with the largest area of 659.84 km² (35.13%) and South Paringin sub-district with the smallest area of 86.80 km² (4.62%) of the total area. Balangan District.

Morphologically, Balangan Regency consists of mountainous areas on the east and north and lowlands to swamps on the west and south sides. The land surface in Balangan Regency is dominated by forest areas which reach 48.11% of the district's area or an area of 90,383 Ha which has great potential as a water catchment area for the watershed below. The area of Balangan Regency in general is plains, hills, and mountains.

The slope of the land in Balangan Regency varies in six classes, namely <2%, 2-8%, 8-15%, 15-25%, 25-40% and >40%. The slope of this land is clearly visible from the physical condition of the environment which is quite bumpy. The slope of a land is related to its sensitivity to soil erosion. The higher / steeper the slope, the more sensitive it is to erosion.

Balangan Regency, most of which is 129,693 Ha or 69%, is on a slope of 0-2 meters. This slope means that most of the Balangan area is on a sloping area. This slope class is very suitable for agricultural cultivation, as well as for urban (built-up) activities.

The population of Balangan Regency in 2020 is 132,103 people. It consists of 66,863 male residents and 65,240 female residents. Awayan District has the largest population of 7,257 people. A summary of the population of each sub-district according to the data from the Department of Population and Civil Registration in 2021 can be seen in Table 1

Table 1. Population of Balangan Regency by District and Gender in 2021

No.	Subdistrict	Man	Woman	Amount
1	Juai	8,674	8,561	17,235
2	Halong	10,492	10,092	20,584
3	Awayan	7,187	6,975	14,162
4	Bath	9,877	9,428	19,305
5	Lampihong	9,606	9,234	18,840
6	Paringin	9,709	9,702	19,411
7	South Paringin	7,795	7,728	15,532
8	High cliff	3,677	3,587	7,264
	Balangan District	67,017	65,307	132,324

The level of education is one measure of the quality of the population. The higher the level of education completed, the better the quality of human resources in the region. This data must be added with work ethic and skills, both hard skills and soft skills. Some business actors stated that what is needed is not only skills but also personality, because skills can be improved through training.

Population characteristics have an important influence on demographic processes and socio-economic behavior. The most important characteristics of the population are age and sex which are often also referred to as age and sex structure. The graph of the population by age and sex provides an overview of the age structure of the population and its implications for the demands for the provision of empowerment programs needed by the community, especially in farmer groups.

Economic Growth

The economic growth of Balangan Regency experienced a slowdown in 2020 from 3.18% to -2.47%. This slowdown is in line with the economic growth of South Kalimantan Province which also slowed from 4.08% to -1.81%. This change was influenced by changes in gross value added in the category of business fields that were quite dominant in Balangan Regency, namely the mining and quarrying category -3.77%, processing industry -2.91%, agriculture, forestry and fisheries -1.77%, and transportation and warehousing -1.73%. The coal mining subcategory greatly affects the size of the economic growth of Balangan Regency. Until now, Balangan Regency still relies on the mining sector, where in the future its growth will decrease along with the decrease in coal raw materials in Balangan Regency. This makes the government begin to develop the agricultural sector as an effort to anticipate the decreasing coal reserves.

Data from the Bappedalitbang of Balangan Regency shows that the distribution of GRDP in primary categories has begun to decline, namely the categories of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and the categories of mining business fields. In 2016 the share of this primary category group reached 76.37% and in 2020 the share became 71.14% or decreased by 5.23% over a period of 5 years while the economic posture of Balangan shows that the economic style of Balangan Regency is still agrarian. One of the performance indicators in the RPJMD of

Balangan Regency is the contribution of the agricultural sector to GRDP. The GRDP contribution of the agricultural sector in Balangan Regency has a downward trend from 99.68% in 2016 to 90.66% in 2020.

Porang Farmer Empowerment Strategy in Balangan District

The next stage to get a strategy through a SWOT analysis after determining the factors that have been grouped into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is to create a SWOT analysis matrix (Dahoklory, 2013). The SWOT matrix is a tool used in compiling the organization's strategic factors (Zainuddin, 2018). This matrix clearly illustrates how the external opportunities and threats faced can be adjusted to their internal strengths and weaknesses (Riwayatiningasih & Purnaweni, 2018). This matrix can produce four sets of possible strategic alternatives, namely SO strategy, WO strategy, ST strategy, and WT strategy.

Table 2. Formulation of Porang Farmer Empowerment Strategy Using SWOT Matrix

External Factors	Opportunities	Threats
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of porang in the 3 times export movement program (gratieks) (O1). The large opportunity and potential of foreign markets, especially for processed porang and its derivatives (O2). Open access to banking for capital through KUR (O3). There are two national porang organizations (Aspeporin and ASPI) that make it easier for farmers to access information on technology and marketing of porang (O4). The development of technology and information is very fast to make it easier for farmers to develop farming businesses (O5). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Porang prices tend to fluctuate because they follow global economic trends (T1). Export policies from destination countries that make it difficult for farmers (T2). Climate change, pest and disease attack (T3). the conflict between the two porang organizations which has quite an effect on the development and empowerment of porang (T4). The amount of financing or capital needed in porang farming (T5).
Internal factors	SO Strategy	WO Strategy
Strength	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase budget allocation for processing porang derivatives so that the economic value becomes higher (S2, O2) Increasing agricultural land development by utilizing financing through banking (S3, O3) Increasing the provision of appropriate facilities and infrastructure on target to increase porang production (S4, O1) Improve technology-based education and training programs to improve the competence of 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Designing regulations and policies on the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers (W1, O1) Establish partnerships and expand networks to get new markets in porang marketing (W3, O2) Creating technology-based applications that can facilitate access to information regarding the development and farming of porang (W8, O5) Improve research on appropriate technologies that are easily replicated by farmers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> High support and commitment of regional leaders in empowering porang farmers which is stated in the vision and mission of the Balangan Regency Government (S1). Porang is included in the government's priority program for 2021-2026 with a fairly large budget plan (S2). Potential land resources and topographic variations suitable for porang cultivation (S3). Availability of infrastructure and production facilities programmed by the Balangan 		

<p>5. Regency Government (S4). Government support for capacity building of farmers through various training and extension programs on a regular basis (S5).</p> <p>6. Government support related to the development of porang through various innovations to increase production yields and post-harvest processing to increase the economic value of porang (S6).</p> <p>7. The re-activation of BUMD, one of which is the porang commodity (S7).</p> <p>8. The main occupation and income of most residents of Balangan Regency are from the agricultural sector with productive age (S8)</p>	<p>porang farmers (S5, O5)</p> <p>5. Improve counseling and assistance through 2 porang organizations using the innovations that have been carried out by the Balangan Regency Government (S6, O4)</p> <p>6. Improving the development of marketing systems and facilities through the BUMD PT Asabaru Daya Cipta Lestari (S7, O2)</p> <p>7. Improving off farm porang farming programs to meet foreign market demand (S6, O2)</p>	<p>related to post-harvest development and processing (W6, W8, O4) (W6, W8, O4)</p> <p>5. Innovate on the development of porang so as to produce diversified products that can be marketed domestically (W7, O5)</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>Strategy</p>	<p>WT Strategy</p>
<p>1. There is no regulation on the protection and empowerment of farmers (W1).</p> <p>2. The complexity of the land certification process as one of the conditions for granting aid and export (W2).</p> <p>3. There has not been a partnership between the government and the private sector or from other industries (W3).</p> <p>4. Provision of agricultural equipment or borrowing to use agricultural production infrastructure and facilities is not evenly distributed to farmers (W4).</p> <p>5. There is no farmer group that can streamline the process of empowering porang farmers (W5).</p> <p>6. The lack of ability of farmers to replicate the innovations made by the government of Balangan Regency related to the development and post-harvest processing based on technology (W6).</p> <p>7. The lack of infrastructure in Balangan and the distance between the Balangan area from the port and the influence on the marketing of porang</p>	<p>1. Improve assistance programs for farmers so that the quality and selling price of porang is higher (S5, T1)</p> <p>2. Facilitating farmers in completing and accelerating the land certification process as a condition for porang exports (S1, T2)</p> <p>3. Create and expand distribution network so that farmers can enter new markets to avoid complicated export policies from China (S7, T2)</p> <p>4. Provide counseling about planning cropping patterns according to SOPs so that farmers can face climate change, pest and disease attacks (S5, T3)</p> <p>5. Establishment of a porang cooperative to assist porang farming capital facilitated by the Department of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives (S1, T5)</p> <p>6. Formation of the Porang Farmer Group to streamline the empowerment program by the government (S8, T4)</p>	<p>1. Increasing institutional strengthening in a sustainable manner in order to increase the capacity of farmers' human resources (W6, T4)</p>

(W7).

8. There is no special empowerment program for porang farmers that is carried out in a sustainable manner starting from developing human resource capacity to strengthening farmer institutions (W8).
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The SO strategy called the comparative advantage strategy is a strategy that uses strengths to take advantage of opportunities in an organization (Isnaini & Affiani, 2019). This strategy provides the possibility for an organization to be able to develop faster because from an internal perspective it has strength and there are considerable opportunities from outside the organization (Taufik et al., 2022). The Balangan Regency Government's commitment in advancing the agricultural sector, especially porang, is to allocate a fairly large 2022 budget for these commodities. One of the problems faced by farmers is the fluctuating price of porang tubers. This is different from the price of other processed porang which is worth more than 10 times the price of porang tubers. The budget for the porang commodity is not only in the Department of Food Security, Agriculture and Fisheries as the leading sector for the development of this commodity, but also in the Department of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives in and Bappedalitbang. The allocation of a large enough budget for porang commodities, especially to produce processed porang products with high economic value, is carried out in view of the large foreign market opportunities for diversification of processed porang.

The WO strategy is a strategy to take advantage of opportunities to overcome weaknesses (Nuryadi et al., 2022). This strategy is the result of an evaluation of the weaknesses and opportunities of the organization and then produces a strategic investment or divestment issue (Isnaini & Affiani, 2019). The current laws and regulations in the Balangan Regency Government have not regulated the protection and empowerment of farmers in a comprehensive, systemic, and holistic manner. Planned, directed, and sustainable regulations governing protection and empowerment are important to be issued in order to anticipate business risks, problems of difficulty in obtaining production infrastructure and facilities, business certainty, price risk, high cost economic practices, climate change, global economic turmoil, capital,

Sulistiyani (2017) stated that the government as one of the actors who play an important role in empowering the community plays more of a role in determining the signs and rules of the game in general. In line with this statement, Anwar and Hariyanto (2017) explained that the most prominent role of government in empowerment actually lies in the role of decision-making and funding. Given the possibility of disputes occurring in the course of the empowerment process, a mediation role is needed, especially to control the role of the private sector so that it runs fairly and does not harm farmers. In addition to designing regulations on the protection and empowerment of farmers, the government can also integrate policies between the central, provincial, BUMN, and private governments.

The regulation policy of the Balangan Regency Government in managing porang plants must lead to the protection and empowerment of farmers. Based on Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government, it gives the authority to the Regional Government to issue regulatory policies (regulations) regarding the management of agriculture in general and especially the porang plant as a form of protection for porang farmers in order to improve their welfare. With the establishment of porang as a priority program and the dependence of porang

marketing on foreign markets, the Balangan Regency Government should issue policies for porang commodities, namely; a) agricultural business development policies by encouraging investment and business partnerships, b) sustainable production improvement policies, c) policies for empowering porang farming communities and farmer institutions, and d) policies for developing human resources and infrastructure suggestions. This is done to provide a sense of security and improve the farming business of porang farmers, so that problems such as porang prices plummeting can be prevented.

The strategic issue of mobilization indicates that the Balangan Regency Government internally has strength but faces several external threats in empowering porang farmers. This makes the Balangan Regency Government have to use existing strengths to anticipate threats that come from outside the organization. Training programs related to cultivation, post-harvest processing, to the development of porang derivative products provided must be balanced with intense assistance by extension workers to farmers. Assistance is provided so that farmers can continuously apply the results of training and counseling. This mentoring program is expected to produce high porang productivity.

Assistance to farmers is a coaching carried out to develop their potential, in this case the porang commodity (Koodoh, 2014). Mentoring is believed to be a strategy that can determine the success of empowerment programs (Nabila et al., 2022). The duties and responsibilities of the assistants are to coordinate the implementation of extension services, carry out technical guidance on porang cultivation, encourage and develop agribusiness activities, monitor and evaluate farmer groups, assist and oversee farmer assistance, take inventory and identify potential areas, and make reports on the implementation of porang farmer activities. Through these various mentoring processes, it is hoped that it will provide positive changes for porang farmers to be better and more creative.

This strategy is also called a damage control strategy or a strategy to avoid danger. This strategy is done by covering weaknesses while avoiding threats. Organizations have weaknesses and are under threat from outside so they are in a very weak position. The concept of agricultural revitalization rests on three main roles that need to be implemented, namely (1) the role of the government (central/provincial/district/city); making policies, facilitating, regulating, mobilizing/organizing, as well as monitoring and evaluation. (2) The role of farmers/fishermen: produce (producers), increase production, and implement agribusiness practices (entrepreneurs/entrepreneurs). (3) The role of extension workers; mobilize farmers, facilitate farmers, with various information and technology. The three main roles have an active role in strengthening farmer institutions.

Facing the challenges of empowering porang farmers, it is important for the Balangan Regency Government to enter the gaps in the socio-technical empowerment elements contained in each farmer group. Efforts and strategies for empowering farmer institutions have a strong relationship with the socio-technical conditions of the farming community. In other words, the government presents policy implications for farmer empowerment with an approach that is able to facilitate socio-cultural aspirations as well as technical and institutional aspirations of farmers. Strengthening farmers' institutions is a systematic, consistent, and sustainable effort to increase farmers' adaptability and innovation in order to utilize technology optimally. To improve the welfare of farmers, the first step that must be done is empowering farmer institutions,

Strengthening farmer institutions is carried out through several efforts, including encouraging and guiding farmers to be able to work together in the economic field in groups. Growing farmer groups through increasing assistance facilities and access to capital, increasing

efficiency and effectiveness of farmers, as well as increasing human resource capacity through various assistance and training for administrators and members, there are additional solutions.

The results of the swot analysis obtained 19 strategies in empowering porang farmers in Balangan Regency. All of these strategies can be carried out by the Balangan Regency Government, although not at the same time. To facilitate and make empowerment efforts more effective, it is important to develop a main strategy as a priority. The formulation of strategic priorities is based on the results of the analysis of environmental factors sourced from interviews, document searches, and observations. The main strategy in empowering porang farmers is the Weakness-Opportunity (WO) strategy, which is a strategy aimed at improving/fixing weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities.

As previously explained, the biggest problem in porang farming is running and developing a porang farming business. As a new commodity, porang farmers still find it difficult to run their farming business, seeing the huge market opportunity, of course this can be overcome together by implementing an empowerment strategy that leads to farming. So that the priority strategies that must be implemented by the Balangan Regency Government in Empowering Porang Farmers are:

1. Designing regulations and policies on the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers.
2. Establish partnerships and expand networks to get new markets in porang marketing.
3. Creating technology-based applications that can facilitate access to information about the development and farming of porang.
4. Improve research on appropriate technologies that are easily replicated by farmers related to post-harvest development and processing.
5. Innovate on the development of porang so as to produce diversified products that can be marketed domestically.

The priority of the strategy is in line with Sadjad's statement which revealed that so far the farmer empowerment program is still on farm centralism. Empowerment should be directed more so that agribusiness engineering grows so that farmers can become reliable business actors and ultimately become the business center of rural communities that prosper themselves and their environment. Agricultural development must start from the downstream, namely the market through the middle component or the new agro-industry, then the upstream is on the farm business.

CONCLUSION

Strength (strength); support from regional leaders, sufficient financial resources, regional potential, availability of facilities and infrastructure, farmer capacity building programs, conducting various studies and innovations on porang development, so that porang is made as one of the BUMD business fields. Weaknesses (weaknesses); there are no regulations and policies aimed at protecting and empowering farmers, land registration process, no government-private partnership program, lack of ability of farmers to adopt innovation and technology, lack of infrastructure that supports porang farming, and no special program for empowering porang farmers. Opportunity (opportunity); porang is included in the free program, the opportunities and potential of the porang market are quite large, access to capital is opened through banking, there are two national porang organizations in Balangan, and the development of technology and information is currently very fast. Threats (threats); porang prices that tend to fluctuate, export

policies from destination countries, climate change, pest and disease attacks, and the amount of capital in running a porang farming business.

The main strategy that can be done by the Balangan Regency Government in empowering porang farmers is to design regulations and policies on the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers, establish partnerships and expand networks to obtain new markets in porang marketing, create technology-based applications that can facilitate access to information regarding development and farming. porang, increasing research on appropriate technology that is easy for farmers to replicate related to post-harvest development and processing, and innovating on porang development so as to produce diversified products that can be marketed domestically.

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