

Governance Fragmentation Shapes Family Farming Implementation for Sustainable Rural Development in Indonesia and the Philippines

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Research Article

Keywords: sustainability governance, family farming, rural development, policy implementation, governance fragmentation, institutional coordination, Indonesia, Philippines

Posted Date: August 14th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-10191040/v1>

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Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

Family farming is increasingly recognised as a key component of sustainable rural development, food security and inclusive agricultural transformation. Yet national action plans and supportive legislation do not by themselves ensure effective implementation. Because family farming policies span multiple sectors and levels of government, their success depends on institutional capacity to coordinate actors, resources and delivery mechanisms within fragmented governance systems.

This article examines how governance fragmentation shapes the implementation of family farming policies in Indonesia and the Philippines through a two-level comparative documentary analysis. First, it analyses national governance architectures developed under the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF). Second, it examines two IFAD-supported programmes: Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) in Indonesia and Rural Agro-enterprise Partnerships for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID) in the Philippines.

The analysis identifies two distinct forms of governance fragmentation. Indonesia illustrates territorial-regulatory fragmentation, where implementation depends on translating national commitments across decentralised governance systems. The Philippines demonstrates functional-vertical fragmentation, where implementation relies on coordinating multiple institutions, stakeholder groups and delivery mechanisms within an established policy framework. In both cases, implementation remains constrained by coordination challenges, financing limitations and uneven institutional capacity despite strong policy commitments.

The article contributes to sustainability governance and rural development scholarship by showing how different forms of governance fragmentation shape the implementation of cross-sectoral family-farming policies. It argues that effective family-farming support depends not only on policy recognition but also on the institutional capacity to coordinate governance arrangements across sectors and administrative levels. These findings offer practical insights for strengthening implementation capacity, policy coherence and sustainable rural transformation in complex governance systems.

1. Introduction

The implementation of sustainable rural development policy increasingly depends on the ability of governments to coordinate across multiple institutions, policy sectors and administrative levels. While governments have adopted increasingly ambitious commitments to address interconnected challenges such as food security, environmental sustainability, climate resilience and rural livelihoods, translating these commitments into effective implementation remains a persistent challenge. This problem is also reflected in recent research on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which shows that global policy commitments may be translated into national targets, projects and budget categories without necessarily producing coherent implementation systems (Vargas et al., 2025). Cross-sectoral policies frequently involve overlapping mandates, dispersed authority and uneven institutional capacity, creating governance arrangements in which coordination becomes as important as policy design itself. Consequently, implementation failures often reflect not an absence of policy ambition but limitations in the institutional capacity to coordinate actors, resources and delivery mechanisms across fragmented governance systems (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Peters, 2012).

These challenges are particularly evident in rural development. Contemporary rural policies are expected to contribute simultaneously to food security, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, climate resilience, youth employment and territorial development. Achieving these objectives requires sustained coordination among ministries, local governments, development agencies, financial institutions, producer organisations and private-sector actors. As rural policy has become increasingly cross-sectoral, implementation has become correspondingly more dependent on governance arrangements capable of integrating diverse institutions and stakeholders.

Family farming illustrates this broader implementation challenge. Increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of sustainable food systems, rural livelihoods and inclusive agricultural transformation, family farming has moved beyond its traditional association with agricultural production alone (FAO, 2014; Graeb et al., 2016). The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028) has reinforced this shift by encouraging governments to establish legal frameworks, national action plans and institutional mechanisms that strengthen support for family farmers (FAO & IFAD, 2019). Across many countries, family farming is now embedded within wider development strategies that seek to combine agricultural productivity with environmental sustainability, social inclusion and rural resilience.

However, the existence of national action plans and supportive legislation does not by itself guarantee effective implementation. Family farming policies span agriculture, rural development, finance, land governance, extension services, environmental management and social policy, requiring coordination across institutions with different mandates, capacities and priorities. In many contexts, implementation therefore depends less on the formal adoption of policy than on the governance arrangements through which policy

commitments are translated into operational support systems. Understanding how governance fragmentation shapes these implementation processes has become increasingly important for both development policy and rural governance.

Although a growing body of research has examined the contribution of family farming to sustainable development and agrifood transformation, comparatively less attention has been given to the governance arrangements that shape implementation. Existing studies have primarily focused on policy design, legal recognition or programme outcomes, while the institutional mechanisms linking policy commitments to implementation have received less systematic attention. This represents an important gap because implementation challenges frequently emerge from weaknesses in coordination, institutional alignment and governance capacity rather than from deficiencies in policy objectives themselves.

This article addresses this gap through a comparative analysis of Indonesia and the Philippines. Both countries have adopted national frameworks associated with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming and both operate within decentralised governance systems where implementation depends on interactions among national institutions, subnational authorities, development agencies, farmer organisations and market actors. At the same time, the two cases exhibit different patterns of institutional coordination and governance fragmentation, making them particularly suitable for comparative analysis.

The study adopts a two-level comparative documentary design based on publicly available sources. First, it examines the governance architectures established through national family farming frameworks developed under the United Nations Decade of Family Farming. Second, it analyses two IFAD-supported implementation programmes, Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) in Indonesia and Rural Agro-enterprise Partnerships for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID) in the Philippines, to examine how governance arrangements operate within broader rural development systems.

This article addresses the following research question: How do different forms of governance fragmentation shape the implementation of family farming policies, and what do these differences reveal about implementation capacity in rural development governance?

This article contributes to sustainability governance, rural development and policy implementation scholarship in three ways. First, it shifts attention from policy adoption to policy implementation by examining how governance arrangements shape the translation of family-farming commitments into operational support systems. Second, it identifies two distinct forms of governance fragmentation affecting implementation processes: territorial-regulatory fragmentation in Indonesia and functional-vertical fragmentation in the Philippines. This distinction demonstrates that implementation challenges arise through different institutional configurations despite broadly similar policy commitments and development objectives. Third, the article argues that the effectiveness of cross-sectoral rural development policies depends not only on formal policy recognition but also on the institutional capacity to coordinate actors, financing mechanisms, delivery systems and stakeholder participation across multiple governance levels. By linking governance fragmentation to implementation capacity, the study provides a framework for understanding why comparable policy objectives may generate different implementation outcomes across developing-country contexts.

The findings suggest that strengthening family farming requires more than national action plans or supportive legislation. Effective implementation depends on governance systems capable of coordinating institutions, resources and implementation mechanisms across fragmented administrative environments. Although developed through the empirical analysis of Indonesia and the Philippines, the analytical framework proposed here has broader relevance for understanding the implementation of cross-sectoral rural development policies in other developing-country contexts.

The remainder of the article is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on family farming, governance fragmentation and policy implementation. Section 3 outlines the comparative research design and methodology. Sections 4–8 present the empirical findings and comparative discussion. The final section concludes by summarising the principal findings and their implications for development policy and rural governance.

2. Family Farming, Governance and Implementation Capacity

2.1 Family farming and sustainability governance

Family farming is increasingly framed not only as a category of agricultural production, but also as a strategic component of sustainable food systems, rural resilience and territorial development (FAO, 2014; Graeub et al., 2016). Recent debates on agrifood transitions and sustainability governance have further expanded attention towards the role of smallholders and family farmers in climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, food security and socially inclusive rural transformation (Clapp, 2021; né et al., 2020). International

organisations and development agencies increasingly position family farming within broader sustainability transitions that require coordination across environmental, economic and social policy domains.

The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDDF) reflects this shift by encouraging states to strengthen legal frameworks, public policies and institutional coordination mechanisms supporting family farmers (FAO & IFAD, 2019). In this context, family farming has become closely associated with wider debates on sustainability transitions, food-systems governance and rural transformation (Scoones et al., 2015; Candel, 2014). Agricultural policy is expected not only to increase productivity, but also to contribute to environmental resilience, youth inclusion, territorial development and more equitable rural economies.

At the same time, these broader expectations increase governance complexity. Family farming policy cuts across agriculture, rural development, finance, land access, extension services, environmental governance and social policy. As a result, implementation depends on coordination among multiple actors operating across different institutional levels. These actors include ministries, local governments, farmers' organisations, development agencies, financial institutions and market actors. Where coordination is weak, policy commitments may exist formally while implementation remains fragmented or uneven across territories.

These concerns are consistent with broader debates on multilevel governance and institutional coordination, which emphasise the difficulties of implementing sustainability-oriented policy across dispersed governance systems involving multiple actors and administrative scales (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Peters, 2012). More recent governance scholarship similarly highlights the importance of policy coherence, coordination capacity and cross-sector integration in sustainability governance and food-system transformation (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016; Biermann et al., 2022).

Recent international assessments have also highlighted persistent implementation difficulties. A comparative review conducted by the World Rural Forum found that many national action plans associated with the UNDDF continue to face challenges related to coordination, financing, institutional continuity and implementation capacity (World Rural Forum, 2026). Similar concerns appear in contemporary rural-development scholarship, which increasingly emphasises that sustainability-oriented agricultural transitions depend not only on policy adoption, but also on the governance arrangements through which programmes are coordinated, monitored and territorially delivered (Koopmans et al., 2018; né et al., 2020).

2.2 Governance fragmentation and multilevel coordination

The governance challenges associated with family farming can be understood through the literature on multilevel governance and institutional coordination (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Peters, 2012). Rather than operating through a single hierarchical authority, sustainability-oriented rural policy is implemented across overlapping institutions, administrative levels and actor networks. Fragmentation emerges when responsibilities, resources and decision-making processes are dispersed without sufficiently effective coordination mechanisms. More recent governance scholarship similarly highlights the importance of policy coherence, institutional alignment and cross-sector integration in sustainability governance and food-system transformation (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016; Biermann et al., 2022).

In the context of family farming policy, fragmentation may take several forms:

- Vertical fragmentation occurs when national policies are not effectively translated into subnational implementation processes or local delivery systems.
- Horizontal fragmentation emerges when ministries or agencies responsible for related policy areas operate with limited coordination or overlapping mandates.
- Territorial fragmentation refers to uneven implementation capacity across regions, provinces or rural territories.
- Participatory fragmentation appears when farmers' organisations, civil society actors or local stakeholders are formally included in governance arrangements but remain weakly integrated into decision-making or implementation processes.

These forms of fragmentation are often interconnected. A national action plan may signal political commitment, but implementation depends on whether institutions can coordinate financing, technical assistance, monitoring systems and territorial delivery mechanisms across multiple governance levels. In this respect, family farming policy reflects broader debates on implementation capacity and sustainability governance.

Adaptive-governance scholarship similarly emphasises the importance of institutional learning, flexibility and collaboration in managing complex social and ecological systems (Folke et al., 2005). Rural governance systems are rarely static. They involve changing relationships among public institutions, communities, market actors and development organisations. This is particularly important in

decentralised governance environments, where implementation depends not only on national legislation, but also on the capacity of subnational institutions to interpret and operationalise policy commitments.

2.3 Implementation capacity and rural policy delivery

Implementation research has long warned against treating policy adoption as equivalent to policy achievement (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984). Public policies may establish objectives, legal frameworks or institutional responsibilities without necessarily producing coordinated implementation systems. This concern is particularly relevant in rural-development policy, where implementation depends on long institutional chains involving finance, training, extension services, infrastructure, monitoring and local participation.

Recent scholarship increasingly emphasises implementation capacity as a central dimension of sustainability-oriented governance (Koopmans et al., 2018). From this perspective, the effectiveness of rural policy depends not only on programme design, but also on whether institutions are capable of coordinating actors, resources and territorial delivery systems over time. More recent work on sustainability governance similarly highlights the importance of policy coherence, adaptive coordination and institutional learning in managing complex rural transitions (Candel, 2014; Biermann et al., 2022).

Family-farming support programmes often require interaction among government agencies, financial-service providers, farmers' organisations, local authorities and market actors. Weak institutional alignment across these relationships can generate implementation bottlenecks even where policy commitments appear ambitious at national level. In decentralised governance systems, implementation challenges may also vary significantly across territories depending on administrative capacity, institutional coordination and local delivery arrangements.

This article applies these concerns to the comparative analysis of Indonesia and the Philippines. Rather than evaluating policy outcomes directly, it examines how publicly documented governance arrangements and implementation programmes structure coordination across institutional levels. In doing so, the article approaches family-farming implementation as a problem of governance capacity within fragmented multilevel systems rather than simply a question of policy adoption or formal recognition.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design and analytical levels

This study adopts a structured, focused comparison of Indonesia and the Philippines using a two-level comparative documentary design. The first analytical level compares national family-farming governance architectures developed within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF). The second examines rural implementation programmes connected to smallholder inclusion, rural livelihoods, finance, market access and sustainability-oriented rural transformation.

The comparison between Indonesia and the Philippines is analytically useful for several reasons. Both are Southeast Asian countries with substantial rural and smallholder populations. Both participated in the UNFFF process and had adopted National Action Plans for Family Farming by 2021. Both also operate through decentralised governance systems in which implementation depends on interactions among national institutions, subnational authorities, development agencies, farmers' organisations and market actors. At the same time, the cases provide meaningful variation in the configuration of institutional fragmentation and implementation coordination.

Indonesia provides evidence of national legal recognition, territorial policy translation and a publicly evaluated youth-oriented implementation programme. The Philippines offers a national action-plan process explicitly linked to multi-stakeholder policy coordination together with an IFAD-supported agro-enterprise programme directed towards smallholders and rural producer organisations.

At the national level, the article examines:

- legal and policy frameworks associated with family farming;
- institutional coordination arrangements linked to the UNFFF process;
- governance structures connecting national and subnational implementation;
- documented implementation challenges and coordination constraints.

At the programme level, the comparison focuses on:

- coordination mechanisms among implementation actors;
- relationships among public institutions, farmer organisations and financial actors;
- territorial delivery arrangements;
- monitoring, supervision and adaptation processes;
- reported implementation bottlenecks and institutional constraints.

The programmes are not treated as identical interventions, nor is RAPID assumed to implement the Philippine National Action Plan for Family Farming directly. Instead, YESS and RAPID are used as nested implementation cases that permit analysis of how sustainability-oriented rural support systems are coordinated, monitored and adapted within different governance environments.

3.2 Source selection and documentary corpus

The empirical corpus is limited to documentary sources that can be independently retrieved and verified online. Sources are included only when available through official institutional websites, stable public repositories or open-access academic publications. This approach strengthens transparency and reproducibility while avoiding reliance on inaccessible internal documentation.

The documentary corpus comprises:

- official legislation and regulations;
- UNDPF and national-action-plan documentation;
- official IFAD project pages and downloadable programme reports;
- supervision, monitoring, evaluation and audit materials;
- open-access peer-reviewed academic literature;
- comparative policy reports produced by recognised international rural-development organisations.

Where primary evaluation or supervision reports are available, secondary syntheses are not used to substantiate programme-performance claims. Reported achievements and implementation results are explicitly attributed to the issuing institution and are not treated as independently replicated causal-impact findings.

3.3 Analytical framework and coding categories

Documents were coded against four analytical dimensions derived from the literature on multilevel governance, policy implementation and adaptive governance (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Peters, 2012; Folke et al., 2005; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984).

- Institutional coordination: relationships among ministries, agencies, local authorities and programme-delivery actors.
- Territorial implementation capacity: evidence of uneven regional delivery, decentralised implementation or subnational policy translation.
- Participation and stakeholder integration: inclusion of farmers' organisations, civil society actors, producer groups and private-sector institutions within implementation systems.
- Monitoring, adaptation and learning mechanisms: evidence of reporting systems, supervision processes, institutional learning or programme-adjustment mechanisms.

The analysis focuses on how implementation systems are organised and coordinated rather than on direct measurement of long-term development outcomes. The coding framework therefore examines governance architecture and implementation capacity rather than attempting to establish causal impact relationships.

3.4 Limitations and claim boundaries

This study analyses documented implementation architecture and institutional capacity; it does not seek to produce a nationally representative impact evaluation. For YESS, accessible IFAD reports permit analysis of reported progress, programme coordination and implementation weaknesses, but findings are presented explicitly as IFAD-reported results. For RAPID, the publicly available January 2024 Supervision Report permits analysis of programme architecture, implementation progress and documented coordination constraints.

Later listed reports would strengthen longitudinal depth and comparative continuity, but the claims advanced in this article are limited to evidence directly analysed from retrieved documentation. This disciplined limitation strengthens the paper's reproducibility and avoids

conflating programme reporting with independently established sustainability outcomes.

4. Family Farming Policy Frameworks in Indonesia and the Philippines

The UNDIFF Global Action Plan provides the international policy architecture shared by the two cases. It positions National Action Plans as instruments through which countries can establish enabling policy environments, strengthen farmer organisations, address youth and gender equality, improve rural services and promote sustainable food systems (FAO & IFAD, 2019). The framework also reflects an intrinsically multilevel logic in which family-farming governance is expected to connect national policy, subnational implementation, farmer organisations, civil society and development partners.

Comparative evidence from the UNDIFF process indicates that Indonesia and the Philippines were among the earlier Asian participants in the development of family-farming policy frameworks. The UNDIFF synthesis report records that Indonesia adopted a Family Farming National Action Plan in 2019 and that the Philippines adopted its plan in 2021 (World Rural Forum, 2021). The same report identifies the Philippines as a case in which a Joint Coordination Committee facilitated collaboration among government agencies, the National Committee of Family Farming, FAO, IFAD and other stakeholders during the drafting process and associated multi-stakeholder consultations. It also highlights the Philippine process as an effort to articulate the National Action Plan with existing national policies and development priorities.

The action-plan evidence demonstrates broad policy convergence and shared institutional commitments, but it does not by itself demonstrate implementation capacity. For this reason, the present study combines analysis of national policy frameworks with nested implementation evidence. Indonesia's YESS and the Philippines' RAPID were selected because both are officially documented IFAD-supported programmes launched in 2018. Both programmes provide an implementation-oriented perspective on rural transformation, economic inclusion and support for smallholder or rural-enterprise actors.

Their role in this study is not to serve as exact programme equivalents. Rather, they provide a comparative lens through which to examine whether implementation systems connect policy objectives, implementing institutions, finance mechanisms, service delivery and monitoring processes across different governance environments.

The World Rural Forum's later comparative study complements this framework by identifying recurrent family-farming policy bottlenecks, including weak inter-agency and multilevel coordination, inadequate financing, limited extension capacity and monitoring weaknesses (World Rural Forum, 2026). The central question addressed here is therefore not whether international family-farming objectives have formally been adopted, but how institutional arrangements seek to overcome, or reproduce, fragmented implementation across different rural governance systems.

5. Indonesia: YESS and Territorial-Regulatory Fragmentation

5.1 Legal recognition and vertical translation

Indonesia's family-farming governance is embedded within a broader framework of farmer protection, rural development, food security and decentralised administration. Law No. 19/2013 on the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers provides an important legal foundation for farmer welfare, capacity development, financing mechanisms, risk protection, agricultural infrastructure and public participation (Republic of Indonesia, 2013). The UNDIFF synthesis report further confirms that Indonesia adopted its Family Farming National Action Plan in 2019 (World Rural Forum, 2021).

The central governance issue in Indonesia is therefore not the absence of policy recognition, but how national commitments are translated into implementation across different territories and administrative levels. In a decentralised governance setting, implementation depends on provincial and district capacities, subnational regulation, public budgeting processes, farmer organisations and coordination among multiple administrative institutions.

This dynamic produces what this article describes as territorial-regulatory fragmentation. National policy commitments may be formally established, yet their translation into delivery systems, institutional coordination and implementation practices can vary significantly across regions. In this context, sustainability-oriented family-farming governance depends not only on national policy adoption, but also on the capacity of subnational institutions to operationalise and coordinate implementation over time.

5.2 YESS as a publicly documented nested implementation case

The Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services Programme (YESS) provides a particularly useful implementation case for examining rural governance and coordination mechanisms. According to IFAD's official project documentation, YESS was approved in December 2018 and implemented within Indonesia's rural-development sector (IFAD, 2023). The programme seeks to create opportunities for rural youth through entrepreneurship and employment while contributing to broader processes of sustainable rural transformation. Unlike many policy initiatives whose evaluation material remains difficult to access, YESS has an extensive documentary trail that includes a publicly available Mid-Term Review, supervision reports and listed audit materials.

The downloadable Mid-Term Review provides detailed evidence of the programme's multilevel governance structure. YESS was implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture through a central National Programme Management Unit, four Provincial Programme Implementation Units and District Implementation Teams operating across fifteen districts in East Java, West Java, South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi (IFAD, 2023). This governance structure is directly relevant to questions of vertical coordination because programme delivery depended on interactions among national management bodies, provincial structures, district teams and local service providers.

YESS is also relevant to horizontal coordination across policy sectors and delivery systems. The Mid-Term Review identifies four interlinked programme components: rural youth transition to work, rural youth entrepreneurship, investing for rural youth and an enabling environment for rural youth. These components connect training, business development, market access and financial products for young smallholder farmers, rural entrepreneurs and related enterprises (IFAD, 2023). Rather than functioning as a standalone training or grant initiative, the programme attempted to integrate multiple support mechanisms within a broader rural-development framework.

The Mid-Term Review also illustrates why institutional ambition must be assessed alongside operational practice. The review assessed training delivery, apprenticeships, competitive grants, service-provider quality, targeting mechanisms, beneficiary selection, staffing arrangements and the adequacy of the monitoring and evaluation system, including the management information system. The review mission combined field visits across all four provinces with engagement involving Bappenas, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, provincial and district implementation units, beneficiaries and business-development service providers (IFAD, 2023). This evidence makes YESS analytically useful not only as a rural-youth programme, but also as a documented multilevel governance arrangement operating within Indonesia's decentralised rural-development environment.

5.3 Reported progress, remaining coordination risks and scaling

The February 2026 IFAD supervision report enables the article to move beyond programme design while maintaining clear attribution of reported findings. According to IFAD, by November 2025 YESS had exceeded several key outreach and results indicators, reaching 204,252 households and 299,569 individuals, including 253,793 young women and men. The report states that five outcome indicators and eight output indicators had been met or exceeded, including indicators related to employment, enterprise profitability and access to rural financial services (IFAD, 2026).

The report also documents 60,951 supported rural enterprises reporting increased profit, 97,575 households using rural financial services and 23 functioning multi-stakeholder platforms supported through the programme. These findings are analytically important because they illustrate how multiple coordination mechanisms – including skills provision, financial inclusion, business-development services and stakeholder platforms – were integrated within a single implementation framework. At the same time, these figures remain institutionally reported programme results and should not be interpreted as an independent national causal evaluation.

YESS is particularly relevant to the governance argument advanced here because the same documentation also identifies processes of scaling and institutionalisation. IFAD reports locally driven follow-up initiatives in South Kalimantan and the development of an application in East Java designed to support beneficiary business records and access to local finance. The programme's exit strategy is presented as embedding successful approaches within government systems and public budgets while strengthening relationships with financial institutions and private-sector actors (IFAD, 2026).

The Indonesian case therefore illustrates both the challenges associated with territorial fragmentation and a documented attempt to institutionalise an integrated rural-development model across subnational governance systems. In this respect, YESS demonstrates how sustainability-oriented family-farming support increasingly depends not only on programme delivery, but also on the longer-term capacity of institutions to coordinate finance, services, monitoring and local implementation arrangements over time.

5.4 Implications for the comparative framework

The Indonesian case therefore provides more than a descriptive account of family-farming policy recognition. At national level, it demonstrates the existence of formal legal and policy commitments together with the challenge of translating these commitments

across decentralised territorial governance systems. At programme level, YESS illustrates how multilevel delivery structures, financial inclusion, youth entrepreneurship, monitoring systems and scaling mechanisms can be integrated within a broader implementation framework.

The comparison with the Philippines therefore focuses not on whether YESS demonstrates superior outcomes, but on whether comparable governance arrangements and coordination mechanisms can be identified across different institutional contexts. The central comparative question is how publicly documented implementation systems connect policy objectives, finance mechanisms, service delivery, stakeholder coordination and monitoring processes within fragmented rural governance environments.

In this respect, the Indonesian case highlights the importance of territorial coordination and institutional scaling in sustainability-oriented family-farming governance. It also demonstrates how implementation capacity depends not only on policy recognition, but on the ability of institutions to sustain coordination across multiple administrative levels and delivery actors over time.

6. Philippines: RAPID and Functional-Vertical Fragmentation

6.1 National family-farming coordination architecture

The Philippines offers a distinct but comparable governance architecture for family-farming policy. The UNDF synthesis report confirms that the Philippines adopted its National Action Plan in 2021. It identifies the Philippine process as one in which a Joint Coordination Committee facilitated collaboration among government institutions, the National Committee of Family Farming, FAO, IFAD and other stakeholders during the preparation of the plan and associated multi-stakeholder consultations (World Rural Forum, 2021). The same source presents the Philippines as an example of linking a family-farming action plan with existing national priorities and policy instruments.

This governance framework is relevant to questions of fragmentation because it was developed within an already layered agricultural and rural-policy environment. Public legislation, including the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010, provides sustainability-oriented agricultural instruments and assigns institutional roles to national agencies, local government units and farmer participation mechanisms (Republic of the Philippines, 2010). The challenge is therefore not simply the adoption of a family-farming agenda, but the capacity to connect action planning, existing legislation, local delivery responsibilities and beneficiary organisations across multiple institutional levels.

The Philippine configuration can be understood as a form of functional-vertical fragmentation. National coordination processes seek to align multiple policy instruments, institutions and stakeholder groups, while implementation depends on administrative capacity and service delivery across different levels of government. In this context, family-farming governance relies less on territorial policy translation than on the ability of institutions to coordinate overlapping functions, delivery systems and organisational relationships within a complex multilevel policy environment.

6.2 RAPID as the nested programme comparator

For the programme-level comparison, the Rural Agro-enterprise Partnerships for Inclusive Development and Growth Project (RAPID) represents the most appropriate publicly documented Philippine comparator identified for this study. IFAD's official project documentation records that RAPID was approved in April 2018 and operates during the 2018–2027 period. The programme aims to improve agricultural value chains by linking agro-enterprises with rural producers, strengthening access to productive capital, knowledge and technology, and improving agro-enterprises' access to agricultural produce and investment finance (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2024).

RAPID is not treated here as a direct implementing instrument of the Philippine National Action Plan for Family Farming unless such a relationship is established through a public primary source. Instead, the programme is analysed as a nested implementation case operating within the broader Philippine rural-development and sustainability-governance environment. This distinction is analytically important because it separates national family-farming policy architecture from an operational programme addressing closely related challenges involving rural livelihoods, market integration, financial access and smallholder support systems.

The relevance of RAPID to the comparative framework lies in its focus on coordination across value chains, financial mechanisms, producer organisations and agro-enterprise development. As in the Indonesian case, the programme provides an implementation-oriented perspective on how institutions attempt to connect policy objectives with delivery systems, economic inclusion and rural transformation within a fragmented multilevel governance environment.

6.3 Publicly reported implementation evidence from RAPID

The official RAPID Partial Supervision Report dated January 2024 provides direct and publicly accessible implementation evidence for the Philippine nested case (IFAD, 2024). RAPID is implemented through a partnership between IFAD and the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The report identifies a multilevel institutional arrangement involving a National Project Coordinating Office together with regional and provincial coordinating units. It also highlights the participation of farmer organisations, micro, small and medium enterprises, local-government actors, private-sector anchor firms and financial-service providers across selected regions in the Visayas and Mindanao, including BARMM, covering twenty-one target provinces.

The report is particularly valuable because it follows up actions agreed during a joint IFAD–National Economic and Development Authority Mid-Term Review conducted from April to May 2023. These actions concerned project duration, budget allocation, detailed investment planning, matching grants and access to credit and equity. The January 2024 supervision mission therefore provides evidence not only of programme delivery, but also of institutional learning and corrective implementation processes.

RAPID demonstrates substantial progress in partnership formation and market-linkage mechanisms. The report records 302 commercial partnership agreements against an original target of 100, involving 266 farmer organisations and 82 anchor firms. It also reports that 303 farmer organisations participated in the preparation of Detailed Investment Plans representing 38,293 households, while 678 SMEs received business-development services. A project management information system was developed as part of the programme's knowledge-management platform, and twenty-one networks of Negosyo Centers supported RAPID activities and assisted 7,945 beneficiaries, 47 per cent of whom were women (IFAD, 2024).

At the same time, the report documents continuing coordination and implementation-capacity constraints. Overall implementation progress reached 44.90 per cent against a cumulative target of 53.92 per cent by the end of 2023, while IFAD loan disbursement stood at 29.85 per cent despite 69 per cent of project time having elapsed. Financial-service delivery remained particularly constrained: only 85 farmer organisations, against a target of 350, had received financial services through the matching-grant support scheme, largely because beneficiaries faced difficulties meeting counterpart-contribution requirements. The report also records continuing challenges related to youth targets, road slippage and the need for programme extension and restructuring (IFAD, 2024).

These findings make RAPID analytically valuable not simply as a rural-enterprise programme, but as a documented governance arrangement operating across multiple institutions, delivery systems and financing mechanisms. As in the Indonesian case, the Philippine evidence demonstrates that sustainability-oriented rural transformation depends not only on policy commitments, but also on the capacity of institutions to coordinate implementation, finance and service delivery across fragmented multilevel governance environments.

6.4 Implications for the comparative framework

The available implementation evidence makes RAPID analytically comparable to YESS without requiring the two programmes to be identical interventions. Both are IFAD-supported initiatives that connect rural target groups with economic support mechanisms, institutional delivery structures, financial services and monitoring systems operating across multiple governance levels. RAPID is particularly useful for analysing the Philippine configuration of functional-vertical fragmentation because the programme generated extensive partnership arrangements and coordination mechanisms while continuing to encounter bottlenecks related to financing, implementation pace and inclusion targets.

The publicly listed RAPID Interim Mid-Term Review Report of July 2023 and Supervision Report of February 2026 would strengthen the longitudinal continuity of the Philippine case analysis. Nevertheless, the January 2024 supervision evidence already provides sufficient documentary support to retain RAPID as a credible nested implementation case within the present comparative framework.

Taken together, the Philippine evidence demonstrates how sustainability-oriented rural governance depends not only on the creation of coordinating structures, but also on the capacity of institutions to sustain implementation, financial delivery and stakeholder integration across complex multilevel policy environments.

7. Comparative Discussion

The comparative design adopted here avoids two analytical simplifications: treating the Philippine National Action Plan for Family Farming (PAP4FF) as equivalent to an operational programme, and portraying Indonesia and the Philippines as a simple decentralised-

versus-centralised contrast. Instead, the analysis distinguishes between national family-farming governance architecture and nested implementation programmes, examining how coordination is organised across policy and delivery levels in each case.

7.1 National family-farming governance architecture

At national level, both Indonesia and the Philippines demonstrate convergence around the family-farming agenda promoted through the United Nations Decade of Family Farming. Both countries adopted National Action Plans and linked family farming to broader objectives concerning rural development, sustainability and economic inclusion.

The comparison nevertheless reveals different governance configurations. In Indonesia, the principal challenge concerns territorial translation across decentralised administrative systems. National commitments depend on implementation through provincial and district institutions operating with varied regulatory and delivery capacities. The Indonesian case therefore illustrates a form of territorial-regulatory fragmentation in which policy recognition exists nationally, but implementation conditions differ across territories and governance levels.

In the Philippines, the main governance challenge relates more strongly to coordination across overlapping policy instruments, institutions and stakeholder arrangements. The Philippine National Action Plan was developed through a Joint Coordination Committee process connecting government institutions, farmer organisations and international partners. At the same time, implementation responsibilities remain distributed across multiple agencies, local-government structures and delivery actors. The Philippine case therefore illustrates a form of functional-vertical fragmentation centred on coordination across institutional functions and service-delivery systems.

The comparison demonstrates that fragmentation within family-farming governance does not take a single institutional form. Different governance environments generate different coordination pressures and implementation challenges.

7.2 Nested implementation programmes

The nested implementation programmes reinforce these differences while also revealing several common operational dynamics. Both YESS and RAPID were designed as integrated rural-development initiatives connecting target populations with training, finance, market support, institutional coordination and monitoring systems.

YESS illustrates a governance arrangement strongly oriented towards territorial implementation. The programme linked national management structures with provincial implementation units, district teams and local service providers operating across four provinces. Its implementation architecture connected rural youth entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, business support and monitoring within a multilevel delivery framework. Public supervision and review documentation further records attempts to scale programme practices through local government systems and financial-delivery arrangements.

RAPID demonstrates a more functionally integrated coordination model centred on value-chain partnerships and agro-enterprise support. The programme connected farmer organisations, SMEs, anchor firms, local-government actors and financial-service providers through partnership mechanisms operating across twenty-one provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao. Public supervision evidence records substantial progress in partnership formation and business-development support while also documenting continuing constraints related to disbursement, financial access, implementation pace and inclusion targets.

The comparison shows that both programmes rely on coordination across multiple institutions, delivery actors and financing mechanisms. At the same time, the operational pressures differ. YESS places stronger emphasis on territorial coordination and local institutionalisation, whereas RAPID places stronger emphasis on coordinating partnerships, value-chain relationships and financial-service arrangements.

7.3 Comparative findings

Several broader findings emerge from the comparison. First, both countries demonstrate significant convergence around sustainability-oriented family-farming governance within the broader UNFFF framework. Family farming is increasingly connected to wider objectives concerning rural transformation, economic inclusion and sustainable food systems.

Second, the evidence demonstrates that implementation challenges persist even where formal policy commitments and coordination mechanisms are already established. Both YESS and RAPID document continuing bottlenecks involving financing, monitoring, delivery systems and stakeholder coordination despite substantial institutional support structures.

Third, the comparison highlights the importance of multilevel coordination within rural governance systems. In both countries, implementation depends on interactions among national institutions, local authorities, farmer organisations, financial-service providers, development agencies and private-sector actors. Sustainability-oriented family-farming governance therefore depends not only on policy adoption, but also on whether these relationships can be coordinated effectively across different governance levels and operational environments.

Finally, the comparison indicates that fragmentation should not be understood simply as the presence of multiple actors or institutions. The more significant issue concerns how policy instruments, delivery systems, financial mechanisms and stakeholder arrangements are connected in practice. The Indonesian and Philippine cases demonstrate different configurations of fragmentation, but both show that coordinated implementation remains central to the effectiveness of sustainability-oriented rural policy.

8. Discussion: Fragmentation, Implementation Architecture and Sustainability Governance

8.1 From policy recognition to implementation architecture

The comparison developed in this article suggests that family-farming governance should be analysed not only through policy recognition, but also through implementation architecture. National Action Plans, legal frameworks and international policy commitments are important because they establish institutional visibility, strategic direction and political legitimacy for family farming within broader sustainability agendas. Yet these instruments do not by themselves ensure that rural support systems operate coherently across territories, institutions and delivery mechanisms.

The findings indicate that implementation architecture matters because family-farming support depends on relationships among multiple actors, policy instruments and governance levels. Finance systems, extension services, monitoring arrangements, market-access mechanisms, local delivery institutions and stakeholder participation must interact in ways that allow support to reach rural actors consistently over time. The central issue is therefore not simply whether policy exists, but whether institutions can sustain coordination across complex operational environments.

This distinction is particularly relevant within sustainability-oriented rural governance. Family farming is increasingly linked to objectives extending beyond agricultural production alone, including food security, youth inclusion, climate resilience, local livelihoods and sustainable territorial development. As these expectations expand, governance systems become more institutionally complex, and implementation increasingly depends on coordination across sectors that have historically operated separately.

8.2 Fragmentation as a governance condition

The analysis also supports a more precise interpretation of fragmentation within sustainability governance. Fragmentation should not be understood merely as the existence of multiple institutions, administrative levels or stakeholder groups. Multilevel and multi-actor governance arrangements are often necessary in rural-development contexts characterised by territorial diversity, decentralised administration and varied local conditions.

Fragmentation becomes problematic when institutional relationships among rules, responsibilities, finance mechanisms, delivery systems and monitoring processes remain weakly connected. In this sense, fragmentation is better understood as a condition of insufficient coordination rather than institutional multiplicity alone. Governance systems may contain many actors and still function effectively where bridging mechanisms support information exchange, implementation alignment and institutional learning.

The comparison between Indonesia and the Philippines demonstrates that fragmentation can emerge through different configurations. In some contexts, the principal challenge concerns territorial translation across decentralised governance systems. In others, the challenge lies more strongly in coordinating overlapping institutional functions, delivery mechanisms and stakeholder relationships. These configurations differ operationally, but both reveal the importance of sustained coordination for rural-policy implementation.

The findings therefore suggest that dispersed governance should not automatically be interpreted as institutional weakness. Multilevel systems may generate adaptive capacity and local responsiveness where coordination mechanisms connect national objectives with territorial implementation and stakeholder participation. The more significant issue concerns whether governance systems possess the institutional capacity to maintain these linkages over time.

8.3 Contribution to sustainability governance and family-farming research

This article contributes to sustainability-governance scholarship by reframing family-farming implementation as a question of coordination capacity within fragmented multilevel systems. Existing research has frequently focused on legal recognition, policy adoption or broad rural-development objectives. The comparison developed here instead directs attention towards the institutional arrangements through which support is organised, delivered, monitored and adapted in practice.

The analysis also contributes to debates on implementation and multilevel governance by showing that sustainability-oriented rural policy increasingly depends on coordination across public institutions, local authorities, farmer organisations, development agencies, financial actors and market systems. In this context, implementation should not be treated as a secondary technical stage following policy design. It is itself a central dimension of governance effectiveness.

For Southeast Asia, the findings highlight the importance of examining how internationally promoted rural-development agendas interact with diverse governance environments. The UNDRP framework encouraged convergence around family-farming policy objectives, yet the comparison shows that implementation pressures remain shaped by distinct administrative structures, institutional histories and coordination arrangements. Sustainability-oriented family-farming governance therefore requires more than policy alignment with global frameworks. It also requires institutions capable of adapting delivery systems, finance mechanisms and stakeholder coordination to varied territorial and organisational contexts.

Finally, from a governance perspective, the article demonstrates the analytical value of carefully bounded public documentary evidence for comparative rural-governance research. Official supervision, evaluation and programme documentation cannot substitute for field-based or participatory research, nor should institutionally reported outcomes be treated as independent impact evaluations. Such documentation can nevertheless provide important insight into how governance systems organise implementation, identify bottlenecks and attempt institutional adaptation over time. Used cautiously, these sources make it possible to examine implementation architecture comparatively across contexts where equivalent field evidence remains uneven or inaccessible.

8.4 Policy Implications

The findings suggest that strengthening family farming requires policy attention not only to programme design but also to the governance arrangements through which implementation is coordinated. National action plans and supportive legislation establish important strategic commitments, yet their effectiveness depends on the institutional capacity to translate these commitments into coherent implementation across multiple sectors and levels of government.

First, policymakers should strengthen institutional coordination mechanisms. Family farming policies frequently involve ministries responsible for agriculture, rural development, finance, environment and local government, together with farmer organisations, development agencies and private-sector actors. Clear governance arrangements, well-defined institutional responsibilities and regular coordination platforms can reduce duplication, minimise overlapping mandates and improve policy coherence.

Second, implementation strategies should give greater attention to vertical coordination between national and subnational levels. The Indonesian case illustrates how decentralised governance can generate uneven implementation where local institutional capacity and territorial conditions vary significantly. National policies therefore need to be supported by implementation frameworks that provide technical assistance, monitoring systems and mechanisms for adapting policy to diverse local contexts while maintaining strategic coherence.

Third, implementation architecture should become a central consideration in rural development policy. The comparative analysis demonstrates that effective implementation depends not only on policy objectives but also on how financing mechanisms, service-delivery systems, stakeholder participation and monitoring arrangements are connected in practice. Investments in institutional learning, adaptive management and inter-agency coordination may therefore produce greater implementation gains than the introduction of additional policy instruments alone.

Finally, the findings suggest that family farming should be approached as a cross-sectoral development policy issue rather than solely as an agricultural policy concern. Supporting family farmers increasingly requires coordinated interventions that link agricultural production with rural livelihoods, youth employment, financial inclusion, environmental sustainability and market development. Policies capable of integrating these objectives across fragmented governance systems are more likely to generate durable implementation outcomes and contribute to broader rural transformation.

While these implications are derived from Indonesia and the Philippines, they are relevant to other developing countries seeking to implement integrated rural development policies. As governments adopt increasingly ambitious commitments related to food security,

sustainability and climate resilience, strengthening governance coordination and implementation capacity will be essential for translating policy commitments into effective development outcomes.

9. Conclusion

This article has examined how governance fragmentation shapes the implementation of family farming policies in Indonesia and the Philippines. Although both countries have adopted national frameworks aligned with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming and recognise family farming as a strategic component of sustainable rural development, their experiences demonstrate that policy adoption alone does not ensure effective implementation. Rather, implementation depends on the capacity of governance systems to coordinate institutions, actors, resources and delivery mechanisms across multiple administrative levels.

The comparative analysis identified two distinct forms of governance fragmentation. Indonesia illustrates territorial-regulatory fragmentation, where implementation depends on translating national policy commitments across decentralised and uneven territorial governance systems. The Philippines demonstrates functional-vertical fragmentation, where implementation relies on coordinating multiple institutions, stakeholder groups, financing mechanisms and delivery arrangements within an existing policy framework. These findings suggest that governance fragmentation is not a uniform condition but can emerge through different institutional configurations that generate distinct implementation challenges.

The article contributes to sustainability governance and policy implementation scholarship by shifting attention from policy adoption to implementation capacity. While previous research has emphasised the importance of legal recognition and national policy frameworks for family farming, this study shows that implementation outcomes depend equally on the institutional arrangements through which policies are operationalised. Effective implementation requires sustained coordination among public institutions, development agencies, farmer organisations, financial actors and local governance structures, together with mechanisms that support learning, adaptation and policy coherence over time.

The findings also have broader implications for rural development policy. As governments increasingly pursue integrated objectives related to food security, climate resilience, environmental sustainability and inclusive rural development, implementation challenges are likely to become more complex rather than less. Strengthening governance capacity should therefore be recognised as a central component of development policy. Investments in coordination mechanisms, institutional learning and implementation architecture are likely to be as important as the adoption of new policy instruments or strategic frameworks.

Although this study focuses on Indonesia and the Philippines, the analytical framework developed here has wider relevance for understanding the implementation of cross-sectoral rural development policies in fragmented governance systems. Future research could extend this analysis through comparative studies in other regions, subnational investigations of implementation dynamics, and field-based research incorporating the perspectives of policymakers, practitioners and family farmers. Such research would further strengthen understanding of how governance arrangements influence the translation of policy commitments into effective development outcomes.

Declarations

Funding Declaration

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics, Consent to Participate, and Consent to Publish Declarations

Not applicable.

Clinical Trial Registration

Not applicable. This study is not a clinical trial.

Data Availability Statement

No new datasets were generated or analysed during this study. This article is based exclusively on publicly available documentary sources. The principal sources analysed are available from the following public websites:

- FAO: <https://www.fao.org>
- IFAD: <https://www.ifad.org>
- World Rural Forum: <https://www.ruralforum.org>
- Republic of Indonesia legislation database: <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id>
- LawPhil (Republic of the Philippines): <https://lawphil.net>

All documents analysed are cited in the reference list.

Author Contribution Statement

Daniel Ruiz de Garibay conceptualised and designed the study, developed the theoretical framework, conducted the documentary analysis, interpreted the findings, and prepared the original manuscript draft. Muhammad Danial bin Azman contributed to the literature review, analysis and interpretation of findings, and manuscript review and editing. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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