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Research Article

Revamping Partnership Agreements to Empower Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the Processed Marine Fish Food Industry

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ABSTRACT: Due to its abundant resources, Indonesia holds significant potential for developing its processed food industry using marine fish as a raw material. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are central to this sector. However, these enterprises need more capital, knowledge, technology, and marketing, distribution, and licensing. Therefore, collaboration with larger business entities through partnership systems is crucial. Currently, the legal relationships within these partnerships are based on agreements, but specific regulations often lead to imbalanced relationships between the parties involved. This research emphasizes the need to reconstruct regulations on partnership agreements to foster MSME development in the processed food industry. The government should conduct comprehensive socialization in collaboration with various stakeholders, including business actors, community leaders, and academics, to educate MSMEs and large business actors about the importance of business partnerships and their legal aspects. The legislative body should also formulate specific regulations to provide balanced legal protection for all parties involved.

KEYWORDS: MSMEs, Processed Food, Business Partnership, Agreement, Regulation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The fisheries, aquaculture, and salt aquaculture industries play a crucial role in Indonesia's economy, providing a primary sorce of income for many of its

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people.[1] As the world's largest archipelagic nation, Indonesia boasts a coastline that spans 99,093 kilometers and oceans that cover 80% of its territory, giving it extraordinary marine fishery resources. These vast aquatic ecosystems are essential not only for food security but also for the livelihoods of millions of Indonesians involved in these industries.[2] However, a paradox exists wherein the majority of marine fish catches are exported in their raw form without adequate processing, resulting in the loss of economic value that could benefit domestic businesses, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Data from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries indicate that, although the number of Fish Processing Units increased from 61,064 in 2018 to 62,866 in 2019, approximately 76% of these are still categorized as micro-enterprises with limited production capacity and minimal added value (MMAF, 2020). MSMEs are crucial drivers of economic development, not only in Indonesia but globally. In developed nations such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan, MSMEs serve as the backbone of their respective national economies.

According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2022), Indonesia's 64.2 million MSMEs contribute 61.07% to the national GDP and absorb 97% of the total workforce. However, within the marine fish processing sector, MSMEs face significant challenges that hamper their growth potential and sustainability. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2021) reveals that only 8.3% of MSMEs in this sector have successfully transitioned from micro to small or medium scale over the past five years, indicating severe limitations in their development trajectory. Business partnerships, defined as cooperation between business entities based on principles of mutual need, trust, reinforcement, and benefit (Law No. 20 of 2008), should theoretically provide a strategic solution to overcome MSME limitations. However, data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2022) reveals that only 12.7% of total MSMEs in the fishery processing sector are engaged in formal partnership arrangements with large

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1 Ani Purwanti et al, "Gender Inequality Against Women Fishers in Indonesia" (2022) 12:3 Indonesia Law Review at 127.

2 Ari Satia Nugraha et al, "Indonesian Marine and Its Medicinal Contribution" (2023) 13:1 Natural Products and Bioprospecting at 38; Sukmawani Bela Pertiwi, "Repositioning Indonesia in the Changing Maritime Landscape of the Indo-Pacific Region" (2020) 22:1 Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional at 10-11.

enterprises. This indicates a significant gap between the established regulatory framework for partnerships and its implementation in practice.

This gap becomes more evident when examining the imbalance of power within existing partnership structures. The Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU) monitors nine partnership models: nucleus-plasma, subcontracting, franchising, general commerce, distribution and agency, profit-sharing, operational collaboration, joint venture, and outsourcing (KPPU, 2020). However, research conducted by the KPPU (2021) found that 73.6% of the 178 partnership agreements analyzed contained clauses that disadvantaged MSMEs, such as disproportionate risk distribution, restrictive exclusivity obligations, and burdensome payment terms. This reflects that despite existing regulatory frameworks, power imbalances persist in implementation, creating unfavorable conditions for MSMEs.

A study by the Central Bureau of Statistics (2021) revealed that 67.8% of marine fish processing MSMEs face difficulties accessing quality raw materials, 82.3% experience limitations in processing technology, and 78.5% struggle to market their products to broader markets. These conditions are exacerbated by the fact that 93.2% of these MSMEs lack strong bargaining positions in the fishery value chain, often forcing them to accept high raw material prices and uncompetitive product selling prices. Sambouw et al. found that the marketing of catch remains a major issue faced by fishermen, as evidenced by the low prices for fish obtained by them. The largest share of profits goes to traders and capital owners, while fishermen receive only a small profit but bear significant risks, including the danger of accidents at sea and long-term risks such as marine environmental degradation. Additionally, the lack of capital is a recurring problem for traditional fishermen. The difficulty in obtaining capital weakens the fishermen's bargaining position within the marketing system, resulting in them receiving inadequate profits and, often, suffering losses.[3]

The significance of researching partnership agreement reconstruction in the marine fish processing industry becomes increasingly relevant considering this

[3] Kevin R Sambouw et al, "Analisis Margin Saluran Pemasaran Hasil Tangkapan Nelayan Soma Pajeko di Desa Tumbak Kecamatan Pusomaen Kabupaten Minahasa Tenggara" (2024) 12:1 Akulturasi at 173.

sector's contribution to the national economy. Central Bureau of Statistics data (2022) shows that the fisheries sector contributes 3.7% to the national GDP with a value of IDR 584.9 trillion; however, the contribution from the fish processing subsector reaches only 0.8% of the total GDP. This indicates untapped potential value in the fisheries value chain, particularly in processing activities that could be optimized through effective partnerships. Food security and food sovereignty have become central policy concerns globally, including in Indonesia. Law Number 18 of 2012 regarding Food defines food as any substance derived from biological sources including agricultural products, plantations, forestry, fisheries, animal husbandry, and water, processed or unprocessed, intended for human consumption. Marine fish, as specified in Article 1, point 19 of this law, represents an important component of processed food. However, the regulation of partnership agreements specifically addressing the marine fish processing industry remains fragmented across multiple regulatory instruments, creating confusion and enforcement challenges.

The Indonesian government's policy framework for MSMEs is anchored in Law No. 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises and its implementing regulation, Government Regulation No. 17 of 2013. Additionally, the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet has designated MSME empowerment as one of its five main priorities, reflected in the National Medium-Term Development Plan under the "Entrepreneurship and MSME Strengthening and Cooperatives" program. However, the research conducted by Azizah and Isbandono shows that the main barriers faced include the lack of access to technical training, limited capital and production support, as well as the absence of formal regulations or institutional structures that systematically govern the development of SMEs. Existing government programs have not been integrated with the real needs on the ground due to communication limitations and the lack of continuous mentoring.[4]

The discrepancy between regulatory frameworks and implementation is particularly evident in partnership agreements. While Article 36 of Law No. 20

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[4] Soraya Nur Azizah & Prasetyo Isbandono, "Implementasi Pengembangan UMKM Perikanan Di Pedesaan (Studi Kasus Di Desa Tejoasri, Kabupaten Lamongan)" (2025) 3:2 Jurnal Inovasi Administrasi Negara Terapan (Inovant) at 196.

of 2008 mandates that partnership establishment be closely and systematically supervised by an entity created to manage economic competition, in practice, the Business Competition Supervisory Commission faces significant limitations in monitoring compliance across the vast MSME landscape. A survey conducted by the Indonesian MSME Association (2022) found that 82% of MSMEs in the fishery processing sector were unaware of their legal rights within partnership agreements, and 91% had never received legal assistance in reviewing their partnership contracts. The processed food industry derived from marine fisheries represents a sector with enormous potential for Indonesia's economic development. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries has outlined a phased development approach: Phase I (2015-2019) focused on fish processing development and industrial waste management; Phase II (2020-2024) concentrates on omega-3 oil manufacturing and fisheries waste-derived food product development; and Phase III (2025-2035) will integrate fish processing with the functional food and supplement industry. However, this strategic roadmap lacks specific mechanisms to ensure MSME participation and benefit-sharing across the value chain.

The integration of MSMEs into these development phases presents significant challenges that require comprehensive policy interventions. Recent data from the Ministry of Industry (2023) indicates that only 7.4% of MSMEs in the marine fish processing sector have successfully integrated into national or global value chains, compared to 23.5% in the agricultural processing sector. This disparity highlights structural barriers specific to the fisheries sector that current partnership models have failed to address. The research conducted by Rahman et al. indicates that fish farming contributes between 15.35% and 86.63% to the household income of the respondent farmers, with an average contribution of 50.99%. This highlights the significant role of fish farming in the household income of the practicing farmers. The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis show that all sources of income together explain 98.3% of the variation in household income, with fish farming alone contributing the highest (44%) to the household income of the respondent farmers.[5]

[5] Syed Mohammad Aminur Rahman, Ariful Haque & Syed Md Ashrafur Rahman, "Impact of Fish Farming on Household Income: A Case Study from Mymensingh District" (2011) 7:2 JSS at 127.

This underscores the potential socioeconomic impact of strengthening MSMEs in this sector through improved partnership structures. The global market for processed fish products continues to expand, with the Food and Agriculture Organization (2023) projecting a 15% growth in demand for value-added fish products between 2023-2028. Indonesia, despite its vast marine resources, captures only 4.2% of this global market, significantly below its potential. A major contributing factor to this underperformance is the fragmentation of the production base, with MSMEs unable to meet international quality standards, volume requirements, and certification demands that could be addressed through strategic partnerships with larger enterprises.

This research addresses a critical gap in the literature regarding the legal structure of partnership agreements in Indonesia's marine fish processing industry. While extensive research exists on technical aspects of fish processing and general MSME development, limited attention has been given to the legal framework governing partnerships between MSMEs and larger enterprises in this specific sector. This gap is particularly significant considering the unique characteristics of the fishery value chain, including seasonality, perishability of raw materials, and complex cold chain requirements. Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze existing partnership agreements in the marine fish processing industry to identify structural inefficiencies that disadvantage MSMEs. It seeks to develop a reconstructed partnership agreement framework that balances the interests of all stakeholders while providing enhanced legal protection for smaller enterprises. The outcomes of this research will contribute to both theoretical understanding of partnership law in resource-based industries and practical applications for policy development in Indonesia's fishery sector.

By addressing the regulatory-implementation gap in partnership agreements, this research contributes to broader national objectives of food security, economic diversification, and inclusive growth. It recognizes that effective partnership structures in the marine fish processing industry can simultaneously advance multiple development goals, including poverty reduction in coastal communities, value addition in exports, and sustainable utilization of marine resources. In summary, this study examines the critical intersection of legal frameworks, economic development, and food security within Indonesia's marine fish processing industry. By focusing specifically on partnership agreements as mechanisms for MSME empowerment, it addresses a significant gap in current research and policy implementation that has limited the growth potential of this vital sector.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to comprehensively address the research questions through a triangular framework of legal pluralism. The normative method analyzes written legal frameworks governing business partnership agreements in the processed food industry, with a specific focus on MSME growth. This approach examines applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines to identify deficiencies and opportunities for enhancing the legal framework surrounding commercial partnerships. Complementing this, the sociological method (living law perspective) investigates the real-world implementation of business partnership agreements in the processed marine fish food sector. Field research utilizes snowball sampling to conduct in-depth interviews with small-scale fishers, capturing diverse experiences and perspectives. This approach reveals practical challenges and advantages emerging from these partnerships, with particular attention to empowering fisherfolk communities. The philosophical method examines fundamental values, principles, and conventions in the business sector, particularly for MSMEs. This involves a comprehensive literature review focusing on theoretical frameworks and scholarly discussions regarding business ethics, partnership dynamics, and community empowerment. Purposive sampling guides interviews with key informants possessing extensive expertise in the industry. Data analysis employs qualitative analytical techniques to identify patterns, themes, and insights from interviews, document studies, and field observations. The process involves systematic coding, organization into themes, and interpretation within the research framework context. To ensure data accuracy and reliability, the study employs triangulation of sources and methods, validating findings by comparing data from legal documents, empirical interviews, and philosophical literature. This process identifies and rectifies any discrepancies, enhancing the reliability of conclusions and providing a comprehensive understanding of legal, social, and philosophical aspects of business partnerships in the processed marine fish food industry.

III. MARINE PRODUCTS AND GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Marine goods play a crucial role in ensuring global food security by providing nutritious, high-quality sustenance from natural resources.[6] Unlike agricultural feed ingredients, marine products require minimal human intervention for production, making them a sustainable food source when managed properly.[7] However, Indonesia's marine resources face significant challenges that directly impact Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the processed marine fish food industry.[8] Indonesia's rich marine biodiversity is under severe threat from overfishing practices.[9] The absence of effective regulation enforcement has led to substantial depletion of fish stocks in Indonesian waters, with annual catch rates declining by approximately 20% in key fishing areas over the past decade.[10] This depletion directly affects the raw material supply chain for MSMEs engaged in processed marine fish production, thus increasing operational costs and threatening business sustainability.[11]

Despite Indonesia's position as one of the world's largest seafood producers, MSMEs in the processed marine fish sector face significant barriers to global market access. These barriers include stringent international food safety standards, traceability requirements, and sustainability certifications that many

6 Ana Augusto, Marco F L Lemos & Susana F J Silva, "Exploring Marine-Based Food Production: The Challenges for a Sustainable and Fast Biotechnology-Based Development" (2024) 14:18 Applied Sciences at 13.

7 Tim McClanahan, Edward H Allison & Joshua E Cinner, "Managing fisheries for human and food security" (2015) 16:1 Fish and Fisheries at 79.

8 Zainul Wasik & Tanti Handriana, "Strategy for Sustainability of the Fishery Industry During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia" (2023) 9:1 Cogent Social Sciences at 9.

9 Daniella Ferrol-Schulte et al, "Coastal livelihood vulnerability to marine resource degradation: A review of the Indonesian national coastal and marine policy framework" (2015) 52 Marine Policy at 163.

10 Wijopriono Wijopriono et al, "Implementasi Penutupan Area Dan Musim Penangkapan Untuk Pengelolaan Perikanan Udang Di Laut Arafura" (2019) 11:1 Jurnal Kebijakan Perikanan Indonesia at 16.

11 Nikmah Mentari & Uni Tsulasi Putri, "Risk Mitigation of Disease Pandemic in the Indonesian Banking Industry: In Response to COVID-19" (2020) 7:3 Lentera Hukum at 259.

small-scale producers cannot afford to implement. Consequently, Indonesian processed marine fish products often remain confined to local markets, preventing MSMEs from capitalizing on higher-value international markets.[12]

The lack of infrastructure for cold storage and preservation technology further exacerbates these challenges, leading to post-harvest losses estimated at 30-40% of total marine catch. This inefficiency undermines both food security efforts and economic opportunities for coastal communities dependent on fisheries.[13]

Climate change presents an existential threat to Indonesia's marine resources and, by extension, to MSMEs in the processed marine fish industry. Rising sea temperatures have altered migration patterns of commercially important fish species, while ocean acidification threatens shellfish populations crucial to many small-scale processors. Extreme weather events increasingly disrupt fishing activities and damage coastal infrastructure essential for processing operations. For MSMEs already operating on thin margins, these climate-induced changes represent significant business risks. Many lack the capital resources and technical knowledge to adapt their operations to changing ecological conditions, placing them at a competitive disadvantage compared to larger corporations with greater adaptive capacity.[14]

Indonesia's Food Law (Law Number 18 of 2012) establishes important objectives for food implementation, including enhancing food self-sufficiency, ensuring food safety and quality, improving access to food for vulnerable communities, and increasing the welfare of food industry stakeholders including fishermen and processors.[15] However, implementation gaps remain, particularly regarding partnership frameworks between MSMEs and larger entities. Current partnership agreements often disadvantage MSMEs through unfavorable terms related to price structures, quality requirements, and payment schedules. Revamping these

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[12] Faiza Abdur Rab, *Tourism, Health Promoting Food Domain and Technology Applications: Individual's Genes Reservoir, Environmental Change and Food in Natural Health Context BT - Handbook of Technology Application in Tourism in Asia* (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022) at 1159.

[13] Lucy M Long, "Culinary Tourism" in *in Jeffrey M Pilcher, The Oxford Handbook of Food History* (Oxford University Press, 2012) at 389.

[14] Kamrussamad et al, "Indonesian Food Policy: The Programs for Strengthening Food Self-sufficiency in Reformation Era" (2018) 4:76 RJOAS at 33-34.

[15] Michelle Limenta & Sianti Chandra, "Indonesian Food Security Policy" (2017) 7:2 Indonesia Law Review at 249-250.

agreements to establish more equitable relationships is essential for empowering smaller enterprises in the marine food processing sector.[16]

Addressing the interconnected challenges of overfishing, limited global market access, and climate change impacts requires comprehensive policy interventions and partnership reforms. By developing more equitable partnership agreements between MSMEs and larger corporations, providing technical assistance for meeting international standards, and implementing adaptive strategies for climate resilience, Indonesia can strengthen its processed marine fish sector while enhancing both food security and economic development in coastal communities.

IV. UNDERSTANDING EMPOWERMENT: CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE

A. Optional Scale Perspective

MSMEs in the marine fish processing industry possess unique characteristics that distinguish them from large enterprises.[17] Based on their operational scale, fish processing MSMEs have limited production capacity but demonstrate high flexibility in responding to changing market demands.[18] Unlike the general definitions presented in the MSMEs Law, which primarily focus on asset value and annual turnover, MSMEs in the fisheries sector require a contextualized understanding that accounts for their specialized operational nature. The marine fish processing industry features a distinct hierarchy of operational scales. Micro-enterprises typically operate as household production units with limited processing capacity, often employing fewer than five individuals and utilizing

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[16] Rinitami Njatrijani, "Pengawasan Keamanan Pangan" (2021) 4:1 Law, Development and Justice Review at 16.

[17] Mwanahimisi A Salehe et al, "Factors Influencing Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Fisheries Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Tanzania" (2024) 10 Social Sciences & Humanities Open at 15; Tera Lesmana & Yusuf Iskandar, *The Influence of Entrepreneurial Characteristics, Operational Strategies, and Marketing Strategies on the Performance of MSMEs in the Preserved Fish Processing Industry in Sukabumi Regency* (Atlantis Press, 2022) at 215.

[18] Fransisco J Vergara-Solana & Daniel Peñalosa Martinell, "Governance, Partnerships, and Cooperation" in *in An Introduction to Sustainable Aquaculture* (Routledge, 2024) at 265.

traditional processing methods passed down through generations.[19] Small enterprises represent an intermediate operational scale, employing between 5-19 workers and incorporating semi-modern processing techniques while maintaining strong connections to local fishing communities. Medium enterprises operate with 20-99 employees and integrate more sophisticated processing technologies while still maintaining regional focus and community connections that large corporations often lack. While Article 1 of the MSMEs Law provides standardized definitions for micro, small, and medium enterprises based on net worth and annual sales, these definitions fail to capture the nuanced operational realities of fish processing enterprises. In practice, many marine fish processing MSMEs operate within complex supply chains where their production capacity is directly tied to seasonal fishing cycles, regional fishing practices, and traditional knowledge systems that exist outside conventional business metrics.[20] This necessitates partnership agreements that recognize and accommodate these operational particularities rather than imposing standard business frameworks designed for different industries.

B. Community-centered Operations

A defining characteristic of MSMEs in the marine fish processing industry is their community-centered operational model.[21] Unlike large-scale industrial processors that operate in isolation from fishing communities, MSMEs typically maintain intimate connections with local fishermen and coastal communities, forming what is described as "socio-economic ecosystems." These enterprises are often established by community members themselves, creating natural synergies between fishing activities and processing operations. The community-centered nature of these operations manifests in several key ways. First, MSMEs typically employ local community members, particularly women who have historically been responsible for post-harvest processing in many fishing

[19] Ayu Kumala Sari et al, "An Empirical Study of Sustainability Strategies in Women-Led Fish Processing Enterprises on the Depok Coast" (2024) 13:3 Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora at 679.

[20] Lawrence W C Lai & Frank T Lorne, "State-Assisted Entrepreneurial Ventures: The Case of Aquacultural Development and the Seafood Industry in Hong Kong" (2020) 12:4 International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing at 439.

[21] Batara Surya et al, "Economic Growth, Increasing Productivity of SMEs, and Open Innovation" (2021) 7:1 Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity at 20.

communities.[22] Second, they frequently operate on flexible schedules that align with local fishing patterns rather than rigid industrial timetables. Third, they often incorporate traditional processing knowledge that has cultural significance beyond mere economic value.[23] This community embeddedness creates both opportunities and challenges for empowerment initiatives. On one hand, it positions MSMEs as natural vehicles for community development and poverty alleviation.[24] Observes, "When marine processing MSMEs thrive, benefits diffuse throughout the entire community rather than concentrating in the hands of external shareholders."[25] On the other hand, community-centered operations may struggle to access formalized business networks, financing options, and export markets that prioritize standardized production practices over community-responsive flexibility.[26] Effective partnership agreements must therefore balance formalization requirements with the need to preserve and leverage these community connections rather than disrupting them.

C. Sustainability Dimensions

Sustainability in the context of marine fish processing MSMEs encompasses environmental, economic, and social dimensions that must be addressed holistically in empowerment strategies.[27] Environmental sustainability concerns are particularly acute given that these enterprises operate within increasingly threatened marine ecosystems. Unlike large industrial processors that can shift sourcing regions when local stocks decline, community-based MSMEs are inherently tied to the health of their local marine environments.[28] Traditional

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22 Asad Nawaz et al, "Valorization of fisheries by-products: Challenges and technical concerns to food industry" (2020) 99 Trends in Food Science & Technology at 38.

23 Maliha Afreen & İlknur Ucak, "Fish Processing Wastes Used as Feed Ingredient for Animal Feed and Aquaculture Feed" (2020) 6:2 Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences at 55.

24 Pedro Ideia et al, "Fish Processing Industry Residues: A Review of Valuable Products Extraction and Characterization Methods" (2020) 11:7 Waste and Biomass Valorization at 15.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Israel Ruiz-Salmón et al, "Life cycle assessment of fish and seafood processed products – A review of methodologies and new challenges" (2021) 761 Science of The Total Environment at 21.

27 Dustin Tarinque Loreño, "Strategies for Sustainable Development Leveraging MSMEs in the Philippine Blue and Green Economy: Innovation for Sustainability and Financial Empowerment for a Sustainable Transition" *in Securing Sustainable Futures Through Blue and Green Economies* (IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2025) at 299.

28 V Venugopal, "Valorization of Seafood Processing Discards: Bioconversion and Bio-Refinery Approaches" (2021) 5 Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems at 11.

processing methods employed by many MSMEs often have lower environmental footprints compared to industrial operations, utilizing less energy, producing less waste, and generating fewer greenhouse gas emissions per unit of production.[29] However, these operations may lack access to innovative technologies that could further reduce environmental impacts while improving product quality and shelf life. Partnership agreements that prioritize technological transfer while respecting traditional knowledge systems are therefore essential for enhancing environmental sustainability without undermining community autonomy.[30] Economic sustainability for marine fish processing MSMEs hinges on their ability to navigate increasingly competitive global markets while maintaining fair pricing structures and profit margins. These enterprises face particular challenges in achieving economies of scale, meeting international quality standards, and accessing high-value markets.[31] Their economic vulnerability is exacerbated by climate change impacts on fish stocks, increasing costs of inputs, and price volatility. Partnership agreements that address value chain inefficiencies, provide market access guarantees, and establish fair pricing mechanisms can significantly enhance economic sustainability.[32] Social sustainability encompasses issues of social justice, equity, and cultural preservation within fishing communities. Partnership agreements must therefore recognize and support these social functions rather than treating MSMEs merely as economic actors divorced from their social contexts.

D. Impact on Fishermen as a Marginalized Group

Fishermen represent one of the most economically vulnerable occupational groups globally, characterized by high poverty rates, exposure to physical risks,

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[29] Jianjun Zhou et al, "The Application of Supercritical Fluids Technology to Recover Healthy Valuable Compounds from Marine and Agricultural Food Processing By-Products: A Review" (2021) 9:2 Processes at 357.

[30] Ben Orlove et al, "Placing diverse knowledge systems at the core of transformative climate research" (2023) 52:9 Ambio at 19; Lorenzo Compagnucci & Francesca Spigarelli, "Improving Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Services: A Roadmap for Knowledge Transfer Offices" (2024) 9:4 Journal of Innovation & Knowledge at 22.

[31] Jham Lal et al, "Diverse uses of valuable seafood processing industry waste for sustainability: a review" (2024) 31:53 Environmental Science and Pollution Research International at 21.

[32] Ume Roobab et al, "High-pressure processing of fish and shellfish products: Safety, quality, and research prospects" (2022) 21:4 Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety at 18.

and economic instability.[33] Marine fish processing MSMEs serve as critical economic bridges for this marginalized group, providing reliable markets for their catches and helping to stabilize incomes that would otherwise be subject to extreme volatility.[34] The relationship between fishermen and processing MSMEs transcends simple buyer-seller transactions, often incorporating elements of risk-sharing, knowledge exchange, and mutual support. In many communities, processing MSMEs purchase catches during periods of oversupply when prices would otherwise collapse, effectively providing price stabilization that benefits fishermen directly. Additionally, MSMEs frequently provide informal credit to fishermen during lean seasons, creating economic security networks that formal financial institutions have failed to establish.

The marginalization of fishermen is further addressed through the knowledge validation that occurs within MSME operations.[35] Traditional fishing knowledge regarding species identification, handling practices, and quality assessment—often devalued in industrial contexts—receives recognition and economic reward within community-centered MSMEs.[36] This validation represents a form of cultural empowerment that complements economic benefits while reinforcing community cohesion and traditional knowledge systems.contexts.

E. Revamping Partnership Agreements for Effective Empowerment

Given these contextual realities, partnership agreements aimed at empowering MSMEs in the marine fish processing industry must move beyond generic empowerment frameworks that emphasize only planning, implementation, and oversight. Instead, they require specialized approaches that recognize the unique operational scales, community-centered nature, sustainability challenges, and

33 John Josephraj Selvaraj et al, "The Economic Vulnerability of Fishing Households to Climate Change in the South Pacific Region of Colombia" (2022) 8:5 Heliyon at 23.

34 Michael G Kontominas et al, "Recent Developments in Seafood Packaging Technologies" (2021) 10:5 Foods at 940.

35 Ulrich Kleih et al, "Financial services for small and medium-scale aquaculture and fisheries producers" (2013) 37 Marine Policy (Social and cultural impacts of marine fisheries) at 106.

36 Wandicleia Lopes de Sousa, Diego Maia Zacardi & Thiago Almeida Vieira, "Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Fishermen: People Contributing towards Environmental Preservation" (2022) 14:9 Sustainability at 23.

connections to marginalized fishing communities that characterize these enterprises.

Effective partnership agreements should incorporate five essential elements that directly address the distinctive characteristics of marine fish processing MSMEs:

1. First, contextual flexibility must replace one-size-fits-all approaches. Partnership agreements should contain adaptive clauses that recognize the seasonal nature of fishing activities, accommodate traditional processing timeframes, and acknowledge the community responsibilities that may occasionally take precedence over business activities. This flexibility extends to performance metrics, which should be developed collaboratively with community members rather than imposed from external frameworks.
2. Second, knowledge integration should be explicitly valued within partnership structures. Agreements should recognize and compensate for traditional ecological knowledge, processing techniques, and quality assessment methods that community members contribute. This integration helps preserve cultural heritage while also improving product quality and sustainability through the combination of traditional wisdom with modern scientific approaches.
3. Third, equitable risk distribution must be formalized within agreements. Conventional partnership models often place disproportionate risk on smaller partners while allowing larger entities to capture most benefits during successful periods. Reformed agreements should include mechanisms such as price floors, guaranteed purchase volumes, and shared investment responsibilities that distribute risks and rewards more equitably.
4. Fourth, capacity building with autonomy represents a critical balance that partnership agreements must strike. While capacity development is essential for MSME growth, it must occur without creating dependency or undermining community autonomy. Agreements should therefore specify knowledge transfer protocols, technology sharing arrangements, and training programs that enhance MSME capabilities while preserving their decision-making authority.
5. Finally, transparent value chain governance must be established through clearly articulated rights, responsibilities, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

The power imbalances between MSMEs and larger market actors often result in exploitative relationships disguised as partnerships. Transparency requirements, third-party verification, and accessible grievance procedures can help ensure that partnership agreements function as intended.

By incorporating these elements into partnership agreements, stakeholders can move beyond rhetorical empowerment toward structural reforms that genuinely enhance the capacity, sustainability, and autonomy of MSMEs in the marine fish processing industry while simultaneously improving outcomes for marginalized fishing communities.

Understanding MSMEs in the marine fish processing industry requires moving beyond generic definitions based solely on financial metrics to appreciate their distinctive characteristics across multiple dimensions. Their operational scales reflect not just economic parameters but community integration and traditional knowledge systems. Their community-centered operations create unique value networks that extend beyond conventional business relationships. Their sustainability challenges and opportunities span environmental, economic, and social domains in ways that demand holistic approaches. Perhaps most importantly, their profound impact on marginalized fishing communities positions them as critical vehicles for addressing persistent inequities in coastal regions. Partnership agreements designed to empower these enterprises must therefore be equally sophisticated and contextually appropriate. By incorporating contextual flexibility, knowledge integration, equitable risk distribution, capacity building with autonomy, and transparent value chain governance, such agreements can catalyze genuine empowerment rather than superficial inclusion. The revitalization of marine fish processing MSMEs through thoughtfully designed partnerships offers a pathway not only to economic development but also to the preservation of cultural heritage, sustainable marine resource management, and the economic emancipation of marginalized fishing communities.

V. THE ESSENCE OF PARTNERSHIP IN BUSINESS

As defined by Law Number 20 of 2008 and Government Regulation No. 17 of 2013, a partnership is a collaboration between MSMEs and Large Enterprises in business linkages.[37] This collaboration is based on mutual necessity, trust, strengthening, and benefit, either directly or indirectly. Partnerships are typically defined by a sense of reciprocal collaboration, whether individually or collectively.[38] Partnership involves co-operation, i.e. "to work or act together" and in a public policy can be defined as co-operation between people or organizations in the public or private sector for mutual benefit.[39] The "win-win" potential of partnership draws extensively on efficiency arguments–maintaining that organizations working in partnership can access broader networks, combine complementary resources and expertise, and share good practices to accomplish specific tasks.[40]

The three primary components of a partnership include: 1) the collaboration between small businesses and medium or large firms; 2) the requirement for growth and empowerment by medium and large entrepreneurs; and 3) the need for mutual advantages and strengthening. A partnership's main objective is to enhance small firms' capabilities in areas such as management, product development, marketing, and technical issues, enabling them to achieve self-reliance and long-term viability without relying on others. The primary objectives of implementing partnerships are to augment the revenue of small businesses and communities, provide additional benefits for participants, foster equality and

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[37] Imam Koeswahyono, Diah Pawestri Maharani & Airin Liemanto, "Legal breakthrough of the Indonesian job creation law for ease, protection, and empowerment of MSMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic" (2022) 8:1 Cogent Social Sciences at 18.

[38] Leda Stott & David F Murphy, "An Inclusive Approach to Partnerships for the SDGs: Using a Relationship Lens to Explore the Potential for Transformational Collaboration" (2020) 12:19 Sustainability at 7905; Kara Mangold et al, "Principles of Successful Partnerships" (2014) 38:4 Nursing Administration Quarterly at 340.

[39] George Ofosu et al, "Friends or foes: Can large-scale mining companies partner with small-scale miners? Yes, they can?" (2025) 119 Journal of Rural Studies at 22.

[40] Philomena Raftery, Mazeda Hossain & Jennifer Palmer, "A conceptual framework for analysing partnership and synergy in a global health alliance: case of the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team" (2021) 37:3 Health Policy Plan at 322.

community empowerment, stimulate economic growth at multiple levels, broaden employment prospects, and fortify national economic resilience.

Partnership agreements entail a collaborative effort when two or more parties pool their resources, assume shared risks, and reap mutual benefits using their skills and expertise. In order to cultivate and sustain such partnerships, several fundamental concepts are essential. First and foremost, it is essential for all parties involved to share a single objective: secureing the survival and expansion of the business. This can be achieved by continually delivering high-quality goods or services at fair pricing, ensuring marketability and allowing for the distribution of profits among all stakeholders. Furthermore, it is crucial to guarantee mutual benefit, where both parties contribute something advantageous to the other, thereby preventing situations where one side gains an advantage at the cost of the other. The reciprocal advantage of this arrangement serves as a compelling incentive, promoting equality and just treatment.[41]

Furthermore, mutual trust is crucial. All parties must approach with honesty and good intentions and the ability to fulfil agreed-upon requirements, such as making payments and deliveries on time and upholding quality standards. Establishing enduring partnerships is highly dependent on this trust. In addition, it is crucial to maintain transparency within appropriate boundaries, ensuring that all parties have access to essential information, such as pricing estimates, while also protecting confidentiality. Transparency enhances reciprocal trust and vice versa. Additionally, partnerships need to be focused on establishing enduring relationships characterised by mutual trust and advantages, which foster collaboration for lengthy durations, typically beyond 20 years. Establishing and maintaining long-term collaborations enables consistent and ongoing product quality enhancement. Finally, it is crucial to enhance the quality and cost aspects continuously. Both sides must consistently endeavour to improve the quality of goods or services and cost-effectiveness, ensuring they maintain competitiveness in the global market. Companies that can maintain a high level of competitiveness

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[41] Dahye Kim, Vincenzina Caputo & Valerie Kilders, "Consumer preferences and demand for conventional seafood and seafood alternatives: Do ingredient information and processing stage matter?" (2023) 108 Food Quality and Preference at 16.

are more likely to survive and thrive, resulting in continuous expansion and mutual benefits.

VI. INDONESIA: THE WORLD'S LARGEST ARCHIPELAGO AND ITS STRATEGIC MARITIME POTENTIAL

Indonesia's identity as the world's largest archipelago confers unprecedented maritime potential that remains significantly underutilized.[42] With approximately 5.8 million square kilometers of ocean territory strategically positioned between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Indonesia possesses natural advantages that could transform its economic trajectory if properly leveraged.[43] The maritime sector's criticality extends beyond economic considerations into political, defense, and security domains, creating a nexus of interests that demands cohesive policy approaches. While Indonesia ranked as the second-largest global producer of capture and aquaculture fisheries in 2014 (second only to China), exploitation inefficiencies persist, perpetuating poverty among fishing communities and contributing to resource degradation. The sustainable potential of Indonesia's marine fish resources is estimated at 6.5 million tons annually across nine primary water zones, with the maximum allowable catch established at 5.12 million tons annually to maintain fish population viability.[44] This substantial resource base constitutes merely one component of Indonesia's broader maritime economy, which encompasses eleven distinct sectors with a combined economic potential valued at approximately USD 1.33 trillion annually—equivalent to 1.3 times Indonesia's current GDP and seven times its 2017 national budget. Despite this extraordinary potential, current utilization levels hover at approximately 25% of total capacity, revealing significant opportunities for enhancement.[45]

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[42] Premesha Saha, "Indonesia's Potential as a Maritime Power" (2016) 12:2 Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India at 28.

[43] Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "Indonesia and the ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific" (2020) 96:1 International Affairs at 111.

[44] Theofania Tsironi, Dimitra Houhoula & Petros Taoukis, "Hurdle Technology for Fish Preservation" (2020) 5:2 Aquaculture and Fisheries at 65.

[45] Indonesian Institute of Advanced International Studies (INADIS), "The Indonesian Archipelago" (2021), online: *INADIS* <https://www.inadis.org/the-indonesian-archipelago>.

Between 2010 and 2016, leading aquaculture commodities experienced remarkable growth trajectories. Catfish production increased by an average of 30.73% annually, while seaweed cultivation grew by 27.72%, and climbing perch by 26.43%. Other significant performers included Nile tilapia (19.03%), gourami (17.70%), shrimp (14.03%), common carp (14.44%), milkfish (10.45%), and grouper (9.61%). These growth patterns indicate promising investment opportunities, particularly in processing industries such as canned sardines, where rising production volumes and values signal attractive prospects for domestic and international buyers seeking quality products (Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, 2023). The fisheries sector in Indonesia divides into capture fisheries and aquaculture, with a combined sustainable production capacity of approximately 67 million tons annually. Marine capture fisheries contribute a Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) of 9.3 million tons per year, while freshwater capture fisheries from lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and swamps add another 0.9 million tons, bringing the total capture MSY to 10.2 million tons annually. The remaining 56.8 million tons represent aquaculture capacity spread across mariculture, brackish water culture, and freshwater culture operations. This potential, if properly harnessed, could address multiple national priorities including food security, employment generation, and economic diversification.[46]

Indonesia's maritime economy extends well beyond capture fisheries to encompass eleven interlocking sectors: capture fisheries, aquaculture, fish processing industries, marine biotechnology, mining and energy, marine tourism, mangrove forest management, marine transportation, small island resource management, maritime industry services, and non-conventional marine resource.[47] Together, these sectors could potentially employ approximately 45 million individuals—representing 35% of Indonesia's 126 million working-age citizens between 15 and 64 years. This employment potential remains largely untapped, particularly in value-added processing segments that could transform raw materials into higher-value products. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries has actively promoted increased fish consumption through initiatives

[46] Michael A Rimmer et al, "Seaweed Aquaculture in Indonesia Contributes to Social and Economic Aspects of Livelihoods and Community Wellbeing" (2021) 13:19 Sustainability at 19.

[47] Hastuti Hastuti et al, "Indonesia's Marine Economic Potential As A Maritime Country:" (2023) 4:4 International Journal of Science, Technology & Management at 813.

like the "Eat Fish Movement," resulting in per capita consumption growth from 38.14 kg in 2014 to 43.94 kg in 2016. Eat Fish Movement is a movement to motivate people to increase their fish consumption patterns.[48] This consumption trend creates expanding domestic markets for fish products, complementing export opportunities. However, the extensive range of unique fish species available to Indonesian processors requires streamlined handling and processing techniques that are generally uncomplicated and do not necessitate substantial investment or advanced machinery. Developing and implementing efficient fish handling and processing technology could significantly enhance the economic value captured by local communities through further processing activities. MSMEs play a crucial role in the processed food industry, utilizing marine fish as raw materials. However, current empowerment initiatives have often fallen short, frequently failing to address the specific requirements of local communities due to predominantly top-down approaches that insufficiently consider contextual factors. This disconnect has limited the effectiveness of well-intentioned programs and restricted the sector's growth potential. Food business actors, including MSMEs, bear substantial responsibilities given the intimate connections between food products and human health, safety, politics, economy, and security considerations. The growing abundance of processed food options in society creates both opportunities and challenges related to raw material sourcing, production processes, packaging, transportation, distribution, marketing, and consumer utilization patterns.

The sustainable development of Indonesia's marine sector requires a fundamental reconfiguration of partnership agreements to properly empower MSMEs. Eight strategic initiatives emerge as particular priorities:

First, adopting a community-centric approach necessitates policies and programs prioritizing actual community needs and conditions, improving the efficiency and sustainability of empowerment projects through extensive community engagement and collaborative planning.[49] This approach stands in contrast to the

[48] Septiana Dwiyanti, Laily Fitriani Mulyani & Yuliana Asri, "The Love to Eat Fish Campaign (Gemarikan) in an effort to improve nutrition in Pancor Village, East Lombok Regency" (2023) 3:2 Indonesian Journal of Fisheries Community Empowerment (Jurnal Pengabdian Perikanan Indonesia) at 243.

[49] *Ibid.*

top-down frameworks that have dominated previous efforts, often resulting in misaligned objectives and implementation inefficiencies.

Second, capability development through continuous training and capacity-building initiatives for MSMEs remains critical, particularly regarding environmentally responsible fishing techniques, advanced processing methods, business administration, and marketing strategies. These targeted interventions would enable MSMEs to improve operational efficiency, enhance product quality, and expand market presence beyond traditional local boundaries.

Third, implementation of appropriate technology and innovation can transform productivity without requiring prohibitive capital investments. By introducing modern yet cost-effective technologies to improve fish handling and processing, MSMEs can extend product shelf life and enhance market appeal both domestically and internationally. This strategy heavily relies on developments in food processing, packaging, and storage technologies that remain accessible to small-scale operators. I

Fourth, infrastructure development with critical investments needed in cold storage facilities, transportation networks, and processing units to effectively limit post-harvest losses, maintain product integrity, and optimize distribution networks. Such foundational infrastructure enables participation in higher-value market segments that demand consistent quality and reliable supply chains.

Fifth, providing accessible financial services such as microloans, grants, and subsidies facilitates MSME growth and advancement, while financial literacy initiatives help business owners effectively manage resources and plan expansions. The financing gap remains particularly acute for marine-sector MSMEs that lack traditional collateral or documented business histories.

Sixth, enhancing market access and promotion capabilities would significantly benefit MSMEs by improving their ability to enter and compete in diverse markets through support for trade fair participation, digital platform utilization, and export opportunity development. Public-private collaborations can further enhance global promotion of Indonesian fish products, highlighting quality attributes and environmental credentials that differentiate these offerings in international markets.

Seventh, ensuring supportive regulatory frameworks through simplified licensing procedures, appropriate tax incentives, and quality standard enforcement protects both producers and consumers while facilitating sector growth. Regulatory coherence across multiple government agencies remains particularly challenging in Indonesia's decentralized governance structure.

Eighth, promoting sustainable and environmentally beneficial practices safeguards marine resources for future generations through environmentally favorable fishing and processing techniques. Community education regarding sustainable practices and regulations to minimize overfishing and environmental degradation ensures long-term resource viability while positioning Indonesian products advantageously in environmentally conscious markets.

Finally, encouraging collaboration and alliances among government agencies, private enterprises, research institutions, and community organizations facilitates innovation, best practice exchange, and resource pooling to address shared challenges.

These multi-stakeholder partnerships create stronger ecosystem support for MSMEs than any single entity could provide independently. Implementation challenges persist despite these clear strategic directions. Law Number 27 of 2007 on Coastal Area and Small Islands Management (amended by Law Number 1 of 2014) establishes a legal framework for coastal community empowerment, yet execution gaps remain evident. Similarly, Law Number 31 of 2004 regarding fisheries (amended by Law Number 45 of 2009) defines the fishery business system encompassing pre-production, production, processing, and marketing activities, but coordination failures between national and local authorities continue to impede coherent implementation.

By reimagining partnership agreements to address these strategic imperatives, Indonesia can more effectively utilize its maritime resources, empower MSMEs, enhance food security, and significantly contribute to national economic development. The sustainable development of the marine sector would improve coastal community welfare while establishing Indonesia as a recognized global leader in marine resource management. However, success depends critically on shifting from descriptive policy statements to actionable implementation frameworks that align incentives across public, private, and community stakeholders. With a significant portion of its maritime economic potential remaining untapped, Indonesia is at a critical juncture where strategic policy decisions regarding the empowerment of MSMEs in the marine fisheries sector could greatly impact the nation's development path. The path forward requires abandoning conventional sectoral approaches in favor of integrated frameworks that recognize the interconnected nature of maritime development challenges. Partnership agreements must evolve from traditional hierarchical models to more collaborative structures that acknowledge MSMEs as essential stakeholders rather than passive beneficiaries. Such reconceptualization would enable more effective mobilization of Indonesia's extraordinary maritime resources while ensuring that benefits flow equitably to coastal communities that have historically been marginalized despite their proximity to these valuable resources.

VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

A partnership agreement is a legally binding document that establishes the terms and conditions for a commercial venture between two or more individuals, with the primary objective of generating financial gains.[50] Under a partnership agreement, the partners bear equal liability for the organisation's debts.[51] Regardless of whether an individual withdraws from the partnership, they will still be held responsible for any outstanding debts and future liabilities if they fail to give proper notice of their departure.[52] Sometimes, a partnership can be established even without a formal written agreement. In such scenarios, the regulations that regulate partnerships will be applicable.[53]

Partnership agreements are foundational to the success and longevity of any business, as they help establish clear guidelines and expectations between partners, reducing the risk of disagreements, ambiguity, and unforeseen

[50] Joseph Long, "Partnership, Limited Partnership, and Joint Venture Interests As Securities" (1972) 37:4 Missouri Law Review at 7.

[51] J Burke & Michael Friel, "Allocating Partnership Liabilities" (1985) 41 Tax L Rev at 173.

[52] Daniel S Kleinberger, "A User's Guide to the New Uniform Limited Partnership Act" (2004) 37 Suffolk University Law Review at 585.

[53] Nutavoot Pongsiri, "Regulation and public-private partnerships" (2002) 15:6 International Journal of Public Sector Management at 487.

complications. These agreements serve multiple crucial functions that ensure smooth operations and protect all parties involved. First, they define the specific tasks and obligations of each partner, outlining their roles, responsibilities, and the expectations placed on them within the business structure. This clarity prevents confusion about who is responsible for what, thereby avoiding conflicts over tasks or decision-making.

Another significant reason partnership agreements are vital is to address taxation concerns. Each partner's tax status must align with the distribution of earnings as per general accounting and taxation regulations. This helps prevent any tax issues that may arise if income distribution is not properly managed. A well-structured partnership agreement ensures that all partners are aware of their respective tax responsibilities, which in turn minimizes the risk of audits or legal trouble related to taxes.

Legal and ancillary obligations are also crucial aspects covered by partnership agreements. By addressing potential legal issues early on, such agreements can minimize the chances of disputes related to contractual obligations, intellectual property rights, or liability concerns. This proactive approach safeguards the interests of each partner and reduces the likelihood of costly litigation down the line. Moreover, the agreement sets clear parameters for resolving any legal issues that may arise, streamlining the process of conflict resolution.

Adaptability is another essential feature of partnership agreements. As businesses evolve, so do the personal and professional circumstances of the partners involved. A good partnership agreement allows for flexibility, enabling partners to adjust to life changes, such as shifts in personal priorities, financial conditions, or business objectives. This adaptability ensures that the partnership can continue to thrive even as external circumstances change, offering a framework for adjusting roles, responsibilities, or equity distributions as needed.

Finally, partnership agreements often include clauses that address non-competition and potential conflicts of interest. These provisions are designed to protect the business from internal threats that could arise if partners pursue competing ventures or engage in activities that create a conflict of interest. Non-competition clauses ensure that no partner engages in activities that could directly compete with the business or harm its interests, even after they leave the partnership. Such agreements prevent the partners from undermining each other or the business itself, fostering a more harmonious and focused working relationship.

Partner contributions can exhibit variability in both magnitude and nature, encompassing monetary funds, innovative concepts, and the allocation of partner labour. In this scenario, each proportion does not need to be in the form of money. This implies that partners can contribute to the firm equitably, with equal rights, but their contributions must be in non-monetary forms. Due to each partner's distinct tasks and authorities, a partnership division of 100 percent ensures impartiality in financial matters. To determine the partnership percentage, one can calculate the capital needed to initiate a new business and divide each partner's contribution by this total. The ownership proportion and financial offerings in a company can be determined by the roles of each partner in its establishment, as well as the amount of effort and time they provide. When partners own a corporate organisation, establish a total share value corresponding to the firm's value. If there are 1000 shares representing 100 percent ownership, these shares are divided and compute the number of shares each partner is entitled to.

Partnerships also contribute to corporate lobbying endeavours. For instance, Sandy Douglas, the CEO of Coca-Cola, employed the company's affiliation with the American Academy of Family Physicians to assert that soda taxes were superfluous. Save the Children, an organisation dedicated to improving the lives of children, initially strongly advocated for the implementation of taxes on soda. Save the Children recently withdrew its support, citing a need for more alignment between supporting soda taxes and the organisation's mission. It may be a coincidence that they were actively pursuing donations from Coca-Cola and obtained a $5 million award from PepsiCo. Both Coca-Cola and PepsiCo explicitly denied requesting the organisation to alter its stance.[54]

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[54] James Mulcahy & Joy Tassin, "Is PepsiCo the Choice of the Next Generation: The Inevitable Disclosure Doctrine and its Place in New York Jurisprudence" (2003) 21:1 Hofstra Labor & Employment Law Journal at 6; Margaret Sherman & Harold Weston, "Fizz Fight: How Soda Taxes Affect Coca-Cola's Business Strategy" (2019) 22 Journal of Legal Studies in Business at 31.

A significant drawback of partnerships in the food business is that they can lead to misunderstandings. Studies conducted in Canada and the United States have determined that the primary cause of increasing obesity rates is the use of an excessive amount of energy or calories. Research using doubly labelled water, a commonly used method to evaluate total energy expenditure over some time, has found that overall activity levels have remained the same since the 1980s. In order to decrease obesity rates, it is necessary to not only increase general activity levels but also to reduce calorie intake. These agreements highlight that the main factor causing obesity is lack of physical exercise, rather than the promotion and consumption of high-calorie items, as the food industry emphasises.

Corporations are not the source of the issue. Corporate expenditure is inherently aimed at enhancing shareholder value, a clear legal obligation encompassing philanthropic endeavours. Health groups should refrain from forming brand alliances with the food sector, especially in situations where they are in dire need of financial or resource support. At the very least, partnerships should involve providing unconditional donations to health organisations and imposing restrictions on how firms can utilise the organisation's name. Otherwise, the health promotion objectives will be undermined by endorsing unhealthy brands.

The partnership program I propose is primarily designed to incentivise MSMEs to participate in the value chain and international markets, serving as a strategic tool to facilitate the growth and expansion of MSMEs. Partnerships between MSMEs, as suppliers of raw materials and semi-finished items, and major firms, as producers who finance these partnerships, can be established. Nevertheless, partnerships must prevent any form of dominance by larger companies, emphasising the significance of establishing equitable partnerships. The participation of the Business Competition Supervisory Commission in monitoring the collaborations between large enterprises and MSMEs is significant in this situation. This relationship is essential for combining efforts to safeguard and expand MSMEs. The imposed sanctions have the objective of not only punishing but also promoting the interests of both parties involved. While large firms need to maintain their size, it is as crucial to uplift MSMEs. Therefore, the Business Competition Supervisory Commission process emphasises the prevention and enhancement of issues. Partnerships that need to be fixed will be urged to enhance their performance. The Business Competition Supervisory Commission will analyse the collaborative alliances between significant corporations and MSMEs. If imbalanced partnerships are identified to exert control, they will be requested to make adjustments. Partnerships ought to be advantageous for all parties involved.

Implementing a partnership business model between commodity/product-based MSMEs and large corporations is a strategic program that aims to empower MSMEs. Utilising partnerships as a strategic approach helps bolster competitiveness and broaden the market for products from MSMEs. The established partnerships are robust, mutually advantageous, essential, and mutually reinforcing, ensuring their sustainability. An opportunity has arisen to establish business partnerships that can enhance the role of MSMEs, particularly in light of advancements in information technology (IT) and digital platforms, enabling the construction of digital-based alliances. Collaborations with large firms are a means of empowering MSMEs. Nevertheless, partnerships should be established on the basis of reciprocal requirements to ensure that neither party feels coerced into the partnership.

Within the realm of MSME development, several forms of partnerships exist, such as those involving the distribution of funds and those serving as platforms for mentorship; financial support and mentoring play a crucial role in the development of MSMEs and are essential in the allocation of financing for partnership programs. In order to guarantee the success of this program, it is essential to identify many crucial criteria. The primary goals include allocating funds to specific targets based on the planned amount, ensuring timely distribution, providing structured and consistent coaching, and facilitating suitable loan payback. The focus is on utilising effectiveness to foster the growth of MSMEs, enabling them to achieve more autonomy and dependability.

Nevertheless, the execution of a program needs to proceed consistently according to the intended design. Many MSME players tend to perceive these partnership programs as nothing more than complimentary aid from firms, without fully comprehending the significance of mentoring and the obligation to repay the loan. This difficulty highlights the necessity for a more efficient and informative communication strategy for MSME actors to comprehend the genuine goals of the partnership program. Additionally, more focused endeavours may be required to enhance comprehension of the program's enduring advantages, with the aim of augmenting involvement and the long-term viability of the associated MSMEs.

Mentoring MSMEs is essential in determining their success and long-term viability. Mentoring not only aids MSMEs in expanding their enterprises but also assists them in preparing to engage with financial institutions, such as banks. Interacting with banks is typically perceived as relatively straightforward, particularly if the MSMEs satisfy the criteria established by the bank or other official financial organisations.

Partnership programs can be created to incorporate several activities and laws to enhance the skills of MSMEs in multiple domains. These programs not only bolster company competitiveness but also increase the general quality of life for the community. The objective of partnership programs in fulfilling social duties is to contribute to welfare and quality of life and ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

When establishing partnerships, it is crucial to adhere to numerous principles to guarantee their effectiveness and mutual benefits: Collaborative partnerships should be established based on the organisation's shared vision, mission, and objectives. This alignment serves as a source of motivation and strengthens the collaboration. Trust is a fundamental requirement in any partnership. Trustworthiness is essential for establishing networks and partnerships, necessitating communication rooted in genuine intentions and honesty. Partnerships should be advantageous for all parties involved. When one side perceives a disadvantage or lack of substantial benefits, it undermines the overall harmony of the collaboration.

Efficiency and effectiveness can be enhanced by combining resources to meet shared objectives and improving time, cost, and effort utilisation while maintaining high-quality standards. Productive collaborations can result in improved results and increased objective achievement. Reciprocal communication is essential for establishing partnerships, as it involves mutual respect and open dialogue. In the absence of reciprocal communication, one side may exert dominance, harming the established connection.

Establishing robust and enduring networks necessitates a steadfast adherence to the mutually agreed-upon terms and conditions. By following these principles, partnerships can be efficient, equitable, and enduring, benefiting all parties involved and contributing to broader economic and social objectives.

VIII. COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS AND MSME EMPOWERMENT IN INDONESIA

From the moment of their birth, humans require affection, camaraderie, and collaboration with others in order to progress and mature. The innate desire for social contact and reciprocal assistance also applies to economic pursuits as individuals strive to meet their financial requirements. As social and economic entities, humans derive significant advantages from collaborating to optimise earnings and attain shared prosperity. Partnerships represent this type of collaboration, providing a feasible approach to harness economic potential.[55]

Partnerships are formed when economic players establish mutually advantageous commercial connections and collaborate to create synergistic working relationships. The Indonesian government has enforced corporate collaborations in developing small enterprises, as stipulated in Government Regulation No. 44 of 1997 regarding Partnerships. This regulation provides more details regarding the business partnership models described in the Small Business Law. These models encompass creating a favourable business environment, offering assistance, facilitating growth, providing financial support, offering guarantees, and promoting partnerships. Despite the repeal and replacement of Government Regulation No. 44 of 1997 by Government Regulation No. 17 of 2013, creating partnerships remains essential.

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[55] Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen, *Partnerships: Machines of Possibility* (Policy Press, 2008) at 1; Akanksha Chaurey et al, "New partnerships and business models for facilitating energy access" (2012) 47 Energy Policy at 51; David Horan, "A New Approach to Partnerships for SDG Transformations" (2019) 11:18 Sustainability at 13.

As stated in Article 25, paragraph (1) of Law No. 20 of 2008 on MSMEs) the Government, Local Governments, the Business World, and the community are required to provide assistance, support, and encouragement for partnership activities that promote mutual trust, reinforcement, and mutual benefits. According to Article 25, paragraph (2), partnerships between MSMEs and between MSMEs and large enterprises involve the exchange of skills in several areas, such as production, processing, marketing, capital, human resources, and technology. Government Regulation No. 17 of 2013, specifically Article 10, highlights the need for partnerships in accordance with the concepts of mutual need, trust, reinforcement, and benefit while maintaining ethical business practices.

Mohammad Suprato et al. emphasise that projects that utilise partnership or alliance contracts demonstrate superior performance due to enhanced relational attitudes and team quality compared to projects that employ lump-sum and replaceable contracts.[56] The legal connections between parties in business partnerships are established through written agreements, as Article 29 of Government Regulation No. 17 of 2013 mandates. MSMEs must establish all types of partnerships through written partnership agreements in Indonesia. If one of the parties involved is a non-domestic individual or legal body, the agreement must be drafted in Indonesian and a language other than Indonesian. The partnership agreement must encompass, at a minimum, the business operations, rights and obligations of each participant, modes of development, duration, and methods for resolving disputes.

A partnership agreement is a legally binding arrangement between two or more parties who have agreed to generate legal consequences through mutual consent. Agreements are formed when the parties reach a consensus, per the principle of consensualism, a fundamental tenet of contract law in Indonesia. A partnership agreement establishes a consensus between MSMEs and large corporate actors, resulting in mutual commitments between the parties involved. These obligations give rise to rights and responsibilities for the people concerned, which may involve providing something, performing an action, or abstaining from an action.

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[56] Mohammad Suprapto et al, "How Do Contract Types and Incentives Matter to Project Performance?" (2016) 34:6 International Journal of Project Management at 21.

Partnership agreements are considered unregulated in the Indonesian Civil Code due to their lack of specified provisions. Partnership agreements are subject to the general requirements regulating agreements in the Civil Code. According to Article 1319 of the Civil Code, all agreements, whether explicitly mentioned or not, are bound by the overall regulations outlined in the Civil Code. In order for partnership agreements to be considered valid, they must fulfil the conditions for validity as specified in Article 1320 of the Civil Code. These requirements include the parties' mutual agreement, the parties' legal capacity, a clearly defined subject matter, and a lawful reason for entering into the agreement.

Partnership agreements must comply with fundamental principles of contract law, such as mutual agreement, freedom to contract, and the binding nature of agreements. The principle of consensualism states that agreements are formed by the mutual consent of the persons involved. Partnership agreements in the processed food industry, including marine fish raw materials, establish consent between MSME actors and major company actors, resulting in the establishment of rights and responsibilities for all parties involved.

The principle of freedom of contract pertains to the substance of the agreement. Parties can establish contracts and specify their terms as long as they are allowed by law, align with current practices, and are made in good faith. The idea mentioned is implicitly stated in Article 1338, paragraph (1) of the Civil Code, which asserts that all legally formed agreements have the force of law and are binding upon the parties involved.[57] This entails the liberty to decide whether to agree, with whom to agree, the substance of the agreement, the format of the agreement, and the governing legislation.

The idea of *pacta sunt servanda* pertains to the obligatory character of agreements. The principle is enshrined in Article 1338, paragraph (1) of the Civil Code. Once an agreement is legally established, following the validity criteria outlined in Article 1320 of the Civil Code, it becomes legally binding for the parties

[57] Agus Yudha Hernoko, Ghansham Anand & Fiska Silvia Raden Roro, "Method Determining the Contents of the Contract" (2017) 3:1 Hasanuddin Law Review at 97; Fifi Junita, "Experience of Practical Problems of Foreign Arbitral Awards Enforcement in Indonesia" (2020) 5 Macquarie Journal of Business Law at 370.

involved.[58] Partnerships should be implemented through mutual necessity, trust, reinforcement, and benefit while maintaining solid corporate ethics.

Micro enterprises refer to productive businesses owned by people and individual business entities that satisfy the criteria for Micro Enterprises as stipulated in the MSME Law. Small firms are autonomous and productive economic units operated by persons or commercial entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies owned, controlled, or affiliated with, either directly or indirectly, medium or large enterprises. Medium enterprises refer to autonomous and productive economic ventures operated by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies owned, controlled, or affiliated with Small or Large Enterprises, as defined by the MSME Law based on their net assets or annual sales. Large enterprises refer to highly productive economic operations operated by business entities that possess net assets or yearly revenues above those of medium firms. This category includes national private or state-owned enterprises, joint ventures, and foreign corporations engaged in economic activities within Indonesia.

Partnerships are business partnerships between MSMEs and significant enterprises. These collaborations can be direct or indirect and are founded on mutual need, trust, reinforcement, and benefit. According to Article 25, paragraph (1) of the MSMEs Law, the Government, Local Governments, the Business World, and the community are responsible for promoting, assisting, and encouraging collaborative activities that involve trust, reinforcement, and mutual benefits. According to Article 25, paragraph (2), partnerships involve the transfer of skills in several areas such as production and processing, marketing, capital, human resources, and technology. According to Article 25, paragraph (3), Ministers and Technical Ministers are responsible for overseeing the distribution of incentives to major corporations that collaborate with MSMEs in areas such as innovation, export-oriented product development, job creation, the use of environmentally friendly technology, and the provision of education and training.

Article 26 of the MSMEs Law outlines many partnerships, including core-plasma patterns, subcontracting, franchising, general commerce, distribution and agency.

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[58] Junita, *supra* note 57; I Gede Angga Adi Utama, "Asas Pacta Sunt Servanda Dalam Perspektif Hukum Perjanjian Internasional" (2019) 1:1 Ganesha Civic Education Journal at 42.

Additionally, it includes other types of partnerships, such as profit-sharing, operational collaboration, joint ventures, and outsourcing. The execution of these partnerships involves the transfer of skills in production and processing, marketing, capital, human resources, and technology, following the partnership model. It is forbidden for large firms to possess or exercise control over their MSME partners as well as medium-sized businesses.

It is essential to place a high priority on business alliances by putting into action several vital initiatives in order to assist the growth of MSMEs. First, it is necessary to engage in thorough socialising. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to ensure that all members of the community, particularly those involved in commercial activities, have a complete grasp of partnership agreements. For the purpose of ensuring that all parties are aware of the terms, advantages, and duties involved with these agreements, it is vital to have effective communication and outreach. The second requirement is a more stringent regulation of partnership arrangements. This entails giving better legal clarity and ensuring that all parties are afforded equitable legal protections. Having transparent and fair regulations helps to develop trust and confidence among partners, which helps ensure that everyone's interests are safeguarded and that disputes are kept to a minimum. Third, integrated oversight must be guaranteed. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to carefully monitor and implement partnerships in a fair and equitable manner. Assuring that the conditions of the agreements are adhered to and that any problems are swiftly handled is made easier by the implementation of regular oversight and review. In addition to preserving the integrity of the relationships, this helps to ensure the continued success and viability of MSMEs. Business partnerships can be established by concentrating on these measures, which will ultimately promote the growth and development of MSMEs.

The government should promote collaborations between significant corporations and cooperatives, as well as MSMEs, in order to expedite empowerment initiatives. These collaborations are essential as MSMEs encounter various barriers, such as difficulties in obtaining funding and navigating business growth. Many MSMEs need help in obtaining bank loans due to multiple factors, including technical and non-technical concerns, such as a lack of adequate collateral. Moreover, there is frequently restricted access to banking information. MSMEs frequently need more knowledge about the finance patterns related to specific commodities from a development standpoint. MSME products can have difficulties competing with huge industries in contemporary retail markets, particularly in marketing. Hence, collaborations between major and minor enterprises are crucial in establishing an equitable domestic economy. Establishing sustainable corporate alliances is crucial for achieving mutual success. A just national economy can be accelerated by fostering sustainable corporate partnerships.

Rigorous oversight is necessary to ensure that partnerships operate as anticipated. In order to foster equitable collaboration, it is imperative to provide MSMEs with education regarding the significance of formal partnership agreements and the equitable stances of all parties involved. Several occurrences are quite exploitative, seeing MSMEs as a market rather than as partners. It is crucial for large firms to comprehend the significance of adhering to legal requirements in order to prevent legal consequences. It is imperative for MSMEs to comprehend that partnership agreements ought to be documented, encompassing key aspects such as commercial activities, the rights and obligations of each party, forms of development, duration, and methods for resolving disputes. Partnerships must conform to reciprocal necessity, confidence, reinforcement, and advantage concepts.

By cultivating an atmosphere of reciprocal collaboration and legal predictability, Indonesia has the potential to augment the efficacy of commercial alliances, empower MSMEs, and promote an equitable and thriving national economy. The partnership of MSMEs and major corporations, with the backing of the government and the community, can stimulate long-lasting economic expansion and societal well-being, guaranteeing that the advantages of progress are distributed extensively.

IX. CONCLUSION

Indonesia possesses substantial potential for the advancement of the processed food sector by utilising marine fish as the primary source. MSMEs are of utmost importance in this area. Nevertheless, MSMEs encounter many obstacles in their growth and progress due to constraints in terms of financial resources, expertise, technological advancements, marketing strategies, distribution networks, and licensing requirements. Hence, it is imperative to collaborate with major corporate entities through partnership frameworks. The legal relationships in these partnerships are established through contractual agreements. However, there currently needs to be more precise regulations controlling partnership agreements. Current partnerships often result in unequal legal relationships between the parties involved. Hence, it is crucial to restructure the regulation of partnership agreements to foster the growth of MSMEs in the processed food sector that rely on marine fish as their primary raw material source. The government should organise comprehensive and extensive awareness campaigns with diverse stakeholders, such as corporate entities, community leaders, and scholars, to enlighten MSMEs and major businesses about the significance of business collaborations and their legal dimensions. The legislative body should establish precise regulations on partnership agreements to ensure legal protection for all parties involved.

In order to tackle these problems, it is crucial to carry out comprehensive and cohesive socialisation initiatives to educate stakeholders about the significance of commercial partnerships and their legal consequences. The legislative body should formulate precise regulations on partnership agreements to provide equitable legal relationships and offer legal safeguards for all involved parties. MSMEs should receive ongoing training and capacity-building programs targeting sustainable fishing practices, sophisticated processing techniques, company management, and marketing tactics. These programs aim to improve productivity and expand market reach. By introducing and providing access to contemporary, economical technology for fish handling and processing, it is possible to assist MSMEs in enhancing their products' longevity and market appeal. Investing in vital infrastructure, such as refrigerated storage facilities, transportation networks, and processing units, is crucial for minimising post-harvest losses and preserving the quality of fish products. Offering easily obtainable financial services, such as microloans, grants, subsidies, and financial literacy initiatives, can assist MSMEs in efficiently managing their finances and promoting their expansion. Enabling market entry for MSMEs through trade fairs, online platforms, and export opportunities will enhance the global promotion of Indonesian fish products, highlighting their superior quality and sustainability. Advocating and implementing sustainable fishing and processing methods are crucial to safeguard marine resources for future generations. Promoting cooperation among government agencies, business sector entities, research institutions, and community organisations can foster innovation, facilitate the exchange of successful strategies, and effectively combine resources to tackle shared obstacles.

This study recognises certain constraints, such as the restricted availability of comprehensive data on particular MSMEs engaged in the processed food sector that utilise marine fish as their primary input. Furthermore, the study predominantly concentrates on the legal and regulatory dimensions of partnership agreements, placing less emphasis on the practical obstacles encountered by MSMEs in the industry. Additional research is required to thoroughly investigate these practical obstacles and devise specific approaches to overcome them. Future studies should prioritise undertaking comprehensive field surveys to collect precise data on the unique obstacles MSMEs encounter in the processed food sector when utilising marine fish as a primary ingredient and creating focused approaches to tackle the tangible obstacles encountered by MSMEs, such as the restricted availability of funds, expertise, advanced tools, promotion, and distribution networks and investigating the capabilities of digital technologies and platforms to improve the productivity and efficacy of business collaborations between MSMEs and major corporate entities and assessing the influence of particular rules on the legal safeguarding and empowerment of MSMEs in the processed food sector and examining the involvement of community leaders, academics, and other stakeholders in advancing and facilitating sustainable business collaborations within the processed food industry.

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COMPETING INTEREST

None.

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