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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rural Cooperatives as Hybrid Last-Mile Governance Institutions: An Integrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Rural cooperatives increasingly operate at the intersection of state policy, local markets, and community economic activities, yet their potential role in public-policy delivery remains fragmented across cooperative, development, and governance literature. This study examines how rural and community-based cooperatives can function as hybrid last-mile governance institutions and identifies institutional conditions relevant to the development of Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih (KDMP) in Indonesia. The study employed an integrative literature review with a structured and purposive literature search, followed by thematic synthesis and conceptual integration. The analysis focused on institutional roles, organizational capacity, governance mechanisms, coordination, accountability, local embeddedness, mission alignment, delivery functions, and institutional risks. The synthesis indicates that cooperative involvement in last-mile delivery depends not only on organizational proximity to rural communities but also on the alignment of administrative, financial, informational, logistical, human-resource, and coordination capacities with the complexity of public-policy mandates. Accountability, monitoring, transparency, data governance, and interorganizational coordination convert organizational capacity into reliable delivery capacity, while local embeddedness can simultaneously facilitate access and create risks of elite capture and political intervention. The study develops a hybrid last-mile governance framework and identifies seven institutional design principles for KDMP: mandate clarity, capacity alignment, accountability alignment, coordination architecture, data governance, mission alignment, and governance safeguards. These principles provide a basis for aligning KDMP's institutional mandates with operational capacities, strengthening accountability and interorganizational coordination, and safeguarding the balance between commercial sustainability and public-service objectives.

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1. Introduction

Rural cooperatives occupy an institutional position between government, markets, and local communities. Their proximity to producers, consumers, and village-level economic activities allows them to perform functions beyond conventional member-based economic activities (Judijanto, 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026). Existing research has examined cooperatives primarily in relation to organisational performance, member participation, finance, governance, sustainability, agricultural services, and market access. However, these research domains have not been sufficiently integrated to explain how cooperatives can function as intermediaries in public-policy implementation and delivery (Afandi et al., 2025).

The cooperative literature demonstrates that organisational outcomes depend on institutional and governance conditions. Grashuis & Ye (2019), through a review of 56 peer-reviewed publications, identified performance, ownership and governance, finance, and member attitudes as major research themes, alongside challenges involving benefit distribution, financial constraints, heterogeneous member objectives, and participation. Recent reviews reinforce this pattern. Chollet et al. (2026), reviewed 274 studies on agricultural cooperative sustainability and found that the literature emphasises economic and financial dimensions, while governance and social dimensions receive comparatively less attention. Siregar et al. (2026), further demonstrated through a systematic review of 74 studies on agricultural cooperatives in Asia that government intervention, regulation, and federation governance substantially

influence cooperative development. Taken together, these reviews establish the breadth of cooperative research while indicating that organisational performance, sustainability, and governance are often examined through distinct analytical perspectives.

The service-delivery literature provides another relevant perspective. Rural producer organisations can facilitate agricultural services, market access, technology dissemination, and connections between rural producers and external institutions (Nikam et al., 2019). Ragasa & Golan (2014), identified external linkages, member financial support, management capacity, and formal governance structures as important conditions for producer organisations providing agricultural services. Cherukuri & Reddy (2014), similarly demonstrated that producer organisations can perform intermediation functions by improving access to technology, advisory services, markets, and bargaining opportunities. These findings explain how organisational capacity and external linkages support service intermediation, but they do not fully establish the institutional conditions under which cooperatives can assume public-policy delivery responsibilities (Albareda, 2018; Breit et al., 2016; Igalla et al., 2021).

Governance research highlights a further institutional tension. Government involvement can provide resources, regulatory support, and access to public programmes, but excessive dependence can weaken organisational autonomy and accountability (Zhang & Chen, 2025). Gwiriri & Bennett (2020), showed that cooperatives involved in government-supported agricultural programmes may face tensions in power relations, political representation, service delivery, and democratic accountability. Chibanda et al. (2009), similarly identified dependence on government funding, limited capital, weak training, and governance deficiencies as institutional constraints affecting agricultural cooperatives. Bijman et al.(2014), demonstrated that professionalisation and changes in board structures can improve organisational management while simultaneously creating tensions with member control and representation. These findings indicate that the integration of cooperatives into public programmes requires institutional arrangements that balance operational capacity, public accountability, and organisational autonomy rather than assuming that government involvement automatically improves delivery performance.

The emergence of Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih (KDMP) provides a contemporary policy context for examining these institutional questions in Indonesia. The national policy initiative seeks to strengthen village-level economic institutions and connect cooperatives with the provision and distribution of essential goods and economic services (Cholifah et al., 2026;Purwansjah et al., 2026). The policy context includes commodities and services with distinct governance requirements, including subsidised fertiliser, 3-kg LPG, and people's cooking oil. These commodities require different combinations of beneficiary targeting, allocation control, price monitoring, inventory management, information systems, logistics, and accountability (Purnamasari et al., 2024). Consequently, assigning distribution functions to village cooperatives does not automatically produce effective last-mile delivery. The fulfilment of these responsibilities depends on the alignment of institutional mandates with organisational capacity, decision-making authority, information access, resources, and accountability mechanisms (Cholifah et al., 2026; Ladini et al., 2026; Rahmawati et al., 2025).

Despite the contributions of these research streams, an integrative framework explaining how cooperative governance and public-policy implementation jointly shape last-mile delivery remains insufficiently developed in the literature (Berenschot & Mulder, 2019; Huwaina et al., 2026; Kameo et al., 2026). Existing research has examined service intermediation, market access, organisational governance, external linkages, financial capacity, and government involvement, but these dimensions have not been adequately integrated to explain how cooperatives can combine commercial activities with public-service responsibilities. In particular, further synthesis is needed to clarify how institutional capacity, governance mechanisms, interorganisational coordination, accountability, information governance, and mission alignment interact in shaping delivery capacity, while accounting for risks associated with elite capture and political intervention (Hasanudin et al., 2025). The research gap

therefore concerns the limited integration of established insights into a common analytical framework, rather than an absence of research on cooperatives or their governance.

This study addresses this gap by conceptualising rural and community-based cooperatives as potential hybrid last-mile governance institutions. The concept refers to organisations that can connect public authorities, market actors, and rural citizens while retaining an organisational identity and economic function distinct from government agencies. Rather than assuming that cooperatives inherently possess the capacity to perform these functions, the study examines the institutional conditions that enable or constrain their participation in public-policy delivery. The resulting framework links institutional capacity, governance capacity, mission alignment, and last-mile delivery while incorporating local embeddedness and institutional risks as conditioning factors.

The study addresses four research questions:

1. How has existing research conceptualised the role of rural and community-based cooperatives in economic governance and public service delivery?
2. What institutional capacities and governance mechanisms enable cooperatives to perform last-mile delivery functions?
3. What institutional risks and governance challenges constrain cooperative involvement in rural public service and distribution systems?
4. What institutional design principles can the literature inform to conceptualise rural cooperatives as hybrid last-mile governance institutions?

The study makes three contributions. First, it integrates cooperative governance and public-policy implementation perspectives that are commonly examined separately. Second, it develops a conceptual framework linking institutional capacity, governance capacity, mission alignment, and last-mile delivery. Third, it derives institutional design implications for KDMP without treating the institution's effectiveness as empirically established. By connecting these dimensions, the study contributes to governance scholarship on the institutional conditions under which community-based economic organisations can act as intermediaries in public-policy delivery.

2. Methodology

This study employed an integrative literature review to synthesise empirical and conceptual research concerning rural cooperatives, community-based organisations, institutional capacity, governance, service delivery, policy implementation, and rural distribution systems. An integrative review is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to critically examine diverse literature and integrate findings and perspectives to develop a new conceptual framework (Battistone et al., 2023; Choudhury & Saravanan, 2026; Luft et al., 2022; Snyder, 2019; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). The methodological approach was selected because the study aims to integrate theoretical and empirical insights concerning the institutional conditions under which rural cooperatives may perform last-mile governance functions, rather than estimate pooled effects or statistically evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions. Accordingly, the review emphasises critical synthesis and conceptual integration to develop a framework linking institutional capacity, governance mechanisms, mission alignment, and last-mile delivery.

A structured and purposive literature search was conducted to identify publications relevant to the four research questions. The search covered the period 2000–2026, prioritised peer-reviewed journal articles published in English, and considered complementary scholarly sources when they offered substantial theoretical or empirical contributions. The search strategy combined three thematic areas: rural and community-based cooperatives in relation to governance and institutional capacity; cooperative organisations in relation to last-mile delivery, public service delivery, policy implementation, and distribution governance; and agricultural or producer cooperatives in relation to subsidies, commodity distribution, supply chains, and market access in rural contexts (Astuti et al., 2026; Karlina et al., 2026; Santika et al., 2026). The search was not restricted to Indonesian studies because

the review aimed to identify institutional mechanisms from international contexts that could inform the conceptualisation of KDMP. Indonesian policy and regulatory documents were considered separately as contextual sources for interpreting the implications of the literature-derived framework. Studies were considered relevant when they contributed theoretical arguments or empirical evidence concerning cooperative institutional roles, organisational capacity, governance mechanisms, service delivery, coordination, accountability, market intermediation, information governance, rural distribution, or institutional risks. Studies addressing financial performance or productivity without a substantive institutional or governance dimension received limited analytical attention.

The selected literature was organised according to its contribution to the research questions and its relevance to the conceptual synthesis. Information extracted from the studies included author and year, geographical context, organisation type, research design, institutional functions, organisational capacity, governance arrangements, coordination mechanisms, accountability, information systems, financial and logistical resources, human-resource capacity, reported outcomes, institutional challenges, risks, and theoretical implications. The extracted evidence was organised into five analytical domains: institutional roles; institutional capacity; governance mechanisms; delivery outcomes; and institutional risks. Institutional roles included economic, service, market, policy, community, and state–market intermediation. Institutional capacity covered administrative, managerial, financial, informational, logistical, human-resource, and coordination capabilities. Governance mechanisms included accountability, transparency, monitoring, participation, regulatory oversight, information sharing, and digital traceability. Delivery outcomes included accessibility, availability, affordability, targeting, timeliness, distribution efficiency, market access, and local economic circulation. Institutional risks included elite capture, political intervention, corruption or leakage, information asymmetry, weak management, insufficient capital, overlapping authority, mission conflict, government dependence, and exclusion. This analytical organisation enabled the comparison of findings across studies with different geographical settings, organisational forms, and research designs.

The review combined thematic synthesis with conceptual integration. First, recurring concepts and institutional functions were identified across the selected literature. Second, related concepts were grouped into higher-order themes representing institutional roles, capacity, governance mechanisms, delivery outcomes, and risks. Third, the relationships among institutional capacity, governance mechanisms, mission alignment, and delivery functions were examined across the evidence clusters. Fourth, the resulting relationships were integrated into a conceptual framework and translated into institutional design principles relevant to KDMP. The synthesis also examined local embeddedness as a potentially ambivalent institutional condition. Proximity to rural communities can facilitate local knowledge, trust, social capital, and beneficiary access, but it can also create vulnerabilities to elite capture, political intervention, exclusion, and informal influence (Dianurchafiz, 2026; Lucas, 2016). Local embeddedness was therefore treated as a contextual resource whose implications depend on the surrounding governance arrangements rather than as an inherently beneficial organisational characteristic

The conceptual framework links policy and institutional design to cooperative institutional arrangements, institutional capacity, governance capacity, mission alignment, last-mile delivery capacity, and public value and rural economic outcomes. Local embeddedness operates as a contextual condition that can strengthen or weaken these relationships, while institutional risks may affect multiple stages of the pathway. The framework further treats mission alignment as a critical connection between cooperative sustainability and public-policy objectives. Cooperatives generally pursue member benefits, organisational sustainability, and economic efficiency, whereas public programmes may prioritise affordability, access, targeting, availability, and accountability. Accordingly, the framework proposes that sustainable last-mile delivery depends on the extent to which public mandates align with cooperative incentives, operational resources, decision-making authority, and accountability

arrangements (Agustiana & Pratama, 2026; Harisudin et al., 2020; Pamungkas et al., 2026; Yoedani & Lestari, 2026).

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Cooperative Organizations as Institutional Intermediaries

The literature indicates that rural cooperatives can act as intermediaries between public institutions, markets, and rural communities (Abdi & Panjika, 2026; Cholifah et al., 2026; Kameo et al., 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026). Cooperative organisations may aggregate producers, facilitate access to inputs and services, connect members with markets, distribute information, and support transactions that individual rural actors may find difficult to perform independently. Ragasa & Golan (2014) demonstrate that producer organisations can facilitate agricultural services through external linkages, organisational management, and member support. Cherukuri & Reddy (2014) similarly identify producer organisations as intermediaries that improve access to technology, advisory services, market opportunities, and bargaining capacity.

These functions create institutional relevance for public-policy delivery. A cooperative that already maintains membership records, local organisational structures, financial transactions, supply relationships, and community-level networks has institutional interfaces that can potentially connect to public programmes. The cooperative therefore represents neither a conventional government agency nor an ordinary private distributor.

The intermediary position is better conceptualised as a hybrid form of institutional capacity. Government provides policy authority, regulatory resources, and public objectives; markets provide production, supply, logistics, and commercial incentives; communities provide local knowledge, participation, social networks, and beneficiary access. The cooperative can connect these domains by making the distribution of authority, information, resources, and accountability explicit (Karlina et al., 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026; Yoedani & Lestari, 2026; Zulhakim, 2026).

However, the hybrid character should not be interpreted as an automatic advantage. A cooperative may become overloaded when government assigns public-policy responsibilities without transferring sufficient resources, information, authority, or operational capacity. The cooperative's institutional value therefore depends on how well its organisational capabilities align with the complexity of the assigned mandate.

3.2 Institutional Capacity Determines Delivery Potential

Institutional capacity is the central condition linking cooperative organisation to last-mile delivery. The literature identifies several capacity dimensions that influence organisational performance: administrative capacity, managerial competence, financial resources, information systems, logistics, human resources, and external coordination (Hadijah & Nara, 2025; Harisudin et al., 2020; Hijrawati & Qibtiyah, 2026; Purnamasari et al., 2024).

Chibanda et al. (2009), found that smallholder cooperatives can face institutional constraints, including low equity and debt capital, dependence on government funding, limited investment, weak training, and governance deficiencies. These findings are important for public-policy delivery because distribution functions generally require more than physical access to beneficiaries. Organisations must manage inventories, verify transactions, maintain records, coordinate suppliers, monitor prices, resolve complaints, and report performance.

Institutional capacity must therefore correspond to mandate complexity. A cooperative that can manage a small, member-based retail activity may lack the capacity to administer a large public subsidy programme. Expanding the mandate without expanding organisational capacity can produce administrative congestion, weak internal control, and accountability gaps.

This relationship leads to the first theoretical proposition:

Proposition 1 — Institutional capacity: The potential reliability of cooperative-based last-mile delivery increases when organisational capacity is aligned with the complexity of the public-service mandate.

The proposition shifts the analytical focus from whether cooperatives are inherently suitable for public-policy delivery to whether their capacities are institutionally aligned with the functions assigned to them.

3.3 Governance Mechanisms Convert Capacity into Accountable Delivery

Organisational capacity alone does not guarantee accountable public-policy delivery. Governance mechanisms determine how organisations exercise, monitor, and control capacity. Accountability, transparency, participation, monitoring, information sharing, and regulatory oversight help convert organisational resources into legitimate institutional action (Bowen & Panagiotopoulos, 2020; El-Taliawi & Van Der Wal, 2019; Fox, 2016; van Popering-Verkerk et al., 2022).

Bijman et al. (2014), demonstrate that changes in cooperative governance can involve tensions between professional management and member control. Professionalisation may improve managerial competence but can also distance management from members. This tension becomes more complex when cooperatives perform public functions because accountability extends beyond members to government agencies, beneficiaries, suppliers, and the broader public.

Gwiriri & Bennett (2020) similarly show that cooperative involvement in government-supported programmes can generate political and accountability challenges. When government programmes become a key resource source, powerful actors may compete for access or influence organisational representation. These conditions can undermine democratic accountability and distort benefit distribution.

The governance implications produce a second proposition:

Proposition 2 — Governance: Accountability, transparency, participation, monitoring, and regulatory oversight strengthen the relationship between cooperative capacity and reliable last-mile delivery when these elements are institutionally embedded.

Accountability in cooperative-based public distribution therefore has at least two dimensions. The first is member accountability, which concerns cooperative ownership and internal governance. The second is public accountability, which concerns the use of public resources, compliance with distribution rules, beneficiary targeting, pricing, reporting, and service outcomes (Hidayatullah & Agistin, 2026; Octavia & Tjandra, 2025; Palupi et al., 2025; Yusma, 2026). KDMP institutional design needs to recognise both dimensions.

3.4 Local Embeddedness Produces Both Capacity and Vulnerability

Local embeddedness represents one of the strongest potential advantages of rural cooperatives. Local organisations may know community conditions, economic relationships, beneficiary characteristics, local supply patterns, and informal barriers to accessing services. Such knowledge can reduce information gaps between central or regional authorities and rural communities (Abdi & Panjika, 2026; Astuti et al., 2026; Bagus et al., 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026).

However, local embeddedness also creates governance vulnerabilities. Close social relationships can facilitate informal influence, preferential treatment, elite capture, or political intervention (Alatas et al., 2013; Arbiyanti et al., 2026; Dianurchafiz, 2026; Marwiyah et al., 2026). Gwiriri & Bennett (2020) show how political and power relations can shape cooperative representation and access to programmes. Local proximity should therefore not be treated as synonymous with accountability.

The literature suggests that local embeddedness generates a conditional institutional effect. It can improve access and responsiveness when transparent membership rules, auditable transactions, representative governance, grievance mechanisms, and external oversight support it. Without these safeguards, the same local networks that facilitate access can also facilitate exclusion.

This relationship generates the third proposition:

Proposition 3 — Embeddedness: Local embeddedness strengthens cooperative last-mile delivery when safeguards against elite capture, political intervention, and exclusion support local knowledge and social capital.

The proposition is particularly relevant for KDMP because village-level proximity is central to its institutional rationale. The policy advantage of proximity depends on whether local knowledge can translate into accountable administrative practice.

3.5 Government Involvement: Support, Dependence, and Institutional Autonomy

Government involvement is a recurring factor in cooperative development (Alif et al., 2026; Kameo et al., 2026; Mulyadi & Rahmati, 2026;Nurdin et al., 2026). Siregar et al. (2026) show that government intervention, regulation, and federation governance influence the trajectories of agricultural cooperatives in Asian countries. Government support can provide legal recognition, capital, infrastructure, technical assistance, market access, and connections to public programmes. However, this relationship can also create organisational dependence.

Chibanda et al. (2009) found that dependence on government funding can weaken institutions. Gwiriri & Bennett (2020) further show that government-supported programmes can create tensions between accountability and power. These findings indicate that government–cooperative relationships require institutional boundaries.

Government should establish the policy mandate, regulatory standards, monitoring mechanisms, and public accountability requirements while allowing cooperative management sufficient organisational autonomy to perform commercial and member-oriented functions. Excessive government control can weaken cooperative ownership and distort incentives. Conversely, insufficient oversight can create risks when cooperatives manage public resources or regulated commodities (Novković et al., 2023).

This leads to the fourth proposition:

Proposition 4 — Coordination: Cooperative delivery capacity increases when cooperatives institutionalise coordination with government agencies, suppliers, financial institutions, and other relevant actors through explicit roles, information channels, and accountability arrangements.

The relevant policy question is therefore not whether government should intervene, but **how government and cooperative institutions should divide authority and responsibility**.

3.6 Mission Alignment as a Condition of Sustainable Public-Policy Delivery

Mission alignment constitutes a central mechanism in the proposed framework. Cooperative organisations have economic and member-oriented objectives, while public programmes have policy objectives. These objectives may overlap but are not identical (Meier & Schnurbein, 2025).

For cooperative members, organisational sustainability, economic efficiency, and member benefit remain central. For public programmes, policy objectives may include affordability, equitable access, beneficiary targeting, supply continuity, price stability, and public accountability. Cooperative involvement becomes problematic when public obligations impose costs without corresponding resources or incentives.

Mission conflict can occur in several forms. A cooperative may face pressure to keep regulated prices low while still maintaining sufficient margins to cover operating costs. It may be required to prioritise specific beneficiaries even when alternative customers are commercially more attractive. It may also be required to maintain distribution records and reporting systems that increase administrative costs.

A sustainable institutional arrangement therefore requires alignment among **mandate, resources, authority, information, incentives, and accountability** (Furqan et al., 2023; Kameo et al., 2026; Sulistiyowati et al., 2026).

This produces the fifth proposition:

Proposition 5 — Mission alignment: Cooperative-based public-service delivery is more institutionally sustainable when public mandates, resources, authority, information, and accountability are aligned with cooperative sustainability and member interests.

Mission alignment should not be interpreted as requiring identical objectives. Instead, it requires a governance arrangement that can explicitly manage potentially conflicting objectives.

3.7 Institutional Design Implications for Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih

The literature-derived framework provides seven institutional design principles for KDMP.

Table 1. Evidence-to-Institutional Design Matrix

Literature-derived issue	Institutional implication	KDMP design principle
Multiple and potentially competing organizational mandates	Define the boundaries of cooperative and public-policy functions	Mandate clarity
Uneven managerial, financial, logistical, and information capacity	Match responsibilities with demonstrated capacity	Capacity alignment
Cooperative accountability traditionally emphasizes members	Add public-resource and beneficiary accountability	Accountability alignment
Public distribution involves multiple government and market actors	Establish formal coordination mechanisms	Coordination architecture
Targeting and transaction verification depend on reliable data	Establish interoperable and auditable information systems	Data governance
Cooperative sustainability and public-policy objectives may diverge	Align incentives, resources, authority, and obligations	Mission alignment
Local embeddedness can generate both access and capture risks	Establish safeguards, oversight, grievance mechanisms, and conflict-of-interest controls	Governance safeguards

These principles imply that **institutional scale should follow demonstrated organisational capacity rather than precede it.** A cooperative should not receive increasingly complex public mandates merely because it operates at village level. Mandate expansion should follow evidence that the organisation possesses the financial, managerial, informational, logistical, and governance capacity required for the assigned function (Karlina et al., 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026; Santika et al., 2026).

Table 2. Institutional Framework for Cooperative-Based Last-Mile Governance

Dimension	Core question	Required institutional condition
Policy design	What public function is delegated?	Clear mandate and legal authority
Cooperative capacity	Can the cooperative perform the function?	Administrative, financial, HR, logistical and managerial capacity
Governance capacity	How will performance be controlled?	Accountability, transparency, monitoring and oversight
Coordination	Who interacts with the cooperative?	Formal interorganizational coordination
Data governance	What information is required?	Accurate, interoperable and auditable data
Mission alignment	Are incentives compatible?	Alignment of public objectives and cooperative sustainability
Safeguards	What can go wrong?	Anti-capture, conflict-of-interest and grievance mechanisms
Delivery outcome	What public value should result?	Accessibility, affordability, availability, targeting and timeliness

3.8 Commodity-Specific Implications for Last-Mile Governance

The proposed framework has different implications across the three policy domains considered in the KDMP context.

Subsidised fertiliser requires strong beneficiary and allocation governance. The relevant institutional functions include farmer identification, eligibility verification, allocation management, stock availability, transaction recording, and coordination with upstream suppliers. Cooperative proximity to farmers can provide informational advantages, but local discretion requires safeguards against preferential allocation and inaccurate beneficiary records (Fatika et al., 2025; Kiloes et al., 2026; Prasetyo et al., 2026).

3-kg LPG requires a different governance configuration. The major concerns include beneficiary targeting, quota management, regulated pricing, stock availability, transaction traceability, and leakage prevention. Cooperative participation can improve local access, but the delivery arrangement requires reliable transaction records and clear coordination with authorised distributors and government authorities (Hendra & Mayarni, 2024; Wicaksono et al., 2026; Wulandari et al., 2026).

People's cooking oil emphasises affordability, availability, supply continuity, and retail access. The relevant institutional capacity therefore includes procurement coordination, inventory management, price monitoring, and retail distribution. The governance challenge is maintaining public-service objectives while preserving enough organisational sustainability to run the distribution network (Santoso et al., 2026; Wicaksena & Evandani, 2025).

These three commodities demonstrate why the institutional framework should not treat "distribution" as a uniform function. Each policy domain creates different combinations of targeting, information, logistics, pricing, monitoring, and accountability requirements.

3.9 Does Cooperative Involvement Strengthen State Capacity?

The literature raises a more fundamental governance question: **does integrating cooperatives into public-policy delivery** strengthen **state capacity, or does it simply shift part of the implementation burden to community organisations?**(Kameo et al., 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026; Nurhayati et al., 2026; Purwansjah et al., 2026).

The answer depends on institutional design.

Government–cooperative integration can strengthen local implementation capacity when the state provides clear authority, resources, information, coordination, monitoring, and accountability while cooperatives contribute local access, organisational networks, and economic infrastructure. Under these conditions, cooperatives can extend public institutions' operational reach without becoming subordinate government agencies.

The opposite situation can occur when government delegates responsibilities without sufficient resources, authority, information, or institutional support. In this arrangement, the cooperative may implement public programmes while absorbing operational and financial risks. Such delegation may increase administrative workload without producing equivalent gains in state capacity (Hasanudin et al., 2025; Hutapea, 2026; Lewis, 2015; Soesilo, 2020).

This distinction leads to a sixth proposition:

Proposition 6 — Public accountability: Cooperative participation in public distribution requires accountability mechanisms that extend beyond member governance to public-resource management and beneficiary outcomes.

A further proposition follows:

Proposition 7 — State capacity: Government–cooperative integration strengthens local implementation capacity when mandates, resources, authority, information, and accountability are aligned; otherwise, it may transfer implementation responsibilities without producing an equivalent increase in state capacity.

This proposition corrects overly promotional interpretations of KDMP. Assess cooperative involvement by whether it creates additional institutional capacity, rather than merely redistributing administrative responsibilities.

3.10 Theoretical Implications for Governance and Law Reform

The study contributes to governance scholarship by positioning rural cooperatives as **hybrid last-mile governance institutions**. The concept extends conventional classifications of public, private, and community organisations by focusing on institutional function and interdependence.

The proposed framework indicates that hybrid governance does not arise simply from combining government and non-government actors. It requires institutional alignment among capacity, authority, information, incentives, coordination, and accountability. The cooperative becomes a meaningful governance intermediary when these dimensions are sufficiently integrated (Adnan et al., 2026; Alkadafi et al., 2025; Bebbington et al., 2006; Rozie et al., 2026).

The framework also contributes to discussions of institutional capacity. Conventional approaches often treat capacity as an organisational attribute. This synthesis suggests that capacity is relational: an organisation can have substantial internal resources but still lack delivery capacity if it lacks authority, information, coordination, or accountability arrangements. Last-mile delivery therefore emerges from the interaction between organisational capacity and governance architecture (Fiestiandani et al., 2026; Karlina et al., 2026; Nurdin et al., 2026).

Mission alignment further extends the framework. Cooperative organisations have member-oriented economic missions, while public institutions have public-value objectives. Integrating these institutions requires mechanisms to manage potential conflicts between these missions, rather than assuming they naturally converge (Pamungkas et al., 2026).

Finally, the framework contributes to governance and law reform by emphasising the legal and institutional architecture surrounding cooperative participation. Effective delegation requires clarity regarding authority, responsibility, resources, data access, reporting, monitoring, sanctions, grievance mechanisms, and organisational autonomy. Legal reform should therefore focus not only on granting cooperatives new functions but also on establishing institutional conditions that make those functions accountable and sustainable (Giawa & Sihotang, 2025; Hasanudin et al., 2025; Kinanti & Mulyadi, 2026; Octavia & Tjandra, 2025).

Figure 1. Hybrid Last-Mile Governance Framework



4. Conclusion

From a policy implementation perspective, the findings highlight the importance of adopting a gradual and context-sensitive approach to strengthening rural cooperatives as last-mile governance institutions. Rather than assigning uniform responsibilities to all KDMP units, policymakers should consider differences in organisational readiness, managerial competence, financial sustainability, and local institutional conditions. Capacity-building programmes should therefore extend beyond technical training to include transparent decision-making, financial accountability, digital information management, and mechanisms for community participation. Equally important is the establishment of clear institutional relationships between cooperatives, local governments, relevant ministries, and distribution networks. Such arrangements can reduce overlapping responsibilities, strengthen public oversight, and ensure that cooperatives remain responsive to community needs while maintaining their economic viability and organisational autonomy.

More broadly, this study contributes to discussions on collaborative governance and rural institutional development by demonstrating that the effectiveness of community-based organisations in delivering public programmes depends on the interaction between institutional design and local governance conditions. The proposed framework provides a conceptual foundation for evaluating whether KDMP can improve service accessibility, distribution efficiency, transparency, and social inclusion without generating excessive administrative burdens or undermining cooperative principles. Nevertheless, the conceptual nature of this study limits its ability to establish causal relationships between institutional arrangements and implementation outcomes. Future research should therefore incorporate longitudinal assessments, comparative case studies, and perspectives from cooperative managers, government officials, distributors, and rural beneficiaries. Such empirical evidence would help refine the proposed framework and support the development of more adaptive, accountable, and sustainable cooperative-based public-service delivery systems in Indonesia.

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Policy and Regulatory Sources

Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 9 Tahun 2025 tentang Percepatan Pembentukan Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih.

Peraturan Menteri Koperasi Republik Indonesia Nomor 2 Tahun 2025 tentang Pengembangan Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih.

Peraturan Gubernur Kalimantan Barat Nomor 23 Tahun 2025 tentang dukungan dan pelaksanaan kebijakan Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih.