

# **Effectiveness of the Procurement and Distribution of Subsidized Fertilizers under Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 on Procurement and Distribution of Subsidized Fertilizers for the Agricultural Sector**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the dualism of roles within the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) in Indonesia, focusing on its legislative and executive functions in the regional government system. As a legislative institution representing the people and a partner of the executive, the DPRD faces challenges in balancing these roles, often leading to potential conflicts of interest and weakened oversight functions. The study aims to analyze the challenges and propose strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of the DPRD in fulfilling its dual roles. Using a normative juridical approach, this research examines legislative provisions and conceptual frameworks to identify the gaps and complexities in the DPRD's current position. The findings reveal that role conflicts hinder the DPRD's ability to effectively oversee and collaborate with regional governments, affecting policy quality and public trust. This study recommends clear role delineation, enhanced institutional capacity, and improved communication between the DPRD and regional governments. These measures are expected to strengthen the DPRD's legislative and oversight functions while maintaining its partnership with the executive, ultimately contributing to more effective and transparent regional governance.

**Keywords : subsidized fertilizers, ministerial regulation no. 4 of 2023, procurement and distribution**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizers are vital elements supporting the agricultural sector, especially in the current context of globalization. The demand for agricultural resources continues to rise, driven by weather uncertainties affecting productivity. In this situation, the use of fertilizers becomes crucial to maximize crop yields and maintain the balance of the agricultural ecosystem. Fertilizers are not merely a secondary need but a primary necessity for enhancing agricultural production (Abdullah & Hakim, 2011). Therefore, the procurement and provision of subsidized fertilizers need to be prioritized to meet the needs of farmers, who are the key actors in this sector. Collaboration between the government and fertilizer producers is crucial to ensure the effective and timely distribution of subsidized fertilizers to farmers.

Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 has formulated a regulatory framework aimed at enhancing efficiency and transparency in the procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizers. This regulation distinguishes between subsidized and non-subsidized fertilizers, regulating distribution and purchasing according to the needs of each party. Non-subsidized fertilizers, while not receiving government support, remain important as an alternative to meet agricultural needs (Herlambang, Guntara, & Abas, 2023). Farmers have greater flexibility in choosing the type and quantity of non-

subsidized fertilizers that suit them without relying on subsidies, although at a higher price. The process of procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizers is governed by clear provisions, such as the Guidelines for Preparing the Definitive Needs Plan for Groups (RDKK), ensuring that the government plays a central role in ensuring fair and efficient distribution of subsidized fertilizers to support the agricultural sector (Lingga, 2021).

The implementation of the subsidized fertilizer program in Indonesia, aimed at providing farmers access to fertilizers at affordable prices, faces several challenges that need to be addressed (Wijayanti, Nurwahidah, Hartono, Mastar, & Pebriana, 2024). Despite the government establishing a clear mechanism, farmers often encounter difficulties in purchasing subsidized fertilizers due to prices that are perceived to be high. Although there is a Highest Retail Price (HET) set to cap the selling price, the practice of selling above the HET still occurs, reducing the availability of affordable fertilizers. Additionally, constraints in distribution and pricing also pose problems, as farmers struggle to access subsidized fertilizers due to uneven distribution, delays in delivery, and shortages in some areas. The sale of fertilizers outside the designated distribution areas creates disparities in access, leading to varying prices (Galu, Sutejo, & Kmarubayana, 2017). To address these issues, there is a need for improved oversight of fertilizer sellers to ensure that transactions comply with applicable regulations and do not harm farmers. Better coordination among the government, fertilizer producers, and retailers, along with improvements to distribution infrastructure, is essential to ensure the timely availability of fertilizers across agricultural regions in Indonesia. The government has a significant responsibility to provide quality public services, as a manifestation of the community's contributions through tax payments and levies, thus, the public is entitled to optimal services in accordance with the principles outlined in Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Service (Dwicaksono, Suharto, & Susanawati, 2013).

Quality public service is the primary objective of every government policy and implementation, with a focus on meeting the needs of the local community (Agustino, 2012). In this regard, the services provided must adhere to applicable administrative principles and exceed the previously established service standards, encompassing aspects of efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the aspirations of the community (Barata, 2003). The application of these principles will enhance public trust and participation in the public administration process, as well as improve transparency in the use of public funds, the effectiveness of program management, and the accessibility of information and services for all layers of society, including those in remote areas (Widodo, 2021). However, the challenges in public service governance in Indonesia are reflected in the statement by the Chairman of the Indonesian Ombudsman, Danang Girindrawanrdana, regarding a 350 percent increase in complaint reports. This demonstrates the public's concern over service quality, as well as complaints about systematic policies, including delays, fraudulent charges, and conflicts of interest. In this context, subsidized fertilizer serves as an example of a tightly regulated public service, with regulations such as the Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 47/Permentan/SR.310/12/2017 and the Minister of Trade Regulation No. 15/M-DAG/PER/4/2013 that establish the distribution mechanism of subsidized fertilizer from Line I to Line IV throughout Indonesia (Rahmawati, Jakiyah, & Umbara, 2023).

Although regulations regarding the distribution of subsidized fertilizer have been established, the surge in complaints indicates that implementation on the ground still faces various obstacles. Complaints from farmers include delays in distribution, shortages

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of fertilizer in certain areas, sales above the Highest Retail Price (HET), and uneven distribution (Riyatno, 2024). Therefore, relevant agencies must respond effectively to these complaints to ensure the timely availability of subsidized fertilizer at the established prices. The Indonesian Ombudsman, as an independent supervisory body, plays a crucial role in monitoring and responding to public complaints related to public services, including the distribution of subsidized fertilizer (Asryansyah, 2023). Transparent and responsive actions from the relevant parties can enhance public trust in the public service system, thus optimizing the management and implementation of subsidized fertilizer regulations to provide maximum benefits to farmers and the agricultural sector in Indonesia (Gufroniah & Sugiono, 2023).

This research is highly relevant given the complexity and challenges in the distribution of subsidized fertilizer in the agricultural sector. Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 serves as the legal basis that regulates in detail the procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizer, covering the procurement mechanism, allocation of needs based on type and region, as well as distribution procedures to ensure the equitable availability of fertilizer. Strict oversight in the procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizer is also vital to maintaining the effectiveness and transparency of regulatory implementation. Therefore, a deep understanding of this regulation is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and to find solutions to improve public services related to the provision of subsidized fertilizer. Collaboration among the government, fertilizer producers, and other related parties is also key to addressing challenges such as fertilizer shortages at retail outlets, which often hinder farmers.

The rising global demand for agricultural products, compounded by uncertainties in weather patterns and productivity challenges, underscores the urgency to optimize the subsidized fertilizer distribution system in Indonesia. Ineffective implementation of the regulation risks undermining food security and exacerbates economic disparities among farmers. Immediate improvements in the procurement and distribution system are crucial to ensure equitable access to fertilizers, stabilizing agricultural output and supporting national food security objectives.

While existing studies have examined the general challenges of subsidized fertilizer distribution, limited research explores the direct impact of Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 on improving efficiency, transparency, and affordability. Additionally, the integration of digital systems such as e-RDKK and their effectiveness in real-world scenarios remains underexplored. This gap highlights the need for a focused evaluation of how regulatory provisions translate into practical outcomes for farmers.

This study provides a unique analysis by linking regulatory frameworks with empirical evidence, highlighting discrepancies between policy design and field implementation. It also introduces recommendations for integrating technological innovations and enhancing stakeholder coordination, offering a novel perspective on addressing distribution challenges and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices.

To evaluate the effectiveness of Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 in ensuring equitable fertilizer distribution. To identify challenges in procurement, distribution, and supervision mechanisms. To propose actionable solutions for improving the implementation of subsidized fertilizer policies.

This research benefits policymakers, agricultural stakeholders, and farmers by offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance fertilizer accessibility. Improved distribution systems are expected to reduce costs, increase crop yields, and ultimately elevate the welfare of farmers while supporting national food security goals.

The findings emphasize the critical role of regulatory reform and technological integration in advancing agricultural sustainability. By addressing inefficiencies in the fertilizer subsidy system, this research contributes to creating a more resilient and productive agricultural sector, fostering long-term socio-economic growth and environmental balance.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In the research on the procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizer in the agricultural sector, the approach used is an empirical juridical research method, which combines the analysis of legal data such as regulations and court decisions with empirical data such as reports and surveys. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023, focusing on the effectiveness of the procurement and distribution mechanisms for fertilizer, as well as the oversight of regulatory implementation and its impact on social, economic, and environmental aspects. The researcher will also employ a legislative approach to analyze the relevant regulations, a conceptual approach to understand the theories behind the regulations, and a case study approach to examine concrete examples of the policy implementation. By integrating these various methods, the research is expected to provide comprehensive insights and policy improvement recommendations that can enhance the welfare of farmers.

The data sources for this research include primary data obtained through interviews with farmers, distributors, and government officials, as well as direct observations of fertilizer distribution in the field. Secondary data will consist of legal documents, policy reports, and academic literature related to the procurement and distribution of fertilizer. Data collection techniques utilized include structured interviews, observations, and document studies to generate a holistic understanding of the subsidized fertilizer policy. Data analysis will be conducted thematically for qualitative data and descriptively for quantitative data, allowing the researcher to identify patterns and trends in policy implementation, as well as formulate evidence-based recommendations that can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the subsidized fertilizer program in Indonesia.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Effectiveness of the Subsidized Fertilizer Procurement Mechanism in Accordance with the Provisions Set Forth in Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 in Ensuring the Equitable Availability of Fertilizer Across Indonesia**

The subsidized fertilizer policy in Indonesia has served as an important tool for the government in supporting the agricultural sector since the New Order era. Introduced in the 1970s, the primary objective of this policy is to enhance agricultural productivity and national food security by providing farmers with access to fertilizers at affordable prices, thereby increasing their agricultural yields and income. During the 1980s and 1990s, this policy underwent various adjustments to address economic challenges and meet the continuously growing agricultural demands. Despite the government reinforcing the distribution system through the involvement of various institutions, challenges such as uneven distribution, subsidy misuse, and fluctuating market prices have remained significant issues (Noor & Suradi, 2016).

Since the reforms of 1998, the subsidized fertilizer policy has been continuously adjusted, with an emphasis on oversight and transparency to reduce abuse and improve distribution effectiveness. One innovative step introduced is the e-RDKK (Definitive Group Needs Plan) system, aimed at enhancing the accuracy of subsidy recipient data.

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Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 regarding the Procurement and Distribution of Subsidized Fertilizer is the latest initiative to more precisely regulate this mechanism, with the goal of improving efficiency, transparency, and fairness in fertilizer distribution. The scope of the regulation includes fertilizer procurement based on type, region, and planting season, and establishes a Highest Retail Price (HET) to ensure that prices remain affordable. Additionally, the importance of stringent oversight over the distribution and management of fertilizer allocation is emphasized to ensure availability and prevent abuse.

Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 underscores the necessity for better coordination between the central government, local governments, producers, and fertilizer distributors to ensure the timely availability of subsidized fertilizers in accordance with farmers' needs. With this regulation in place, it is hoped that issues such as fertilizer shortages at retail outlets and practices of selling above the established prices can be minimized, allowing the objectives of the subsidized fertilizer policy in supporting national food security to be more effectively achieved.

The procurement process for subsidized fertilizers is detailed, beginning with the determination of fertilizer needs by the Ministry of Agriculture based on the e-RDKK prepared by farmer groups. The e-RDKK data serve as the main reference for determining the quantity and type of fertilizers needed, while the ministry coordinates with producers such as PT Pupuk Indonesia to ensure adequate stock and clear contract arrangements.

The allocation and distribution of subsidized fertilizers are carried out to ensure that fertilizers reach farmers in sufficient quantities and on time. Allocation is determined based on information from the e-RDKK, taking into account the planting season, climatic conditions, and agricultural potential in various regions. Distribution involves a network of distributors cooperating with fertilizer kiosks across Indonesia, where each distributor is responsible for delivery to designated areas. Close supervision is essential to ensure that distribution proceeds as planned, along with a reporting system to monitor stock and sales. The establishment of the Highest Retail Price (HET) is also a crucial step in keeping subsidized fertilizer prices affordable for farmers, by factoring in production, distribution costs, and a reasonable profit margin. The HET aims to protect farmers from uncontrolled price fluctuations; however, its implementation requires oversight to prevent deviations from the established prices (NIM, 2020).

Although Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 provides a comprehensive framework for the procurement of subsidized fertilizers, its implementation in the field still faces various obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of this mechanism. One major issue encountered is the delays in the procurement and distribution of fertilizers, often caused by complicated bureaucracy and a lack of efficient coordination among the government, producers, and distributors. Although e-RDKK data serves as the basis for procurement, the implementation at the regional level often does not reflect the actual needs of farmers, resulting in inaccurate fertilizer allocation.

In addition to procurement issues, significant challenges also arise in the distribution of fertilizers. Many remote areas still struggle to obtain timely fertilizer supplies due to uneven distribution networks and inadequate transportation infrastructure. As a result, fertilizer shortages often occur, especially during peak planting seasons, negatively impacting agricultural productivity. Ideally, the allocation policy based on e-RDKK is designed to ensure that fertilizer needs in each region can be met according to the established planning. However, on the ground, there is a discrepancy between the set allocations and the actual needs of farmers.

One of the primary causes of this inaccuracy is the lack of updated data and effective verification in the field. Inaccurate data can lead to errors in determining the required amount of fertilizer. Additionally, there are also distribution practices that do not comply with regulations, such as hoarding and selling outside official channels. These practices can potentially impede the distribution of subsidized fertilizers that should reach farmers in a timely manner, ultimately disrupting agricultural stability and productivity.

The establishment of the Highest Retail Price (HET) is a crucial step in keeping fertilizer prices affordable for farmers. However, the implementation of the HET often faces challenges in the field, especially due to price deviations by retailers and distributors. Many retailers still sell fertilizers at prices above the HET, particularly in areas experiencing shortages. This is often caused by inadequate monitoring and ineffective law enforcement against violations related to the HET. This situation forces farmers to pay more for fertilizers, which can potentially harm them financially and reduce their access to subsidized fertilizers.

### **Supervision of Subsidized Fertilizer Distribution for the Agricultural Sector is Conducted in Accordance with the Provisions Established in Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023**

The supervision of subsidized fertilizer distribution in Indonesia is based on a number of legal provisions aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and accountability of the implementation of this mechanism. Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 is the main framework regulating this supervision, emphasizing the importance of equitable and targeted fertilizer distribution across all regions. Additionally, Law No. 19 of 2013 on the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers also establishes the government's responsibility to guarantee farmers' access to production inputs, including subsidized fertilizers. In this case, the Ministry of Agriculture plays a central role in designing policies and coordinating supervision implementation in the field, with support from local governments responsible for verifying fertilizer needs and ensuring appropriate allocation according to the e-RDKK.

This distribution supervision is grounded in important principles such as transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. Transparency encourages open information regarding fertilizer allocation and distribution so that all parties, especially farmers, can monitor distribution effectively. Accountability ensures that all parties, including the government and distributors, are responsible for their actions and are prepared to be audited. Meanwhile, the principle of effectiveness aims to guarantee that supervision is conducted efficiently, with clear performance indicators established to assess the success of distribution. Supervision involves various agencies, including the Ministry of Agriculture, local agricultural offices, as well as the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP) and the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) to ensure that the budget for subsidies is used appropriately and to identify any deviations that may occur. With a clear legal framework and principles, it is hoped that the supervision of subsidized fertilizer distribution can be carried out effectively and provide maximum benefits for farmers.

Despite being well-regulated in Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023, the supervision of subsidized fertilizer distribution in Indonesia still faces various challenges that hinder the effectiveness of its implementation. The Ministry of Agriculture, as the central government, plays a crucial role in establishing supervision policies and coordinating at the national level. Meanwhile, local governments are responsible for ensuring that subsidized fertilizers reach the farmers in need promptly, through local

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agricultural offices. They also have the responsibility to provide guidance and enforce regulations related to fertilizer distribution. However, discrepancies often occur between the established fertilizer allocations and the actual needs in the field due to suboptimal coordination between central and local governments. On the other hand, fertilizer producers and distributors are expected to comply with existing distribution regulations, including maintaining the quality and quantity of fertilizers supplied. Unfortunately, many deviations are still found, such as hoarding and selling outside official channels, indicating that the existing supervision mechanisms and enforcement of sanctions have not been effective. Therefore, better synergy among all parties is needed to address various existing constraints and to improve transparency and accountability at every stage of subsidized fertilizer distribution.

One innovative step in the supervision of subsidized fertilizer distribution is the use of technology, particularly through the Electronic System for the Definitive Group Needs Plan (e-RDKK). This system is designed to facilitate the collection of fertilizer needs data from farmer groups throughout Indonesia and ensure that the allocation of subsidized fertilizers corresponds to the actual needs of farmers. The e-RDKK also facilitates more effective supervision by integrating data between the central and local governments. However, the implementation of this system has not yet been fully effective due to various challenges faced. One major issue is the quality of data, which is often inaccurate due to manual data input being prone to errors. Additionally, limitations in technological infrastructure in remote areas pose a significant barrier to optimizing access to and use of the system. Other digital innovations, such as applications and platforms for monitoring fertilizer distribution in real-time, also face challenges in terms of adoption and utilization in the field. These challenges include a lack of training and technical support for users, as well as suboptimal coordination among all parties involved. Therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of supervision through technology, there is a need for improved human resource capacity, adequate infrastructure development, and better system integration so that the information obtained can be accurate and timely for all stakeholders.

**The Impact of the Implementation of Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 on Farmers' Welfare Regarding Access to Affordable Subsidized Fertilizers and Efforts to Enhance the Program's Benefits for the Agricultural Sector**

The implementation of Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 concerning the Procurement and Distribution of Subsidized Fertilizers is expected to bring about significant changes in the agricultural sector of Indonesia, particularly in improving farmers' access to subsidized fertilizers at affordable prices. This policy aims to ensure a more equitable and efficient distribution of subsidized fertilizers while maintaining price affordability for farmers. Although this regulation is designed to enhance farmers' welfare and agricultural productivity, challenges in its implementation often hinder the achievement of desired outcomes. Some emerging issues include farmers' difficulties in accessing fertilizers in a timely manner and distribution problems that lead to shortages at retail kiosks, especially in remote areas.

One crucial aspect of this regulation is the establishment of the Highest Retail Price (HET) to ensure that subsidized fertilizers remain affordable for farmers. However, the implementation of HET often does not meet expectations. In some areas, fertilizer selling prices still exceed the established HET, either due to illegal selling practices or insufficient effective monitoring. This has the potential to reduce the benefits of the subsidies that should alleviate farmers' production costs. Farmers' inability to obtain fertilizers in a timely manner and at appropriate prices can increase their production costs,

affecting their income and productivity. When subsidized fertilizers are unavailable or too expensive, farmers are forced to seek more expensive alternatives, which can result in declining crop yields and negatively impact their economic well-being.

Barriers in the implementation of Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023 are also evident in fertilizer distribution issues, which often experience shortages at retail kiosks. Although this regulation aims to ensure an even availability of fertilizers, the reality is that certain areas, particularly remote ones, frequently face stock shortages. Delays in delivery and supply instability prevent farmers from obtaining fertilizers on time, which affects the planting process and reduces crop yields. Due to these shortages, many farmers are forced to seek alternatives that are often more expensive or even postpone their agricultural activities, inevitably reducing the benefits from the subsidies that should be provided.

Furthermore, difficulties in enforcing the Highest Retail Price (HET) represent another critical issue. The establishment of HET aims to keep subsidized fertilizer prices affordable, but in many areas, the implementation of this policy remains weak. Practices such as selling fertilizers outside official channels or falsifying HET still occur frequently, causing selling prices to exceed the established limits. This issue is often driven by inconsistent monitoring and lack of strict law enforcement. As a result, farmers have to pay higher prices for fertilizers than they should, diminishing the effectiveness of the subsidies and burdening them with unnecessary additional costs. Insufficient enforcement of HET also hinders farmers' access to subsidized fertilizers at reasonable prices, which should facilitate and support the success of agricultural production.

To maximize the benefits of the subsidized fertilizer program, several strategic efforts need to be undertaken. Improving the distribution system is crucial by addressing logistical issues and enhancing distribution channels so that fertilizers can reach farmers on time. This includes optimizing distribution routes and improving coordination between distributors and local governments. Additionally, enhanced monitoring and law enforcement are necessary to ensure compliance with HET and prevent malpractice. This can be achieved by strengthening supervision mechanisms and enforcing strict penalties. The development of technological capacity and infrastructure is also essential through better information systems and training for farmers and distributors. This will facilitate monitoring distribution and managing subsidies. Effective education and outreach programs must be implemented to provide farmers with knowledge about optimal fertilizer use, the benefits of subsidies, and how to utilize technology such as e-RDKK and digital applications. With this approach, it is hoped that farmers can fully benefit from the subsidy program, which in turn can enhance their well-being and support the overall success of the agricultural sector.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study highlight that the subsidized fertilizer procurement mechanism under Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2023, aimed at ensuring equitable availability of fertilizers across Indonesia, faces significant challenges. Issues such as complex bureaucracy, ineffective coordination among stakeholders, distribution delays, and inaccuracies in the e-RDKK system contribute to uneven fertilizer availability, particularly in remote areas. Additionally, deviations in the Highest Retail Price (HET) due to inadequate supervision and law enforcement further complicate the regulation's implementation. To address these issues, strategic improvements are recommended, including enhanced coordination among governments, producers, and distributors;



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improved transportation infrastructure and distribution routes for remote areas; and strengthened supervision through independent agencies and strict penalties for violations. Investment in upgrading the e-RDCK system and digital applications, along with training for farmers and distributors, is also essential to ensure accurate demand data and optimal subsidy utilization. These measures aim to improve the efficiency and equity of fertilizer distribution, ultimately boosting farmer welfare and agricultural productivity.

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