



# Effectiveness of Gender Policy in Indonesia: A Review of the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

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## A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of public policies in addressing gender issues as part of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in Indonesia. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach based on a literature review. Research data were obtained from monitoring policy implementation supported by statistical data, which were analyzed using the VOSviewer application. The results of the study indicate that although the government has taken various positive steps in formulating and implementing gender policies, there are still significant challenges in translating these policies into fundamental changes in society. These obstacles include patriarchal cultural norms, lack of understanding of officials and the community regarding gender policies, and limited active participation of the community, especially women. This study confirms that active community participation and increasing women's social awareness are important factors that determine the sustainability and success of gender policy implementation. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the need for continuous improvement steps in public policy to address gender-based issues more effectively. Improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on an ongoing basis, as well as active involvement from all levels of society, including the government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities, are considered very important in realizing the vision of gender equality and achieving the SDG's in Indonesia. Thus, this study makes an essential contribution to deepening the understanding of gender policy dynamics in the context of sustainable development and offers strategic recommendations for strengthening future policies.

## INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality remains a significant issue facing Indonesia in its efforts for sustainable development (Latifah & Abdullah, 2023). Although the government has issued various policies to promote gender equality, its implementation still faces significant obstacles. Factors such as patriarchal cultural norms, deeply rooted gender stereotypes, and lack of understanding and awareness of gender policies are significant obstacles to achieving the goal of gender equality as a whole (Azis & Thobroni, 2024; Handayani, 2023). In the context of globalization and dynamic social change, the Indonesian government has established gender policies as an integral part of the national development strategy, including in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the challenges of persistence in the implementation of gender policies continue to emerge, indicating a gap between the formulated policies and the reality on the ground (Carroll & Esposito Amideo, 2024; Grown et al., 2016; Pahlevi & Rahim, 2023).

Empirical facts show that gender equality in Indonesia is still on the threshold of achieving sustainable development. The National Gender Inequality Index (IKG) in 2022 reached 0.45, reflecting significant inequality in various sectors. For example, women's representation in the legislature was only 21.74%, while men reached 78.26%. In the field of education, women's participation of 36.95% is still lagging behind men's involvement of 42.06%. Likewise, at the labor force participation rate (TPAK), women only reached 53.41% compared to men at 83.87% (Central Statistics Agency, 2023). This condition causes significant losses

in achieving human development, with an estimated failure of 45%. In addition, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022, Indonesia is ranked 92nd out of 146 countries with an index score of 0.697 (World Economic Forum, 2022), which shows that there is still great room for improvement in the aspect of gender equality (Larasati et al., 2023; Razavi, 2016; Wardana & Magriasti, 2024).

Gender inequality that occurs not only has an impact on quantitative aspects but also has severe negative impacts on women (Heise et al., 2019). These impacts include limiting women's potential to carry out productive activities, marginalization and social exclusion, and a decline in women's psychological and economic conditions. Furthermore, this inequality also opens up opportunities for the exploitation of women, which exacerbates their vulnerability in various aspects of life (Klasen, 2018; Starnarski & Son Hing, 2015). Therefore, the issue of gender inequality is a top priority in the orientation of sustainable development, which demands the quality and quantity of human resources that are equitable and guarantee the rights of every individual, especially women (Kabeer, 2021). In the context of the SDGs, gender equality is one of the crucial pillars, with 16 goals and 91 targets that are directly or indirectly related to women's empowerment and the protection of their human rights (Hepp et al., 2019; Leal Filho et al., 2023).

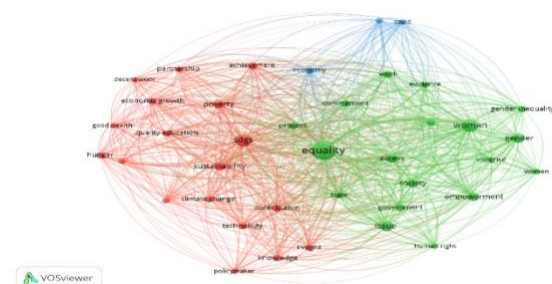
Women play a vital role in the success of national and global development, not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of change who are able to make significant contributions to the development and maintenance of life functions (Odera & Mulusa,

2020). Therefore, the SDGs are a milestone and strategic foundation for realizing gender equality and justice, including in efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (Dhar, 2018; Sen, 2019). Gender policy evaluation is a systematic process that is very important for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of policies that have been implemented. This evaluation involves collecting and analyzing data related to policy implementation and evaluating the extent to which the policy achieves its stated goals.

In the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) theoretical framework proposed by Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier (1994), policy evaluation includes analysis of advocacy coalitions, policy subsystems, beliefs or paradigms, and the role of the political environment that influences policy stability and change. In addition, the evaluation also assesses aspects of justice, community participation, and the social impact of the policy. The evaluation stages include setting objectives, selecting methods, formulating an evaluation framework, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting results, developing recommendations, reporting, disseminating, and ongoing monitoring to ensure future policy improvements. Gender equality is a tool to promote transparency and accountability in achieving the SDGs. Research has found that adequate disclosure can strengthen the implementation of gender policies and raise public awareness of gender issues (Lestari & Hapsari, 2020).

Krook (2017) discusses the challenges of gender-based violence faced by women in the political sphere in various countries. Krook highlights how this violence hinders women's participation and threatens democracy. The study emphasizes the need for protective policies and strong legal mechanisms to support gender equality in politics. In addition, the importance of integrating gender perspectives in global development and the challenges of implementing gender policies in various countries. He emphasized the importance of the SDG framework in strengthening gender equality globally (Moghadam, 2019). Community involvement to build awareness of the importance of gender equality. By reimagining the concept of feminism and gender equality from the perspective of women and men. This study aims to analyze the extent to which gender development policies in Indonesia have developed and are able to integrate the roles of men and women equally, especially in terms of achieving gender rights and justice. This study uses a literature study based on the VOSviewer application to map and analyze data related to the implementation of gender policies. In addition, this study also examines the contribution of solutions through a critical feminist concept and theory approach to provide a deeper picture of the dynamics of gender policies and the direction of their implementation in a complex society toward an inclusive culture. Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods to produce a comprehensive understanding.

Figure 1. Visualization of the Vosviewer Application



Source: Processed with Vosviewer Application (2025)

This VOSviewer analysis shows that gender equality is a central issue and is integrated into various aspects of sustainable development. The linkages between gender issues, women's empowerment, human rights, and SDGs are robust, supported by external factors such as the economy and the pandemic. To achieve the SDGs effectively, a holistic, cross-sectoral, and evidence-based approach is needed by placing gender equality as a top priority in development policies and implementation. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in the mapping of cross-sectoral integration between gender equality and the SDGs, as well as the identification of emerging new themes such as digitalization, pandemics, and scientific evidence as part of the future gender research and policy agenda. These findings recommend the need for a more holistic, adaptive, and evidence-based policy and research approach to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by placing gender equality as a central issue that is interconnected with current and future global development challenges.

The urgency of this study lies in the need to identify the gap between gender policies that have been formulated and the reality of their implementation in the field. This gap includes institutional, cultural, and community participation aspects, which are still the main obstacles to realizing gender equality in real terms. This study also highlights the novelty in the use of a critical feminist approach and the application of VOSviewer as an innovative data analysis tool in gender policy studies. Thus, this study is expected to contribute significantly to strengthening the implementation of responsive and sustainable gender policies in Indonesia. This study focuses on several important aspects related to gender development policies in Indonesia. First, how are the development and effectiveness of gender development policies in integrating the roles of men and women equally? It is crucial to determine the extent to which the policies that have been formulated can be implemented in the field. Second, what are the main challenges faced in the process of implementing these gender policies, including cultural, social, and institutional barriers that hinder the achievement of gender equality goals? Third, what is the role of community participation, especially women's social awareness, in supporting the successful implementation of gender policies? Finally, how can a critical feminist approach provide practical solutions and strategic directions in realizing inclusive and sustainable gender equality amidst the complexity of Indonesian society? By answering these questions, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture and more targeted policy recommendations to strengthen efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the field of gender equality.

## METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach that aims to provide an in-depth and comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of public policies in addressing gender issues in Indonesia (Vedung, 2017). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore meaning, understand the social context, and explore the dynamics of policy implementation holistically. The primary focus of this study is on the analysis of literature relevant to the theme of gender equality and women's empowerment within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The literature review is the primary data collection technique to ensure that the analysis is based on a strong theoretical and empirical understanding.

The data used in this study are secondary and come from various trusted sources, such as scientific journal articles, conference proceedings, official reports, books, and statistical data related to gender policies in Indonesia. Data collection is carried out systematically through reviewing, selecting, and synthesizing literature relevant to the research topic. To strengthen the analysis, this study utilizes the VOSviewer application as a bibliometric visualization tool. VOSviewer allows researchers to map literature networks, identify thematic clusters, and understand trends and patterns of collaboration between researchers in gender studies. The use of this technology provides added value in organizing and presenting literature data in a more structured and easy-to-understand manner (Arruda et al., 2022).

The data analysis process is carried out descriptively qualitatively, starting with organizing literature data, identifying main patterns and themes, and interpreting results that are relevant to the research objectives. This analysis aims to reveal the level of policy effectiveness, challenges in implementation, and the critical role of community participation and women's social awareness in encouraging the success of gender policies. With this approach, research can provide a comprehensive and contextual picture of the dynamics of gender policies in Indonesia. The conclusions of the study are drawn based on the synthesis of findings from the literature and data visualization, which are then used to provide strategic recommendations for improving future policies. To clarify and facilitate understanding of the research process, a flowchart that describes the steps, from data collection and mapping using VOSviewer to the analysis and conclusion stages, can be presented as a systematic visual representation of the methodology. This approach is expected to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the research framework being carried out.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Indonesia is highly dependent on the effectiveness of gender policies implemented by the government and various stakeholders (Permatasari et al., 2021). Gender equality, which is the primary focus of SDG number 5, is a fundamental human right as well as an essential prerequisite for the nation's social, economic, and political progress. Various policies and programs have been implemented to encourage women's empowerment, increase women's participation in the formal sector, and expand their access to strategic positions in the world of work and decision-making. However, structural challenges such as gender bias in policymaking, the dominance of patriarchal social norms, and weak implementation and supervision of regulations are still real obstacles to realizing gender equality as a whole (Sari et al., 2022; Sudirman & Susilawaty, 2022). Therefore, evaluating the effectiveness of gender policies is very important to ensure that the efforts that have been made truly contribute to the achievement of SDGs in a sustainable and inclusive manner in Indonesia.

**Gender Inequality in Indonesia**

Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Adolescent Birth Rate (ABR) in Southeast Asia, gender inequality in Indonesia in 2022 is ranked 1110 out of 170 countries (Stotsky et al., 2016). Despite the success of the government's efforts, gender inequality still often occurs in its implementation. At the ASEAN level, Singapore is the country

with the best GII achievement among others. Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam also have good reproductive health indicators. The proportion of women in parliament in both countries is relatively low compared to other countries. In Vietnam, Thailand's low GII is due to exemplary achievements in maternal mortality rates, which are less than 50, while the achievement of gender equality in Thailand is supported by equality of achievement between male and female education. But this is still at a poor level because there are still many people with low education (Bangun, 2018).

Meanwhile, Indonesia is ranked below the Philippines, where the two countries have different maternal mortality and education conditions, which makes Indonesia 9 ranks behind the Philippines. On the other hand, based on the gender inequality index in Indonesia in 2019-2021, the national gender inequality index value in 2021 was 0.390, where this value reflects that there was a failure in achieving human development due to gender inequality of 39%. The gender inequality index in Indonesia is still relatively high but has decreased in the last three years from 0.421 in 2019 to 0.390 in 2021, and the decline was due to improvements in all aspects of health, empowerment, and the labor market. In terms of health, married women aged 15-49 years who have experienced living in the last two years without health facilities in 2019 amounted to 0.141, decreasing to 0.111 in 2021. Meanwhile, the proportion of women aged 15-49 years who are married and have their first live birth at the age of less than 20 years, the indicator decreased from 0.271 in 2019 to 0.262 in 2021.

In the education dimension, the opportunity for men and women to obtain education has undergone a process of equality. In general, during the 2013-2022 period, the difference or gap in average school achievement between men and women has decreased, although it has not yet reached the same level of schooling. In 2022, the average length of education for men was 8.99%, while the average length of schooling for women was 8.39%. This is a reality that needs to be given our collective attention because the low level of education for women can have an impact on the wages received when women enter the labor market.

Seen from the Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) of women, based on BPS in 2021, stated that the TPAK between men and women in Indonesia from 2017 to 2021 men experienced fluctuations but not significantly, while women experienced an increase every year. So, it can be seen that there is a vast inequality between the labor force participation rate of men and women. The average hourly wage received by female workers actually decreased by IDR 1,792 per hour in 2022. This decrease in women's salaries caused the difference in average hourly wages for men and women to become even greater, which was IDR 2,205 per hour. The low TPAK for women is due to a lack of information and the assumption that women are only fully responsible for the household, as well as gender discrimination and high costs.

**Table 1.** Women's TPAK in statistics in Indonesia

Tahun	Tingkat Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja (%)	
	Laki-Laki	Perempuan
2017	82,51	50,89
2018	82,69	51,88
2019	83,13	51,89
2020	82,41	53,13
2021	82,27	53,34

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2021)

Improvements in the reproductive health dimension are influenced by improvements in the indication of women giving birth

without health facilities, which decreased from 15.4% in 2021 to 14.0% in 2022. Improvements in the empowerment dimension are influenced by improvements in the indication of the percentage of women aged 25 years and over who have a high school education. The rate of women increased from 34.87% in 2021 to 36.95% in 2022, while the percentage of men increased from 41.30% to 42.06% in 2022. So, looking at the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (IKG), even though in the last 5 (five) years, there has been an increase in gender quality and improvements in gender equality in development.

However, the focus of this context is to see that the level of education more or less affects the quality of human resources and gender TPAK (Labor Force Participation Rate), especially for women who still have an index below men. Therefore, in addition to improving education, there is a need to create collective awareness in society, which is expected to be able to make achievements in the aspect of sustainable development. The effectiveness of gender-responsive policies can vary depending on their implementation. To assess the extent to which the policy has reduced gender inequality in Indonesia, a comprehensive evaluation of gender inequality indicators such as economic participation, education, and access to health is needed. Data analysis and feedback from various community groups are also required to ensure that the policy is genuinely responsive to the needs and challenges faced by women.

**Reality, Policies and Division of Women's Labor**

Gender reality in Indonesia has reflected various developments and challenges, including the Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) program regulated in law and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pillars as tangible evidence that gender roles and equality are still being fought for to create sustainable development targets (Tupamahu & Korlefura, 2023). Here are some crucial aspects of gender reality in Indonesia, as follows: (1) Gender Gap: Although progress has been made in some aspects, gender gaps exist in many areas. These include gaps in access to education, employment, and political participation; (2) Women's Participation: Women in Indonesia have rights guaranteed by the law, but women's participation in politics and decision-making is still low. The presence of women in parliament and leadership positions still needs to be improved; (3) Violence against Women: Violence against women, both in the household and in public places, remains a serious problem. Many organizations and institutions are working to address this issue and raise awareness about the importance of combating violence against women. (4) Women's Involvement in the Economy: Women in Indonesia are increasingly involved in the economy, both as formal workers and in the informal sector. However, they still face challenges such as wage gaps and equal access to economic opportunities. (5) Education: There has been a significant increase in women's access to education, and they now have higher participation rates at all levels of education. However, challenges such as child marriage and high school dropout rates still exist, and (6) Cultural Change: Indonesian society is experiencing complex cultural changes related to gender roles, modernization, urbanization, and media influence have changed views on gender roles.

The Indonesian government and various NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) have attempted to improve gender equality through policies, programs, and campaigns aimed at addressing gender gaps and promoting women's rights (Harirah, 2023). Although many challenges remain, progress continues to be made toward achieving greater gender equality in Indonesia. Gender policy in Indonesia has been stated in the law governing gender equality, and various initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing issues of inequality faced by women have been widely

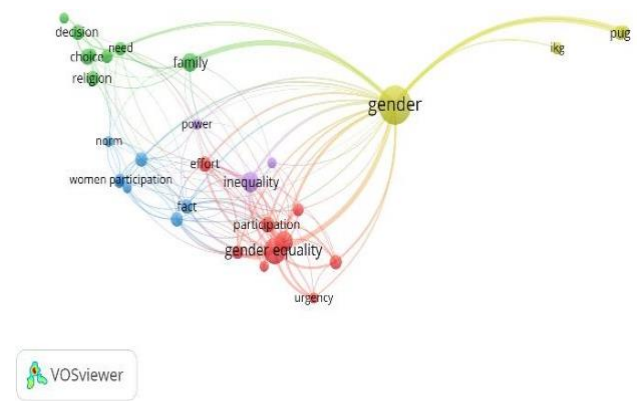
reviewed through policies and programs aimed at gender mainstreaming (PUG) in development. Here are some government policies, as follows:

No	Policy	Main Idea
1	Law No. 7	Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
2	Year 1984	Elimination of Domestic Violence (KDRT)
3	Law No. 23	Human Rights
4	Year 2004	National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025:
5	Law No. 39	Recognizing gender equality
6	National policies and programs	Advocacy and promotion of gender equality (PKH- Family Hope Program) focuses on empowering women

**Implementation and Obstacles of PUG in Indonesia**

The implementation of PUG has been carried out but is still lacking or not optimal in its implementation, and this is influenced by the lack of resources, attitudes, tendencies, and characteristics of the implementing agents. In the development of community life, forms and conditions are still found to discriminate against one party. So, it is important for implementers to understand the objectives and implementation of the policies made. Implementation of policies where the external environment also contributes to the success of public policies in equalizing gender equality. An uncondusive economic and political environment can be a source of problems for the failure of policy implementation performance.

**Figure 1: Reflective overview of gender policy in VOSviewer**



Source: Processed by Vosviewer Application (2025)

Based on the VOSviewer above explains that gender is the main priority in all aspects of the discussion of studies on equality in public policy. Gender gaps in opportunities and control over resources,

economy, power, and political participation occur everywhere. Women and girls bear the heaviest burden due to the inequality that arises, but basically, inequality is detrimental to everyone. Gender equality will strengthen the country's ability to develop, reduce poverty, and govern effectively. Quality education creates awareness of gender equality, and gender equality is one of the indicators of the implementation of sustainable development. Therefore, social awareness of gender equality is fundamental in sustainable development in Indonesia.

Implementation and obstacles in Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) in Indonesia related to gender equality in various aspects of life, such as education. There are several obstacles to the implementation of PUG in Indonesia: (1) lack of awareness and understanding of PUG; society and policymakers still have concerns about the concept of PUG and gender inequality. (2) uneven development, the implementation of PUG in Indonesia still faces challenges in development that are not based on awareness and understanding of PUG. (3) special time allocation, education, the obstacle to implementing PUG is the special time allocation in implementing gender-responsive activities so that PUG is implemented less carefully. (4) policy actors, formal and non-formal education policy actors, have a responsibility in implementing PUG, but the primary focus is on gender-responsive activities. (5) facilities and human resources are important factors that influence the success of implementing PUG policies in education.

There are several obstacles that affect PUG in Indonesia, both in households and on the broader community; (1) Social status: Gender status related to education, health, and position in decision-making has an impact on their productivity. Women generally have less access to this, which ultimately impacts their productive and reproductive roles; (2) Barriers to obtaining employment: Work is more often associated with traditional norms, where women are associated with household activities, women experience relative mobility barriers because women are frequently reluctant to work far away physically because they are always expected to be close to their children; (3) Employment status: There are different positions, women often get lower positions than men. And in terms of technology, of course, gender often gets more negative impacts than positive impacts, and (4) Double burden: Women have more double burdens than men. Where uniting family with work for women is much more complicated than for men. Therefore, female workers have simultaneous role demands from work and family, while men only have secondary role demands.

This is what then becomes some of the obstacles experienced in the implementation of PUG in Indonesia. Blindness to the concept of gender, lack of understanding of gender, and statements that consider gender issues not essential and irrelevant to discuss ultimately become obstacles in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. PUG becomes ineffective in its implementation. Despite obstacles in the implementation of PUG, efforts to improve gender equality and reduce gender disparities in Indonesia continue to be made. This involves communication, resources, characteristics, and bureaucratic structures. In addition, PUG training and education are carried out at the formal and non-formal levels of research and teaching by relevant agencies or governments.

Several initiatives carried out by the community to achieve gender equality in Indonesia, such as the Eastern Women's Conference organized by the Bakti Foundation, the Service Procurement Forum (FPL), and the National Commission on Violence Against Women with full support from the MAMPU Program, the Australia-Indonesia Partnership Program for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. This conference produced recommendations for ending violence against women in eastern Indonesia. The MAMPU (Australia-

Indonesia Partnership for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) program aims to improve access for poor women in Indonesia to gender equality and an inclusive life.

## CONCLUSION

Gender equality is essential in Indonesia's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite progress in gender equality, discrimination still occurs in various aspects of life. Gender gaps in opportunities and control over resources, economy, power, and political participation occur everywhere. Women should basically enjoy equal access to quality education in line with policies set by the government. Indonesia has focused on four primary sectors to address the issue of women's empowerment and gender equality, namely strengthening education, health, employment, and prevention of violence. Women can use the SDGs as a "collection tool" for the government to fulfill women's rights, realize gender equality and justice, and strengthen Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) in development.

Gender equality is an essential and contemporary issue that is often discussed both domestically and internationally, with the aim that women regain their rights that are controlled by the dominance of capitalism. The effectiveness of public policies on gender-based problems in Indonesia needs to be seen in terms of implementation, community participation, and tangible impact on achieving the SDGs. Continuous evaluation is required in order to ensure that policies support gender equality and contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, the success of gender-based public policies in Indonesia is not the end goal, and continuous implementation steps are key to ensuring that the policies truly have a positive impact on gender equality and support the vision of sustainable development.

This study reveals that although Indonesia has made progress in gender equality, discrimination and disparities still occur in various fields such as education, health, employment, and politics. Policies that focus on these sectors have a positive impact, but their implementation is still constrained by social norms and structures of domination that hinder gender justice. Women can use the SDGs as an advocacy tool to demand their rights and strengthen Gender Mainstreaming (PUG), but the success of the policy depends heavily on continuous implementation and active participation of the community, especially women. Therefore, consistent evaluation and monitoring are key so that policies can adapt and make a real contribution to inclusive, sustainable development.

This study has limitations, mainly because it relies on secondary data from literature reviews and bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer, so it does not explore more specific primary data and local contexts. The focus on national policies also limits the understanding of variations in implementation in regions with different social conditions. In addition, time and resource constraints limit the scope of the study, so the issue of vulnerable women is underrepresented in depth. For further research, it is recommended to use a mixed-method approach that combines primary data through interviews and field studies to obtain a more comprehensive picture of gender policy implementation. Research should also explore the role of non-governmental actors such as NGOs and the private sector and focus on vulnerable women's groups, such as people with disabilities and women in remote areas. This approach will strengthen academic relevance

and provide more applicable recommendations for policymakers and practitioners.

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