SKALA
Sinergi dan Kolaborasi untuk Akselerasi Layanan Dasar
Kemitraan Australia - Indonesia

Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia
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Australian Government

GUIDANCE NOTE

From Knowledge to Policymaking

Working with subnational government leadership to improve service delivery

October 2026

This Guidance Note examines how a knowledge ecosystem approach has supported evidence-based policymaking in Kalimantan Utara (Kaltara). The knowledge ecosystem has three elements – processes, institutions and actors – through which knowledge is generated, exchanged, assessed and used in policymaking. Drawing on collaboration between SKALA, the Australia–Indonesia partnership program, and Kaltara Provincial Government, this note identifies four enabling actions which underpin effective functioning of the ecosystem: alignment with policy context; structured dialogues; clear institutional roles; and incentives and recognition for actors who produce and use knowledge. It also recommends ways in which provincial actors, academics, civil society organisations and development partners can strengthen and sustain these arrangements.

Background

A knowledge ecosystem consists of processes, institutions and actors through which knowledge is generated, exchanged, assessed and used. It includes the relationships, rules of engagement and coordination arrangements that shape how evidence moves from production to discussion and, where relevant, into policy decisions.[1]

Within this ecosystem, data, research findings and evaluation reports, as well as professional and local knowledge, help decision-makers understand problems, assess policy options and anticipate impacts. Knowledge and evidence are only one set of influences on policy decisions, alongside political considerations, institutional mandates, capacities and interactions among actors.[2]

In Indonesia, knowledge for policymaking is generated by national data, research and innovation systems and by the Policy Analyst Functional Position (JFAK). This position was established through Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 45 of 2013 and sits within the civil-service

[1] Adapted from the concept of 'Knowledge Community' in Datta A, Nurbani R, Satria G, Antlöv H, Fatonie I & Sabri R 2018, *Policy, change and paradox in Indonesia: Implications for the use of knowledge*, Working Paper no. 29, Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI), Jakarta, p. 1.
[2] Pellini A et al. 2018, 'Introduction: Knowledge, politics and policymaking in Indonesia', in A Pellini, B Prasetiamartati, KP Nugroho, E Jackson, & F Carden (eds.), *Knowledge, politics and policymaking in Indonesia*, Springer, pp. 1–4; Pellini A, Pramusinto A & Fatonie I 2018, 'Brokering knowledge and policy analysis within the Indonesian public sector', in A Pellini et al. (eds.), *Knowledge, politics and policymaking in Indonesia*, Springer, pp. 47–48.

framework set out in Law No. 5 of 2014 on the State Civil Apparatus (which has since been replaced by Law No. 20 of 2023). Policy analysts serve across ministries, agencies and local governments, helping to generate policy and connect evidence with decision-making.

In Kaltara, policy analysts, academics, civil society organisations (CSOs) and regional government agencies (OPDs) have collaborated to strengthen the use of knowledge in policymaking. Experience in the province shows a growing awareness of the value of evidence, but the relationships, institutional arrangements and working processes that connect knowledge to decisions still need to be strengthened so that they become part of government institutions and practice.

Three elements of the knowledge ecosystem in Kalimantan Utara

The knowledge ecosystem is made up of three interlinked elements: processes, institutions and actors. The section below on enabling actions describes what helps these dimensions function effectively in practice. SKALA has helped to strengthen all three elements in Kaltara since 2024.

- **Processes** are the recurring steps through which knowledge moves from issue identification to policy drafting, review, dialogue, decision and follow-up.

  In Kaltara, the policy drafting team (e.g. analysts, academics, CSOs) engages with local government agencies to align its analysis with regional priorities. The drafting team then reviews and refines its policy draft before discussing it in a multi-stakeholder policy dialogue with technical agencies, the Regional Development Planning, Research and Innovation Agency (Bapperida) and the Regional Secretary. Follow-up is then recorded and monitored, including through the Kalimantan Utara Regional Research and Innovation Information System (SIRINDAKU) repository. SKALA helped to design and, initially, facilitate this process; as implementation progressed, Bapperida and the relevant provincial agencies assumed oversight.

- **Institutions** are the organisations with formal mandates, rules and coordination arrangements that structure how knowledge is produced, reviewed and used. Clear institutional roles are important because different parts of the policy process sit with different agencies.

  In Kaltara, the institutional roles and mandates are identified as such:

  - lead coordination – Bapperida
  - competency development – Human Resources Development Agency (BPSDM)
  - personnel and career progression – Regional Civil Service Agency (BKD)
  - organisational arrangements and working relationships – Organisation Bureau
  - mentoring, peer review and professional networking, including through a community of practice and influence (CoPI) – Kaltara chapter of the Indonesian Policy Analysts Association (INAKI)
  - initial convening and institutional linkage among the above actors – SKALA.

- **Actors** are the individuals and organisations that produce, broker, use or support the use of knowledge.

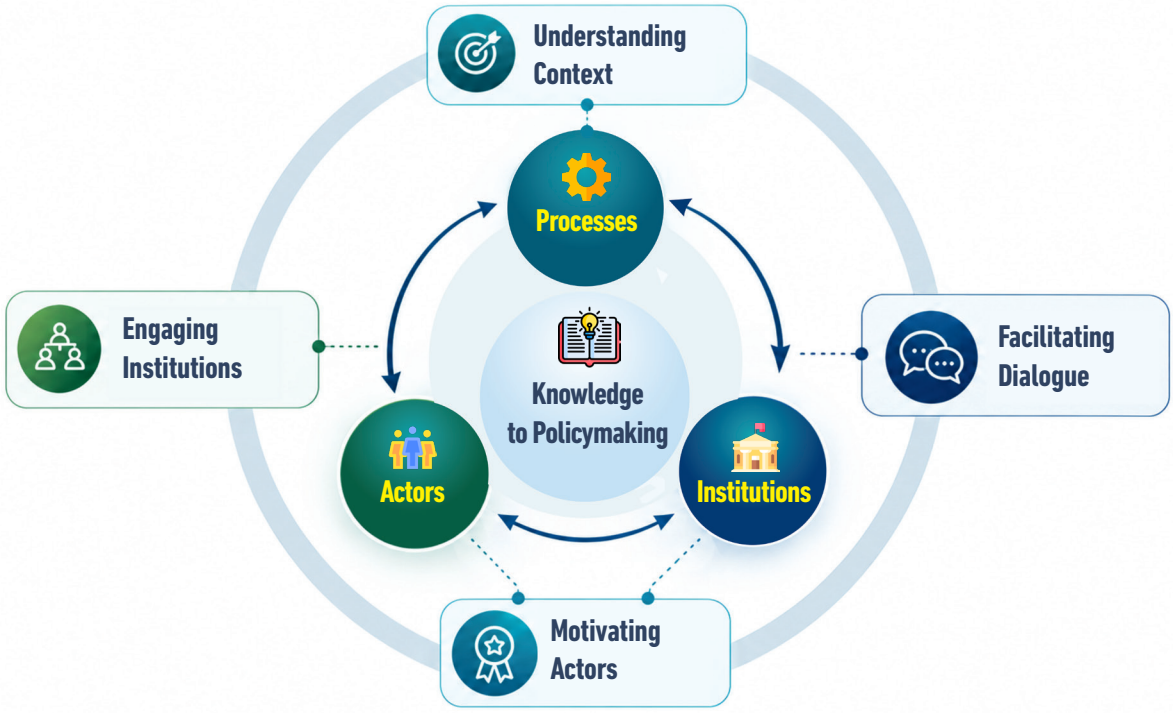
  In Kaltara, these actors include policy analysts holding JFAK positions, academics, CSOs, local government staff and senior decision-makers. Development partners may provide a supporting role through capacity building, convening and knowledge brokering, while ownership of the mechanisms remains with provincial actors.

  The province's updated 2024–26 inventory records 34 policy briefs which address a range of priority development issues. SKALA helped to develop the capacity of the policy drafting teams to better align their work with local government needs. SKALA also supported local actors to review and refine the briefs for inclusion in multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Four enabling actions for knowledge use in policymaking

The three elements of the knowledge ecosystem interact with four enabling actions to underpin effective functioning of the ecosystem – see Figure 1 for summary and explanation below.

Figure 1
How the three elements of the knowledge ecosystem interact with the four enabling actions



1. Understanding context: drafting policy relevant to the local government's agenda

Knowledge is more likely to influence decisions when the policy context is taken into account, including current agendas, priorities and decision-making processes.

At the start of the planning cycle, Bapperida identifies strategic issues in the *Regional medium-term development plan* (RPJMD), the needs of OPDs and national policies that require a local response. These issues then inform the themes for policy briefs (see example below).

> A JFAK within Kaltara's Provincial Finance and Asset Agency wrote a policy brief on efficient ways to implement changes to the 2025 Regional Budget (APBD).[3] The agency then used the brief as the basis for a staff review – an internal government document that presents analysis and recommendations to senior management. The staff review made recommendations on how to optimise local revenue, reform local expenditure, develop public-private partnership schemes, and strengthen transparency and accountability in budget management. These recommendations helped inform provincial government decision-making on fiscal reform priorities and contributed to a better evidence base for budget planning and management. See Appendix 1 for a summary of this and other policy briefs where follow-up has been documented.

2. Facilitating dialogue: discussing policy issues and recommendations

Policy dialogue provides a structured process for testing recommendations, obtaining feedback and agreeing on next steps.

As part of this process in Kaltara, the drafting team first seeks input from the relevant government agencies to refine the analysis and recommendations. Bapperida then facilitates a policy dialogue bringing together the drafting team, technical agencies and the Regional Secretary. The official or agency with authority over the issue decides whether or how to follow up the recommendations, while Bapperida manages and facilitates the process.

To trace follow-up actions, Bapperida has created documentation to record dialogue outcomes, decisions, responsible units and agencies, deadlines and the status of policy brief utilisation. Progress can then be monitored through periodic reporting and updates to the SIRINDAKU repository.

3. Engaging institutions: dividing roles and inter-agency working mechanisms

Knowledge management functions are distributed across institutions according to their mandates. Inter-agency coordination currently operates on a functional basis.

In Kaltara, Bapperida leads coordination because its development planning mandate includes cross-agency coordination and use of analysis in planning. BPSDM supports competency development, BKD manages personnel and career-related functions, and the Organisation Bureau supports organisational arrangements. INAKI complements these roles through mentoring, peer review and professional networking.

To clarify and institutionalise these working arrangements, the Kaltara Provincial Government is developing two complementary instruments:

- *JFAK governance guidelines*, which cover human resources, professional development and inter-agency working relationships
- *SIRINDAKU policy brief cycle guide*, which sets out how knowledge products move from drafting and review to dialogue, follow-up and policy uptake.

4. Motivating actors: creating incentives and recognition for knowledge producers and users

The knowledge ecosystem is more effective and sustainable when actors see value in participating. For policy analysts, policy briefs can become evidence of performance and professional development, although publication does not automatically generate 'credit points' on employment records. Recognition might also accrue via publication, opportunities to present analyses in policy forums, mentoring and peer review, and documented evidence that recommendations have been considered or used. Recognition can extend to government agencies, supervisors, mentors, reviewers and partners that contribute to the effective use of policy analysis.

Incentive and recognition mechanisms are still being developed, including with BKD, so that appropriate forms of recognition can be embedded in the provincial governance framework while remaining consistent with national JFAK rules.

[3] Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2025 and Minister of Finance Decree No. 29 of 2025 on expenditure efficiency.

Recommendations

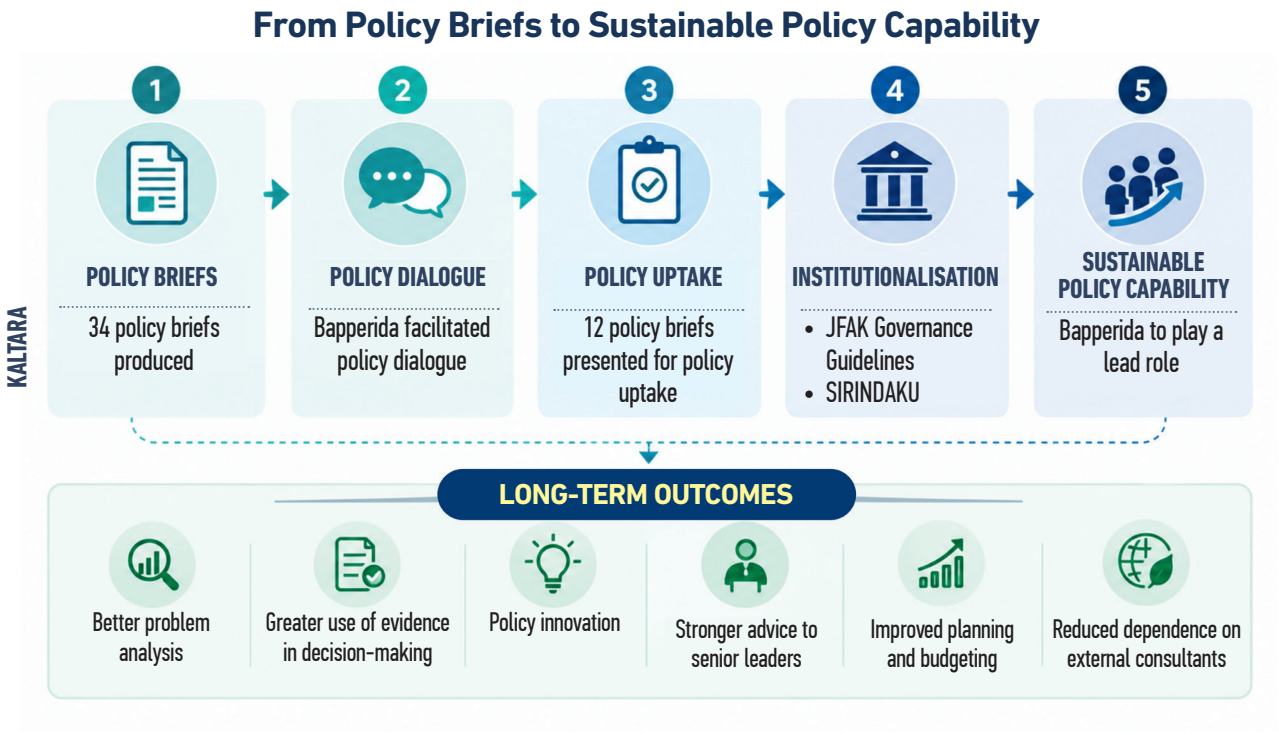
This Guidance Note makes the following recommendations organised by the knowledge ecosystem's three constituent elements:

Action	Recommendation	Responsibility (in Kaltara)
	PROCESS	
Identify regional policy themes	Set policy brief themes based on regional development priorities and decision needs, while maintaining an open route for relevant submissions from government and non-government actors.	Bapperida
Facilitate a policy dialogue	Maintain a policy dialogue process involving government agencies, higher education institutions, CSOs, the private sector and affected communities to test recommendations and agree on follow-up.	Provincial Government
Monitor brief utilisation and policy implementation	Track policy brief utilisation and follow-up through SIRINDAKU, including decisions, responsible units, timelines, evidence of implementation and reasons why any recommendations were not taken forward.	Bapperida
	INSTITUTIONS	
Provide guidance, instruments and systems to policy analysts	Finalise, formalise and implement the *JFAK governance guidelines* and the *SIRINDAKU policy brief cycle guide*, with clear mandates, working relationships and responsibilities for follow-up.	Bapperida, together with BPSDM, BKD and the Organisation Bureau
Formalise coordination mechanisms	Maintain a formal coordination mechanism that links the relevant agencies, INAKI and user departments, supported by documented decisions, follow-up responsibilities and a shared knowledge repository.	Bapperida
	ACTORS	
Strengthen capacity of policy analysts (JFAK)	Strengthen policy analysts' capacity to produce policy briefs, engage in policy dialogue and communicate evidence to decision-makers.	Provincial Government and BPSDM
Recognise contribution	Develop appropriate recognition mechanisms for policy analysts and other contributors, consistent with applicable JFAK regulations and without treating publication as an automatic entitlement to credit points.	BKD
Understand regional priorities	Align research and policy brief topics with regional priorities while maintaining analytical independence, and contribute evidence, peer review and participation in policy dialogue.	Higher education institutions and CSOs
Support provincial ownership	Take a 'supporting actor' role through capacity building, convening, knowledge brokering and technical assistance, while reinforcing provincial ownership of the mechanisms.	Development partners

Sustainability

Institutionalising the production and use of policy briefs will strengthen the Provincial Government's internal capacity and result in more sustainable development outcomes (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Recommended process to institutionalise knowledge



Conclusion

Knowledge and evidence do not move into policy automatically. The three ecosystem elements described in this note – processes, institutions and actors – provide the architecture for connecting knowledge to policy decisions.

Kaltara's experience suggests that these dimensions work more effectively when four enabling actions are present: (1) a favourable policy context, particularly alignment with current priorities and decision windows; (2) structured processes for dialogue, decision and follow-up; (3) institutional clarity about mandates and coordination; and (4) incentives and recognition that sustain the engagement of knowledge producers and users. These actions do not guarantee adoption, but they increase the likelihood that relevant evidence is considered, documented and used.

Appendix 1. Policy brief follow-up results

Between 2024 and 2026, policy analysts in Kaltara produced 34 policy briefs. They went on to present a total of 12 policies to local government bodies and relevant agencies, which were then followed up in various ways (see table below for details).

Policy brief	Agency responsible for follow-up	Follow-up on recommendations
1. Strategies to prevent school dropout in children to support achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Kalimantan Utara	Bapperida	Drafted a Governor's Regulation on a *Regional action plan to prevent school dropout among children*.
2. Accessibility and tax relief schemes for people with disability in *Benuanta Bumi* (Kalimantan Utara)	Bapperida	Implemented the SADAR Benuanta program.
3. Strengthening the One Data (Satu Data) Indonesia initiative in Kalimantan Utara Province	Bapperida	Drafted guidelines on the data cycle, operational procedures, a Circular Letter from the Regional Secretary, and a Governor's Decree on Regional Satu Data.
4. Higher education scholarships for people with disability through the *Kalimantan Utara Unggul* program	Bapperida and the Bureau of Public Welfare	Developed the *Kalimantan Utara Unggul* program.
5. Policy memorandum on Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2025 concerning Expenditure Efficiency in the Implementation of the 2025 Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget	Regional Secretariat	Submitted via staff review to the Regional Secretary as a basis for policy consideration.
6. Ensuring accurate data on social welfare service recipients (PPKS) through the optimisation of the Kalimantan Utara Social Welfare Information System (SIJOSKU)	North Kalimantan Provincial Social Affairs Department	Created a data collection mechanism for people with disability via SIJOSKU and regulations concerning PPKS.
7. Optimisation of local revenue to promote fiscal autonomy in Kalimantan Utara Province	Regional Revenue Agency	Developed an innovative watercraft tax scheme (Bakti Benuanta).
8. Promoting a collaborative regional innovation ecosystem in Kalimantan Utara	Bapperida	Drafted a Governor's Regulation on Regional Research and Innovation
9. Promoting fiscal affirmation for underdeveloped, border and outermost (3T) regions through the optimisation of adjustment factors for the General Allocation Fund	Directorate General of Fiscal Balance, Ministry of Finance	Drafted technical recommendations on the General Allocation Fund for 3T regions.
10. Accelerating compliance with vehicle tax payments through digitalisation for fiscal stability	Bapperida, BPSDM and the Regional Secretariat	Developed the digitalisation of motor vehicle tax payments.
11. Strategy for the integration of occupational health and safety licensing to strengthen regional fiscal capacity in Kalimantan Utara Province	Bapperida, BPSDM and the Regional Secretariat	Drafted a policy for the collection of heavy equipment tax.
12. Strengthening the relevance of vocational education to local labour market needs in Kalimantan Utara Province	Bapperida, BPSDM and the Regional Secretariat	Formulated vocational education guidelines.

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Sinergi dan Kolaborasi untuk Akselerasi Layanan Dasar (SKALA) is an Australia-Indonesia Partnership Program aimed at supporting the Government of Indonesia's efforts to reduce poverty and inequality by improving basic-service provisions to poor and vulnerable communities in less-developed regions.

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