

Social and Economic Development of Rural Border Area in Malaka and Belu Regencies (Border of Indonesia-Timor Leste)

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Abstract

Indonesia and Timor Leste have the same land area; these countries are located on Timor Island. It encourages interaction between regions, which can have positive or negative impacts. The adverse effects of the two countries' interaction must be minimized by formulating a strategy for developing border areas, especially village areas that directly border neighboring countries. This research aims to identify rural border communities' social and economic interactions and formulate development strategies for rural border areas in the Malaka and Belu Regencies. This research uses a qualitative research approach. The data collected includes a description of the social and cultural interactions carried out by rural communities and factual conditions that constitute strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities in developing rural border areas. The analysis results explain that the interactions between rural borders include socio-cultural and economic interactions in trade activities. The strategy for developing rural border areas is to increase defense and security and maintain social cohesion in border areas; strengthen local potential in each village; encourage rural economic activities (BUMDes or Cooperatives) to grow and develop, and export rustic products; form clusters in rural border areas with the same potential; strengthening cooperation networks with higher education, the private sector and non-governmental institutions in improving and developing rural border areas; strengthening rural economic activities with rural border markets; increasing rural community participation in border area maintenance efforts; as well as improving access to basic infrastructure, in particular electricity, roads, water and telecommunications.

Keywords: Belu Regency; development strategy; Malaka Regency; rural border areas; SWOT.

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I. Introduction

The morphology of Indonesia's territory as an archipelago makes Indonesia a region that borders several countries. Indonesia has maritime and land border areas whose sovereignty needs to be maintained. Development in border areas is prioritized on security, maintaining the stability of the country's security so that it makes a positive contribution to the welfare of society (Sarjito, 2024). The management pattern of border areas tends to be centralized due to the political system in the past being centralized and placing great emphasis on stability and security. So, border area development policies have yet to be implemented optimally and are less integrated. There are often tug-of-war interests between various parties horizontally, sectorally and vertically (Martoyo, 2016). Sovereign rights and authority in managing and utilizing this territory for the welfare and prosperity of the Indonesian people are strictly regulated in law. According to Law No. 43 of 2008 concerning State Territory, regional or border areas emphasize that the state guarantees the integrity, sovereignty, and order in Border Areas in the interests of the entire nation's welfare. With this policy, border development has become one of the country's increasingly intensive priorities. So, all forms of development carried out, both in infrastructure and institutions, are mandatory. Border areas far from the center of Government are one of the reasons these areas are less touched by development, especially in the social and economic fields. It is challenging for the Indonesian Government to maintain economic activity in the region. The security approach that has been implemented needs to be reconsidered and combined with a prosperity approach to improve people's welfare (P. Firdaus, 2020). Developing border areas based on regional characteristics can increase competitiveness and create a multiplier effect that improves the economy (Klau & Hidayah, 2021).

The urgency of border area management is strengthened by including this as a target in the 2020–2024 RPJMN, namely increasing the number of sub-districts in priority locations at state borders by improving welfare and governance (sub-districts). The number of priority locations is related to the Village Government Strengthening and Development Program (P3PD) location. This target increased from 187 sub-districts in 2019 to 222 in 2024. Meanwhile, the average value of the Border Area Management Index (IPKP) in 18 National Strategic Activity Centers (PKSN). Developing border areas is necessary because border management represents the state's presence and fulfills the rights of communities at the border. Development of border areas as centers of sustainable growth so that they can influence and become a driver of growth in the surrounding regions (Rahim et al., 2023). Regional development based on the leading sector has a more significant multiplier effect on other economic aspects.

One of Indonesia's southern borders is directly adjacent to the Timor Leste region. The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (RDTL) chose to establish an independent state and guarantee the territorial integrity of its own country in 2002. Despite the territorial and political separation, socially and anthropologically, the Indonesia-RDTL border communities are closely tied to familial and ethnic relations (Oki, 2021). It encourages strong interaction between communities in rural borders. This interaction between regions can stimulate equitable development, promoting a spread effect that benefits both regions. Optimizing spatial interactions that can increase the impact of funds inflows to the regions encourages economic growth. However, unbalanced interaction between regions can trigger regional leaks, a flow of resources out of the region that does not impact development and increases regional dependency rates (Taena et al., 2024). If there is an imbalance in economic

growth, one region will result in a generation of movement, even permanent movement, to a region with a rapidly growing economy. Not only should we focus on developing alternative regions but also prepare human resources in the area to increase literacy and accept new, futuristic things (Hidayah et al., 2024). Excessive interaction can also damage the people's national spirit at the region's border (Feka & Anin, 2023).

Based on the description of the problems above, it is necessary to minimize the negative impacts that will occur from interactions between the two countries. Thus, this research aims to examine the interactions in rural borders in the Belu and Malaka Regencies and develop development strategies for these areas by looking at regional characteristics, physical and non-physical potential, and existing forms of interaction and harmonization. In formulating our strategy, we consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by communities in border village areas. The results of this research can be used as recommendations for development policies in border areas, especially at the village level.

II. Methods

This research was located in 34 rural border areas in Belu and Malaka Regencies, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This research was conducted from April to October 2023. The data needed in this research is information related to social and economic interactions carried out by rural border communities with communities in the State of Timor Leste. The social interactions explored in this study include cultural relations and fulfilling health and education needs. Economic interactions show how in-border communities carry out trade relations to fulfil their needs. We conducted in-depth interviews with village governments and community leaders in each rustic border. Meanwhile, to answer the objectives of the rural border development strategy, in-depth interviews were conducted with the village head at the border, the head of the Regional Border Agency, the Community and Rural Development Service, and the head of the Planning and Research Development Service in each Regency. In in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, information was obtained about the development plans for border areas that had been determined, as well as obstacles and potential for border development (Supit et al., 2021). The data that has been collected is then subjected to qualitative descriptive analysis. This research uses Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis in formulating rural border development strategies.

SWOT Analysis is an analysis technique used to formulate strategies by considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an agency/organization. This technique has become the primary tool in determining strategic planning (Benzaghta et al., 2021). In SWOT analysis, you can see a strategy by paying attention to external conditions (opportunities and threats) and internal conditions (strengths and weaknesses). This analysis can also identify a program or plan's driving and inhibiting factors (Maimunah et al., 2020). Several stages are required to carry out this analysis, including:

1. Identify internal and external factors.

Identifying internal factors is a process of reflection on oneself, looking at one's strengths and weaknesses. Strength is facts related to an agency/organization's advantages compared to another. Facts about success/achievements in Belu and Malaka Regency border construction are written in a shortlist. Weakness is a short list that provides an overview of shortcomings or failures in achieving successful development in

rural border areas. Identifying weaknesses is essential to make it easier to formulate solutions to problems. Identification of external factors is the formulation of a list of facts related to external parties or those external to the agency/organization. The components of external factors consist of opportunities and threats. Opportunity is an organization/agency's potential that can be obtained from outside. Opportunities must be identified and appropriately exploited to develop rural border areas. Meanwhile, threats are all risks that may occur and must be faced by the organization. By estimating these threats, companies can plan solutions to deal with them and minimize risks.

2. Develop a SWOT matrix.

The SWOT matrix is prepared by compiling a matrix table consisting of three columns and three rows. The first column explains external conditions, and the first row describes the internal conditions of the organization/agency. In the first column and row, the points for each SWOT component that have been formulated previously are filled in. In this matrix, four quadrants of the strategy matrix will be obtained. Quadrant I explain the SO Strategy obtained by considering strengths and opportunities. In quadrant II is a WO Strategy obtained by minimizing weaknesses and exploiting opportunities. Quadrant III is the WT Strategy, which is a strategy obtained from minimizing weaknesses and threats. Meanwhile, Quadrant IV is an ST Strategy that maximizes strengths and minimizes.

Table 1: SWOT Matrix

	Strengths (S) ● ... ● ...	Weaknesses(W) ● ... ● ...
Opportunities (O) ● ... ● ...	Quadrant I (SO Strategy)	Quadrant II (WO Strategy)
Threats (T) ● ... ● ...	Quadrant IV (ST Strategy)	Quadrant III (WT Strategy)

3. Conclusion

Concluding is the final stage of data analysis activities. The conclusion-drawing stage is a process of searching for or understanding the meaning, regularity, patterns, explanations, cause and effect flow, or propositions from the results of the strategy formulated. Drawing conclusions based on the research results is carried out by describing the results of the strategy prepared, which are linked to facts and previous research. The conclusion in question explains the strategy results presented in narrative form.

III. Results, Analysis, and Discussions

3.1. Analysis of Social and Economic Interaction at the Rural Border Areas

East Timor joined Indonesia in 1975 and separated again in 1999 after conducting an opinion poll with the United Nations (UN). It was officially declared a country of Timor Leste in 2002. Indonesia and Timor Leste have very close relations, especially in the mainland area of Timor Island. It is due to the same regional and geographical characteristics, as well as the same history and culture, namely the Portuguese colony. The interactions that occur between the people of the two countries are strong. Access from rural borders in Indonesia to Timor Leste is only limited by the river. People from rural borders must pass through rivers, gardens, and forests if they want to visit between countries. The visit is generally carried out on foot with a distance of 1-5 km via the border post. However, village residents who wish to use private vehicles or public transportation can make inter-country visits via the Motaain or Motamasin State Border Crossing Post (PLBN).

Economic interaction between Indonesia and Timor Leste in the border region is included in international trade. International trade is the buying and selling of goods and services carried out between countries, including export activities or selling goods abroad and import activities, namely buying goods from abroad. International trade positively impacts a country's economic growth (Wulandari & Zuhri, 2019). The significant influence of international trade activities means that the Government provides special rules and guidelines written in ministerial regulations. International trade is an essential element of the globalization process. Protective regulations regulating reciprocal relationships in interactions must support economic activities in border areas. Apart from rules, a strategy is also needed to improve the economy of border regions (Budianta, 2010). The required strategy facilitates interactions between economic actors, individuals, and groups. Before structuring and managing the PLBN, residents in border areas had already carried out legal and illegal trade transactions. Research conducted by Pusvitasary (2017) stated that until 2016, there was still unlawful trade, especially for motorized vehicles, so there was increased supervision on unofficial border routes. However, since constructing the PLBN with a sound governance system in 2017, the Indonesian Government has provided a border market officially opened to serve trade activities between countries. Trade activities between countries generally involve buying and selling necessities for the community.

The construction of the Motaain PLBN has positively impacted increasing economic activities in border areas in Belu Regency, primarily through goods export activities (Lay & Wahyono, 2018). The same thing happened to PLBN Motamasin, which is in Malaka Regency. The goods exported to Timor Leste include mineral water, snacks, cooking oil, instant noodles, instant coffee, and others. The border market also sells export goods in other goods and equipment, such as mattresses, iron, concrete, cement, and agricultural tools (Yusliana et al., 2023). Meanwhile, imports made through PLBN Motamasin are agricultural products such as tamarind, shallots, candlenuts, and sagiko. The number of exported goods sold through the Motamasin border market has an increasing trend from 2017 to 2021, although from 2019 to 2020, there was a decline. It is due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which limits interactions and disrupts international trade activities (Prasetya et al., 2022). Suppose you compare goods exported and imported at PLBN Motamasin in research by Yusliana et al. (2023). In that case, it shows that the number of goods exported is more significant than imported, meaning that Timor Leste still depends on its need for goods from Indonesia.

When this research was conducted, people in rural borders stated that economic interactions with border communities were carried out at the border markets in PLBN, both Motaain and Motamasin. Strict security on (unofficial) rat routes has now been tightened with the construction of border security posts. The village community understands how significant the risk of illegal trade violations is if carried out. So that village communities no longer carry out illegal trading. Apart from that, the village government has also built village markets to meet the needs of its people so that there is no need to carry out illegal trade with people in neighboring villages.

Rural borders are sovereign villages with total obligations to fulfill the basic needs of their people. Rural borders have been developed with basic facilities for access to education and health. The results of observations and interviews in the field show that every village has basic education facilities such as PAUD/TK and SD. Meanwhile, junior and senior high school facilities are in the sub-district area. In each sub-district, health facilities have been built as inpatient health centers. The availability of these basic facilities can be utilized well for rural border communities so that there is no need to cross into neighboring countries to get access to education and health. Likewise, people in Timor Leste villages do not use these facilities to fulfill their basic human needs. These two countries already provide basic facilities for their people, so there needs to be social interaction to meet their needs for primary education and health facilities.

The cultural interactions between the rural border communities of Indonesia and Timor Leste have a very close relationship. It is because these people still have the same tribe and have family relationships. So, these familial relations make differences in citizenship status more fluid (Mauk et al., 2019). Cultural interactions occur in the traditional ritual activities of each tribe. These activities include building traditional houses, wedding ceremonies, death ceremonies, and other traditional ceremonies that are not considered a threat to national security. This cultural interaction is essential in harmonizing and maintaining social stability and peace in the border regional governance system. People from both countries carry out visits between the countries through border security posts spread across each village. In villages in Belu Regency, people still have Border Crossing Passes (PLB), which are used as access to cross into Timor Leste; however, most villagers in Malaka Regency who travel into Timor Leste only use KTPs as proof and collateral. Visits for traditional activities are limited to only 3-5 days.

Village communities at the border fully understand their rights when carrying out traditional visits through state border posts in each village. It is because the local community is made part of the "Border Guard." Border Guard is a group of rural border communities explicitly formed to participate in efforts to guard, maintain, and drive the development of border areas. This group consists of community leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and women's representatives (gender) who live in rural borders. Border Guard members have received technical guidance in managing state security (Mauk et al., 2019).

3.2. Strategy Development of Rural Border Area in Indonesia-RDTL

The formulation of development strategies for Indonesia-RDTL rural borders is carried out by considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In formulating the substance of each component, in-depth interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders, namely the Head of the Regional Border Management Agency, the Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency, the Community and Village Empowerment

Service, and five village heads. The synthesis of the results of in-depth interviews with stakeholders is written in Table 2.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with stakeholders, the internal factors that are strengths in developing rural areas in Belu and Malaka Regencies are:

1. Rural border communities have harmony, good social interaction, and maintain traditional culture.

The rural border communities in Belu and Malaka Regencies are villages that highly uphold culture and customs. Based on interviews, it is known that the people of both regions still have the same culture, language, and customs, so there is often high interaction. Apart from that, there are still relatives between the two countries. Border communities have maintained and preserved their culture for many years, as well as their uniqueness and exclusive traditional values, amidst the progress of the times. Through conventional rites, the community maintains its ancestral traditional heritage. When there is a formal event in one area by a particular tribe, the people will visit each other. Visits made by rural border communities are not carried out officially through migration posts; people only ask permission from the security forces in each country by recording and leaving their identity cards. These people are allowed to visit relatives in neighboring countries within a time limit of 3-7 days and are not allowed to bring vehicles. Seeing the potential for solid interaction between border communities, in November 2023, the Fronteira Festival was held, which is an event for cultural arts exchange and strengthening community reconciliation in the border areas of RDTL and Indonesia. Arts and culture delegations from Belu, Malaka, TTU, and Kupang Regencies attended this activity. Timor Leste delegation studios with various music performances, traditional dances, seminars, and dialogue with the Government.

2. There is a red belt border route that can increase accessibility for rural border communities.

The Indonesian Government has built road infrastructure on the border, known as the "Red Belt." The term belt is a symbol of binding, which binds and connects villages on the border. Meanwhile, the term red is taken from the color of the lines on the border map made by the TNI when the territory of Timor Leste was separated from Indonesia. The Red Belt Road on the eastern sector border (Belu-Malaka) was built along 179.99 kilometers with a total budget of IDR 1.6 trillion. With the construction of this route, rural border communities will have better access. Before the existence of this road, people used village roads and footpaths. However, rural border residents can use motorized vehicles to move to the city center more quickly. The road construction in this Red Belt project is also equipped with bridges in 44 locations that connect the Red Belt route with a total length of 1600 meters. Massive infrastructure development is being carried out to improve the welfare of border communities. The welfare of border communities is a parameter of state defense strength (Dewi et al., 2023).

3. Have a cross-border post (PLBN) and border posts in each village.

In maintaining the security of national borders, the Indonesian Government has built National Border Posts (PLBN) in each border area. In Belu Regency, the Motaain PLBN has been created, while in Malaka Regency, the Motamasin PLBN has been built. In the PLBN area, several buildings were built consisting of the PLBN main building, integrated inspection building, inspection yard, clinic building, carwash, weighbridge,

confiscation warehouse, kennel building, immigration checkpoint, Tasbara gate, Garuda monument, Indonesian National Armed Forces Security Post (TNI), employee mess, management office, market, multi-purpose building, Indonesian guest house, volleyball court, police post, convenience store, food court, rest area and prayer room. This PLBN functions as a state gateway that can improve the image of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in the eyes of neighboring countries and a trigger for enhancing the quality of the residential environment in border areas that have been lagging. Developing an integrated and modern PLBN is expected to increase the mobility of goods and services, open access to isolated areas, and strengthen connectivity between regions. PLBN also reflects the state's presence at the border, helps manage security, and prevents illegal activities (Hutabarat, 2022). Apart from building PLBN, which is used as an official population migration post, the Government is also making several border post points as security posts for state borders and unofficial migration routes. Considering the very close cultural relations between the two countries, where rural border communities often carry out migration for traditional interests, the Government gives special permission to border residents to make inter-country visits for these purposes with duration and conditions. Villagers who wish to visit between countries for traditional events such as weddings, deaths, or the construction of conventional houses must report to the border post guarded by the TNI. The construction of the PLBN and Border Posts has positively impacted the two countries' economy, security, and border control (Rokhanyah et al., 2023).

4. Establishment of several border markets

In the Indonesia-Timor Leste land border area, several markets were built as money circulation centers to create a multiplier effect. The Government has made two large border markets at PLBN Motaain and Motamasin. Through Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Economic Development in State Border Areas, namely the Development or Revitalization of People's Markets (Sabet and Henes Markets). Apart from that, the village government budget also helps build village markets, both permanent and semi-permanent. Based on village potential data in Belu and Malaka Regencies, one candy market and nine semi-permanent markets exist.

5. Has good agricultural potential and garden yields.

Border area development must be done as optimally as possible by developing all regional resource potential (natural, artificial, and human resources) to achieve prosperity and security. Belu Regency and Malaka Regency, which are strategic border areas, have good agricultural potential, so the central Government designated the two regions as food estate development areas; even in Belu Regency, the Rotiklot Dam was built to support this policy. The construction of the Rotiklot Dam has been proven to increase agricultural production and indirectly increase economic growth. In Malaka Regency, implementing the Malaka Agricultural Revolution policy and continuing with the food security policy to further increase potential and competitiveness in border areas. Malaka Regency can potentially develop metropolitan regions based on food crops (Klau et al., 2019). The agricultural potential and good plantations that result from these two regions further increase cross-border trade with the neighbouring country of Timor Leste. Export commodities from Malaka Regency, namely rice, corn, green beans, candlenuts, and shallots, from 2017 to 2022 are increasing even though

they are experiencing fluctuations (Yusliana et al., 2023). Belu Regency also continues international trade with Timor Leste by importing rice, green beans, candlenuts, and tamarind agricultural products. Apart from that, there is transportation connecting the two countries, namely a cross-border bus that connects Dili and Kupang via PLBN Motaian and operates every day, making it easier to move and interact between the two countries, which can increase regional growth.

6. There are public transportation facilities that connect the two countries (Kupang-Dili)

Seeing the high level of social interaction between the two countries, the governments of Indonesia and Timor Leste agreed to collaborate to improve adequate transportation facilities that facilitate access between the two countries. The Ministry of Transportation officially operates the Cross-Border Transport Service (ALBN). Legalization of this operation was carried out by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cross-border movement by Commercial Buses and Coaches. The cooperation agreement was signed by the Director General of Land Transportation and the Governor of NTT Province as representatives from Indonesia and the Director General of Transportation and Communications as representatives from Timor Leste. For the ALBN service, the Indonesian Government is providing five buses with a capacity of 24 passengers, and Timor Leste will also operate five buses with a capacity of 34 passengers. This mode of transportation serves the Kupang-Soe-Kefamenanu-Atambua-Motaian-Dili route from Indonesia, while from Timor Leste, the Dili-Tibar-Liquica-Maubara-Motaian-Kupang route. This transportation service officially operates every day starting March 30, 2023, with an IDR fee. 350,000. The operators serving from Indonesia are Perum Damri and PO Bagong Transport, while those from Timor Leste are Hamutuk Babadok Translog. This ALBN service is hoped to have a positive impact on competitiveness and economic growth in border areas.

The weaknesses in developing rural areas in Belu and Malaka Regencies are:

1. There is no equal distribution of telecommunications infrastructure.

Based on village potential data, information was obtained that only 50% (16 villages) on the border of Belu and Malaka have Toweb BTS with one to two buildings. With the availability of telecommunications infrastructure, only 16 villages have strong signals, and the rest have weak signals. Each village gets telephone signals from one to two types of cellular operators, namely Telkomsel and Indosat. Moreover, 80% of villages do not have G/LTE internet access (Figure 1). Telecommunication access in border areas can be categorized as poor and uneven. It aligns with research conducted by Soares et al. (2020), which states that providing telecommunications infrastructure networks at borders requires the addition of BTS and STO to meet community needs.

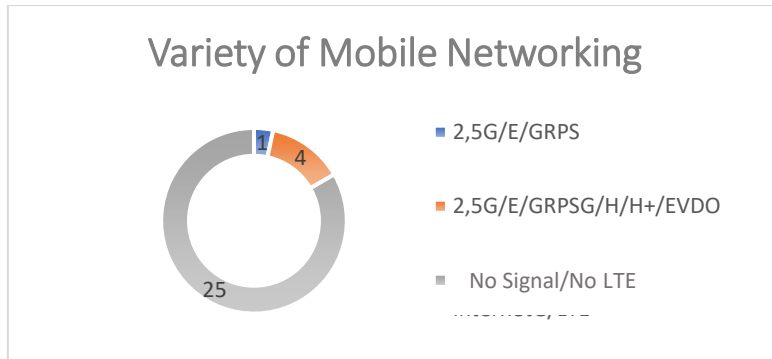


Figure 1: Variety of Mobile Networking

Source: BPS, 2022

Even though many national development policies have been implemented, there are still border areas where infrastructure needs to be improved, so these areas are isolated and underdeveloped. Border areas in NTT Province generally use technology in the community, both in terms of the ability of business actors to operate computers and to access the internet in certain areas (Saleh & Hadiyat, 2016). However, based on the results of field observations and interviews, it is known that there are still several rural borders that still need access to communication networks. It is due to the geographic conditions of the area, which are difficult to reach. Border communities get internet access from Timor Leste because the network is more vital. It encourages people to buy the Telemor provider, which is Timor Leste's internet access provider. Some communities, such as Telkomsel and XL, even have to go to neighboring villages or be in hilly areas to get internet access. It threatens border areas because it causes money to flow out to neighboring areas or regional leaks. Apart from that, from a state security perspective, this lack of attention to border management can reduce the nationalism of people who feel their needs cannot be met (Ramin, 2016).

2. There is no proper maintenance of road infrastructure and clean water.

During the period during which this research study was carried out, facts were obtained in the field that several roads in rural borders were damaged. This damage also occurred on the Red Belt route built by the Government. It is influenced by topographic conditions, hilly areas, geological conditions, and areas with problematic Bobonaro clay soil (prone to landslides). With these soil characteristics, road repairs are needed by paying attention to suitable quality materials. During the construction period, you must also pay attention to weather conditions to optimize the construction process. Apart from that, special road care and maintenance are also needed to ensure that increased accessibility for border communities can be sustainable.

Sources of water for drinking and cooking needs and toilet washing (MCK) needs in rural borders are obtained from several sources (Figure 2). Potential data shows that most rural border communities depend on natural springs for their water needs. Some rural border communities experience difficulties in accessing clean water, especially during the dry season (Soares et al., 2020). It causes residential areas to be quite far from water sources. Clean water is the primary human need for life, so infrastructure support can make it easier to fulfill this need. Infrastructure development in border areas is

necessary as a benchmark for fulfilling constitutional rights in border areas (Hutauruk, 2019).

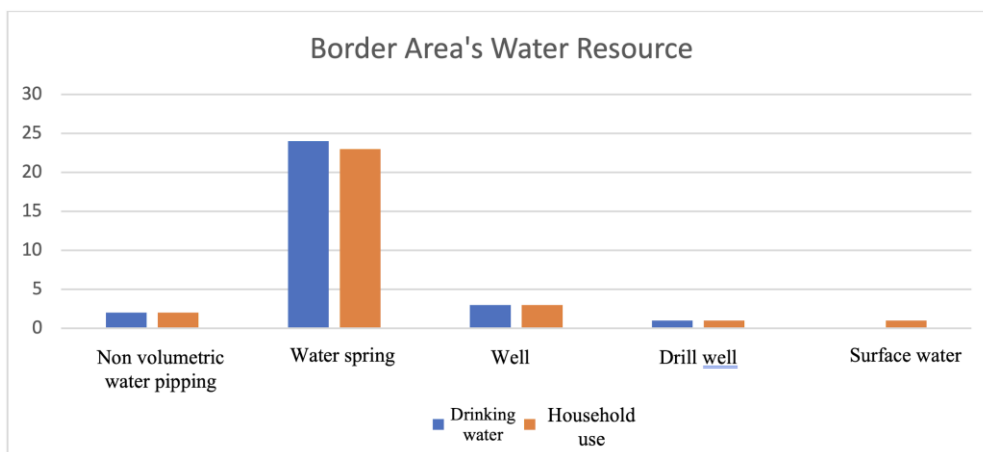


Figure 2: Border Area's Water Resource

Source: BPS, 2022

3. Budget limitations in border development

Border areas play an essential role in the national development framework. In its development, border areas act as the front porches of the Republic of Indonesia, which reflects itself and a benchmark for national development. Its strategic position makes the development of border areas one of the national development priorities (Fachri, 2016). PLBN, red belt roads, electricity, and water, compared to village government policies, which need to be revised regarding border area management. The results of interviews with stakeholders in border area management stated that the allocation of funds available for border development still needs to be improved. It causes the development and provision of basic infrastructure in the area to be slower. The development of border infrastructure in Belu Regency based on Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Economic Development in State Border Areas in Aruk, Motaain, and Skouw targets 21 programs to be completed in 2022; however, only 11 programs can be completed in that year.

4. There needs to be equitable distribution of development in rural borders.

Development at the border is a positive change. There are changes in the level of village development in border areas, especially in Belu Regency. In 2020-2022, 2 rural borders changed from underdeveloped to developed villages, and five underdeveloped villages became developing villages. However, in the same period, there were five villages in Belu Regency whose status remained the same, with the status of underdeveloped villages. In the same year, rural borders in Malaka Regency also did not experience changes in the status of village development levels. The four villages on the border of Malaka Regency are underdeveloped.

Meanwhile, external factors show several opportunities and threats that exist in the development of rural borders. The opportunities for developing rural borders include:

1. Rural border communities still have similarities and ethnic unity with residents on the borders of the RDTL State

The people of these rural borders still have ethnic similarities with the village people in Timor Leste. The course of history has caused the people of the two countries to become politically separated. Ethnic groups in rural borders have strong customary and cultural rules (Kennedy, 2020). The social interaction becomes fluid and is not limited or hindered by state administrative boundaries, especially if the community has similar ethnicities and kinship ties (Saleh, 2015). Residents in Belu and Malaka Regencies build economic networks as a form of social solidarity to control financial resources for their welfare. By knowing the harmonization that is taking place, it can show the existing solidarity attitude (Suwartiningsih et al., 2018). Harmonization and interaction in border areas can indicate the form of social resilience that exists in that community. Social resilience in a community is also greatly influenced and depends on infrastructure assets, natural capital, social capital, political capital, economic capital, physical capital, and human capital, all of which can be identified as potential (Suryani, 2019). This research aims to describe, know and analyze management of village funds management. Management of village Funds management is measured through planning, implementation, supervision and responsibility or reporting. The research was conducted in Sungai Gelam village, Muaro District, Padang Gelam District. The type of data used in this study is primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques are triangulated (combined) i.e. observation, interviews, libraries, and documentation. This research is descriptive using a qualitative approach and the analysis is inductive or qualitative. Based on the results of the research, all processes in the management phases of the village fund management have been implemented, but the results for the planning and implementation process are still not optimal. This can be seen from the difference between the village's income budget and the realization of the village's income, where the realization of the village revenue is smaller than the planned village's income budget, as well as the amount of the village expenditure is not clear Thus grouped into other unexpected shopping fields. The amount of realization of village expenditure is greater than the amount of village revenue resulting in excess village expenditure. At the supervision and accountability stage or report the village funds are good enough. Local government support as well as human resources owned are supporting factors in conducting good Village fund management management. While the inhibitory factor is the concern for the planning between the village and the subdistrict is still not in sync, still the low allocation of village funds to support the operation of village governance and lack of socialization about the management of village funds to the village community (Ghafur, 2016). This homogeneity of societal characteristics provides opportunities for easy acceptance of policies in border areas involving the two countries.

2. Has the opportunity to become an outlet and driver of regional economic activity.

The strategic position of the border region provides opportunities as a showcase for Indonesian products. Neighboring countries are potential markets that can be utilized by internal producers in border areas and nationally. With the function of rural borders as economic outlets, it is hoped that small-scale economic activities in border areas can move and provide a multiplier effect. Border areas are the front line of a country, which is a zone of social and economic contact between citizens of neighboring

countries. Trade carried out by border communities can increase welfare and improve regional development (Yusliana et al., 2023).

3. Each village on the border has a budget that its autonomy can manage.

Since the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning villages, villages have had the power of autonomy in managing all their development, including financial management. Each village is given a particular budget called the Village Fund. Village funds are development budgets given to villages from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget portion, which is transferred through the district/city Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. Village funds can finance government administration, implementation, community development, and community empowerment. It means that villages can use these budgets to participate in accelerating the development of rural borders. The village government is expected to utilize the budget by optimally preparing and implementing village development programs through good and correct management of village funds (Suryani, 2019).

The threats to the development of villages on the border of Indonesia and Timor Leste are:

1. Degradation/weakness of nationalism and love for the country

Border areas are areas whose main characteristics are the social, economic, financial, and regional accessibility conditions, which are low, and the main problems that are currently of significant concern are the community's economy and uneven development. This condition is considered to encourage people to get involved in the illegal economy to fulfill their daily needs or act practically in fulfilling their lives without paying attention to other aspects that might endanger or threaten the integrity, strength of nationalism, and sovereignty of their country (Bahzar, 2014). Nationalism is an understanding of maintaining and creating national sovereignty by realizing a concept of shared identity for a group of people with the same goals or ideals in learning the interests of their nation (Santoso et al., 2023). The understanding of nationalism states that an individual's highest allegiance and loyalty must be exalted to his country and nation so that there is a deep feeling and a close bond towards his homeland, with socio-cultural traditions, as well as official leaders in his area in the course of history with powers that fluctuate according to the development and dynamics of the times (Berliana et al., 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the national identity of people living in border areas. This identity can represent a special aspect of social cohesion because it is rooted in the assumption of sameness and includes emotional dimensions of loyalty, affiliation, and commitment that are much more specific and unique than general trust because it is rooted in the assumption of sameness (Istiqomah, 2017). Degradation of nationalism is considered to occur due to the weakening of the ideology used by society in a region and the decline in applying Pancasila values as the nation's ideology. Degradation of nationalism is vulnerable to people living in border areas. Border areas are considered where two cultures, customs, and ideologies mix. This mixing has the potential to cause degradation in one of them. One of the degradations of nationalism can be seen in the use of language. Indonesian is an instrument in implementing nationalism because language is considered the identity of a country. People who live in the Belu and Malaka Regencies use Tetun, the regional language of the Timor Indonesian region. According to Arissusila (2020), the

degradation of language use can be caused by rational choice, uniformity, and cultural imperialism. So, efforts that can be made to minimize the degradation that occurs is to overcome the causes. The choice of rationality comes from individuals, so intervention needs to be carried out by providing information and knowledge regarding the importance of using Indonesian to the community. Uniformity or uniformity needs to be established in terms of language, for example, the obligation for students to speak Indonesian at school. Hopefully, uniformity at the school level will foster a sense of nationalism through language. Cultural imperialism can be minimized by preventing the entanglement of the people of Belu and Malaka Regencies in cultural values outside Indonesian culture. This imperialism can be prevented by strengthening the local culture of Belu and Malaka at every generation level. In the border area, there are indirectly high socio-cultural relations between the people of the two countries. The existence of similarities in terms of race, ethnicity, and ancestry can trigger the same perception or intention, namely wanting independence, which, in the end, can lead to the degradation of nationalism in society (Bria, 2018). Apart from that, the inadequate availability of facilities and infrastructure such as electricity and telecommunications networks are an obstacle for border communities to find out about the latest conditions in their country or show broadcasts on television related to nationalism. Feka & Anin (2023) research regarding the value of nationalism in the border areas of Indonesia and Timor Leste is the relevance of community nationalism values through cooperation, community participation in government affairs, participating in celebrating historic days and participating in guarding the borders of the Republic of Indonesia, but there are obstacles in enforcement. Nationalism, namely a lack of understanding of the values of nationalism due to the lack of human resource support.

2. Illegal trade that the community can carry out through rat routes.

Forests and the Malikaba River geographically limit the land border between Indonesia and Timor Leste. These conditions make it very easy for illegal trading activities to occur. Cases of Illegal Entry and smuggling of goods, especially Fuel Oil (BBM), are serious problems (Ma'mun, 2014). It was triggered by differences in commodity prices and high consumer demand from Timor Leste (Nino, 2018). The condition of people's low income and the inability to fully guarantee the survival of border communities is also a factor causing illegal trade (Tahu, 2019). Data shows that in 2015-2017, there was a very high increase in incidents of smuggling of goods. However, since the PLBN was built and the border posts were tightened, the trend of illegal trade has decreased (Figure 3). It is inseparable from the joint efforts made by the two countries.

Through the TNI and Polri, the Indonesian Government has collaborated with Timor Leste security forces to try smuggling. Security forces from Indonesia and Timor Leste have thwarted many attempts to smuggle goods or illegal entry from Indonesia to Timor Leste and vice versa. If this good security and security system is not improved and maintained, it is very possible that smuggling will occur again. The Government needs to anticipate military threats by adding security posts and improving the quality of personnel, while in dealing with non-military threats, government policies include repatriation and resettlement and improving people's living standards (Uly et al., 2023). Activities that can strengthen cooperation include joint training between the Indonesian National Police (Polri) and the Policia Nacional de Timor Leste (PNTL) in

collaboration. This training aims to overcome various cross-border problems, including illegal entry, smuggling, illegal trade, and the threat of terrorism (Rokhaniyah et al., 2023). Anticipation of the circulation of unlawful goods in Indonesia is carried out through DJBC, which monitors illegal goods and operations related to collecting tax import duties (Djong, 2022)



Figure 3: Number of Customs Garment Smuggling Cases in Atambua.

Source: IJRSM 2023

The strategy for developing rural borders, especially in the land border areas between Indonesia and Timor Leste, is obtained by considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. By viewing the strengths to maximize opportunities that may occur, it is necessary to:

Table 2: SWOT Matrix for Development Strategy for Indonesia-RDTL Rural Borders

	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<p>Rural border communities have harmony, good social interaction, and maintain traditional culture.</p> <p>There is a red belt border route that can increase accessibility for rural border communities.</p> <p>Have a cross-border post (PLBN) and border posts in each village.</p> <p>Establishment of several border markets</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no equal distribution of telecommunications infrastructure. 2. There is no proper maintenance of road infrastructure and clean water. 3. Budget limitations in border development 4. There needs to be equitable distribution of development in rural borders.

	<p>Has good agricultural potential and garden yields.</p> <p>There are public transportation facilities that connect the two countries (Kupang-Dili)</p>	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural border communities still have similarities and ethnic unity with residents on the borders of the RDTL State 2. Can become an outlet and driver of regional economic activity. 3. Each village on the border has a budget that its autonomy can manage 	<p>SO Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing defense and security and maintaining social cohesion in border areas (S1, O1) 2. Strengthening local potential in each village (S5, O2) 3. Encourage village economic activities (BUMDes or Cooperatives) to grow and develop (S4, S5, O3) 4. Encourage village product export activities (S2, S5, S6, O2) 	<p>WO Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formation of clusters in rural borders with the same potential (W4, O2) 2. Strengthening cooperation networks with higher education, the private sector, and non-governmental institutions in strengthening and developing rural borders (W3, O2) 3. Improving the quality and access to basic infrastructure (electricity, roads, water, and telecommunications) sourced from village funds (W1, W2, O3)
<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Degradation/weakness of nationalism and love for the country 2. Illegal trade that the community can carry out through rat routes 	<p>ST Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening village economic activities with rural border markets (S5, T2) 2. Increase village community participation in border area maintenance efforts (S1, S3, T1) 	<p>WT Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing bilateral cooperation to maintain security between the two countries (W2, T2). 2. Improving the quality of human resources through implementing the central values of character education (W4, T1)

1. Increasing defense and security and maintaining social cohesion in border areas

Social cohesion is something that needs to be done to maintain sovereignty. Border communities are considered more vulnerable to influence because they directly border areas outside the country. One instrument that can be used to increase social cohesion is strengthening community communities. This strengthening can be done

through actor-centered power (ACP) or social networks. ACPs have different priorities and conflicting interests regarding resources, which encourage actors to influence the formulation and implementation of policies and decision-making based on their power (Prabowo et al., 2016). Social networks look at an individual's social environment to explain the individual's characteristics, whether through influence or information exchange. Increasing the defense and security of border areas can be carried out using various approaches, namely strengthening logistics networks and information systems, improving public services for border communities, and monitoring regional borders (Ayu et al., 2022; Hartati et al., 2022).

2. Strengthening local potential in each village

In village development, it is necessary to pay attention to the potential problems of the village, which must be measurable so that the planning that will be carried out can be properly on target and easy to measure/evaluate. Strengthening is needed to improve the potential function of existing resources. This strengthening can be done by mapping economic activities per village. Village potential mapping involves village communities in deliberation (Mardiana et al., 2020). One way is to strengthen local potential by increasing the added value of natural resource products previously produced by a region (Aditiawati et al., 2016). The potential of the villages on the border of Belu and Malaka is diverse; several villages have natural and religious tourism potential, small industrial potential in making traditional woven cloth, and the main potential in agricultural activities. These potentials need assistance to be processed and packaged so that they provide added value that can strengthen the economy of village communities.

3. Encourage village economic activities (BUMDes or Cooperatives) to grow and develop.

Village economic activities are economic activities that are driven or owned by the town (Hidayah, 2019). The form of village economic enterprise can be a village-owned enterprise or village unit cooperative (KUD), both of which have community economic origins. BUMDes and KUD have the same function of mobilizing and encouraging community economic activities. So that it can improve the welfare of village communities, increasing the welfare of village communities can be achieved because BUMDes functions as a strengthening of social solidarity and collective bargaining power (Murwadji et al., 2017). The level of welfare of the village community will develop if the KUD works continue to be good and its administrators work honestly and responsibly; then, everyone will feel the benefits when cooperatives appear in villages (Amruh & Rahmayati, 2022). These village economic activities can source Original Village Income (PADes), encouraging village independence (Hidayah et al., 2020; Kasih, 2022). Belu and Malaka Regencies need BUMDes with a good management category. So, efforts must be made to encourage village economic development by forming BUMDes or KUD.

4. Encourage village product export activities.

Border areas have good export opportunities because locations bordering other countries widen the business market. In the long term, exports and imports significantly affect economic growth (Putra, 2022). If the value of exports increases, total aggregate expenditure increases so that economic growth can increase. Then, the import variable has a negative and significant effect on economic growth because the rise in goods and

services imported into the country will cause an increase in goods produced abroad and reduce domestic productivity to grow the economy (Nurdani & Puspitasari, 2023). So, encouraging eco-sports must be increased to achieve better regional economic growth. Higher exports will open more jobs (Taslim, 2023). So far, the export activity carried out by rural communities is selling products obtained from Kupang. It is necessary to develop local village products that can have export value.

In developing rural borders, several strategies are needed that take into account opportunities to overcome existing weaknesses, namely:

1. Formation of clusters in rural borders with the same potential

Clustering is a process of grouping data that is similar to one another and dissimilar to data in other groups (Naldy & Andri, 2021). Belu Regency has 30 rural borders, and Malaka Regency has four rural borders. These villages are in different village statuses, either advanced, developing, or underdeveloped village status. This status is created from several economic, social, and infrastructure indicators. The growth and development of villages in these two districts are dynamic, as can be seen from changes in village status that have occurred in the last few years. These dynamic changes require mapping or clustering to make the development planning direction more focused, effective, and right on target. Clustering is needed to organize the distribution and to know the characteristics so that the characteristics of each village that will be developed are known. It will then be adjusted to the implemented strategy (Sarasvananda et al., 2021). In other conditions, clustering is carried out to help communities manage their own regional superior economic businesses (Rauf & Padhil, 2024). There are alternatives to clustering, namely expanding the scope of evaluation and implementing a blending strategy (Mardiana & Tampunolon, 2021). This blending strategy is related to cooperation between related actors and the environment in a region. Village grouping is based on similarities in physical characteristics, village categories, and functional characteristics of the villages. This grouping refers to potential agri-business, fishermen's, industrial, and tourism villages. This clustering can encourage the existence of new growth centers so that they can have a spreading effect in border areas (Rani, 2012). The cluster approach in regional economic development can be an effective tool for regional economic development policies and integrated technology policies (Dewanti et al., 2015).

2. Strengthening cooperation networks with higher education, the private sector, and non-governmental institutions in improving and developing rural borders

Developing border areas requires an integrated and sustainable management mechanism because there will always be positive and negative interactions with neighboring countries in these border spaces (Arifin, 2013). So, border management requires the involvement of various private sectors, non-governmental institutions, and universities. Collaboration with higher education is primarily in the tri dharma of providing access to higher education for border communities, improving the quality of human resources, assisting in developing skills, and utilizing science and technology from research studies to establish border potential. Collaboration with the private sector is needed to support infrastructure and empower rural border communities to strengthen village potential through CSR schemes. Collaboration with non-governmental institutions is required to assist village communities in managing

resources. By establishing cooperation between the three actors, the collaboration results can stimulate regional development, whose long-term goal is to attract developer interest.

3. Improving the quality and access to basic infrastructure (electricity, roads, water, and telecommunications) sourced from village funds.

In increasing equitable development, especially in rural borders. Regarding providing electricity, 5% of rural border residents in Belu and Malaka Regencies have yet to receive electricity, especially the people in Debululik Village and Lutha Rato Village. Meeting electricity needs in rural borders can be completed from the PLN network or by developing renewable electrical energy using solar power, considering that the average temperature conditions in Belu and Malaka Regencies are high, namely 30-32°. The construction of main roads falls under the authority of the central Government to carry out maintenance and repairs on parts of the road that experience landslides. Special treatment is required, considering the hilly and steep contours of the area. Meanwhile, the village government can implement local road and environmental improvements using the village budget. Providing water is very important in life in several villages that are still experiencing water shortages. In providing a water source, it is necessary to identify each village's source point and pipe them to residential areas. Furthermore, to meet telecommunications needs, the Government must encourage providers to add BTS points in 14 villages that still need telephone signals or increase the coverage capacity of internet signal services. Border infrastructure development is essential to maintain the security and development of border areas (Julqurniati & Susanty, 2019). Critical infrastructure development in rural borders can be carried out using village funds. Optimal utilization of village funds through rural infrastructure development can encourage the realization of independent and competitive villages (Farida et al., 2021; Irmansyah et al., 2021).

By considering the strength to overcome threats, several things are needed to realize sustainable rural border development, namely:

1. Strengthening village economic activities with border village markets.

The Government has built several market locations on the border. It has enormous potential as a driving force for the village economy, which can provide a multiplier effect. The market has multiple roles which not only play a role in carrying out economic activities but also become a place where the process of cultural interaction takes place so that people can easily see changes in values, ideas, norms, beliefs, and patterned activities of humans in society (Hermansyah, 2011). Strengthening the economy through developing border village markets can be done through several things, such as supporting regulations that regulate the interaction of economic actors, laws that regulate the export and import of goods, increasing market accessibility, involving MSME entrepreneurs, and expanding target markets.

2. Increase village community participation in efforts to maintain border areas.

Community participation in maintaining border areas is a form of citizen contribution in the decision-making process based on appropriate information. Participation enables tremendous changes in people's thinking (Sumardjo, 2010). Changes that occur through the participation process will be more meaningful and beneficial for meeting the needs of society as a subject of development. Community

participation in development communication in protecting border areas can be seen in hamlet Musrenbang (village development deliberations) activities, routine community meetings or community consultations, and other activities in the village. The meeting was held to convey information, ideas, and opinions from all residents so that the village development process could be carried out sustainably and that people in border areas between countries could improve their welfare. Community involvement is also needed in maintaining state security, such as involvement in securing state borders, maintaining harmony between countries, and programs for implementing nationalism in everyday life. Community involvement in implementing nationalism using the habituation method has been proven to increase the nationalism of border communities (Keraf & Feka, 2022).

Recognizing the threats and weaknesses in the development of border villages, the Government needs to:

1. Increasing bilateral cooperation to maintain security between the two countries.

Indonesia and Timor Leste already cooperate in security and defense aspects involving the police (Rokhaniyah et al., 2023). Indonesia's bilateral cooperation with Timor Leste needs to be maintained and strengthened to prevent illegal activities that may occur at the border. Apart from being focused on security, cooperation must also be developed to regulate relations between economic activities at the border in the international trade scheme.

2. Improving the quality of human resources through implementing the central values of character education

Fornt to increase security, apart from appropriate strategies, it is also necessary to instill a love for the country in the people of border areas (Ayu et al., 2022). Love for one's country is a national character created due to civilization through character education (Firdaus & Dewi, 2021). Character education is a system that instills character values in students, which contains components of knowledge, individual awareness, and determination, as well as the will and action to implement values, both towards God Almighty, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, as well as the nation, so that a human being will be created (Suwartiningsih et al., 2018). The good values in character education in Indonesia include religion, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love of the country, respect for achievement, friendly communication, and love of peace, likes reading, and cares about the environment, social affairs, and responsibility. Border areas are regions threatening state sovereignty from internal and external disturbances, and people in border areas must be instilled explicitly with national values (Supriyono et al., 2022). Instilling these values through formal education activities in elementary schools and universities and informally in border communities.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

The result analysis explains that the interactions between rural border communities include socio-cultural and economic interactions in trade activities. Social and cultural interactions between rural communities on the border of Indonesia and Timor Leste occur because these communities have the same ethnicity. So, this causes traditional and cultural

activities to be carried out jointly in Indonesia and Timor Leste. Traditional activities often carried out by people in these two countries include weddings, deaths, and building traditional houses. Economic interactions occur in trade activities between countries, which the Government legally facilitates. Buying and selling transactions by communities of the two countries are carried out at the border markets located at PLBN Motaain and Motamasin. No social interaction was found in fulfilling basic needs such as water, electricity, education, and health. Each country has fulfilled these basic service standards.

The strategies that can be implemented in developing rural border areas by considering strengths to maximize opportunities are increasing defense and security, maintaining social cohesion in border areas, strengthening local potential in each village, encouraging rural economic activities (BUMDes or Cooperatives) to grow and develop; and promote export activities of village products. In developing rural border areas, several strategies are needed that consider opportunities to overcome weaknesses, forming clusters in rural border areas with the same potential and strengthening cooperation networks with higher education, the private sector, and non-governmental institutions in improving and developing rural border areas. By considering the strength to overcome threats, it is necessary to strengthen rural economic activities with rural border markets and increase rural community participation in efforts to maintain border areas. Recognizing the threats and weaknesses in developing rural border areas, the Government must improve access to basic infrastructure, particularly electricity, roads, water, and telecommunications.

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