

Determining Priorities for Government Assistance Through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) Approaches Supports the Empowerment of Shallot Farmers in Enrekang Regency

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Abstract. *This study aimed to determine government assistance priorities to support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) approaches. Community service activities were conducted from April 6–10, 2026, involving 30 participants consisting of government officials, agricultural extension officers, farmer group leaders, and shallot farmers. The FGD identified twelve types of government assistance required by farmers, which were then prioritized using AHP based on human, business, institutional, and environmental development aspects. The results revealed that capital facilitation ranked as the highest priority (0.2314), followed by agricultural machinery (0.1947), production inputs (0.1486), technical training (0.1129), internships (0.0851), and marketing support (0.0635). Lower-priority assistance included road rehabilitation, profit-sharing regulation, legal farmer groups, insurance subsidies, environmental conservation, and research dissemination. These findings indicate that business and human development assistance are more urgently needed to strengthen farmer productivity, income, and long-term empowerment in shallot farming systems.*

Keywords: *Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), Focus Group Discussion, Government Assistance, Shallot Farmers, Farmer Empowerment*

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INTRODUCTION

Shallots are the most widely cultivated seasonal horticultural crop by farmers in Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi Province. Shallots account for 28.24% of the total crop, followed by cayenne pepper (23.53%), tomatoes (17.13%), cabbage (13.47%), spring onions (10.91%), and seven other commodities (6.72%) out of a total of 25,386 farmers. Shallot farmers face several key challenges each planting season, including the procurement of production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides) due to limited capital, crop drought during the dry season, pest and disease attacks, and post-harvest handling issues, particularly due to the short shelf life of shallots.

To address this issue, the government has implemented several policies, including subsidies for fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides, subsidies for farm insurance premiums, financing assistance in the form of low-interest micro-enterprise loans, agricultural machinery, construction/rehabilitation of farm road infrastructure, and several other policies. However, some of this government assistance has not yet fully benefited farmers (Mokgomo et al., 2022;

Glauber et al., 2002). This is evidenced by the continued presence of horticultural farmers, including shallot farmers, who constitute 28.80 percent of all farmers working in the agricultural sector in Enrekang Regency (Tussadia & Halim, 2023; Azizah, 2025; Pujawiyatna, 2024; Agung, 2023).

This phenomenon is suspected to be one of the impacts of government assistance that does not prioritize budget availability and farmer needs. As a result, farmers may receive government assistance but are unable to utilize it because it does not align with their needs. In this regard, Community Service (PKM) activities have been conducted, including determining government assistance priorities through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency.

Literature Review

Government Assistance in the Agricultural Sector

The central and regional governments distribute various agricultural sector assistance programs to improve food security and farmer welfare (Lencucha et al., 2020; Rusastra & Simatupang, 2005; Del et al., 2007; Chapoto et al., 2016). This assistance includes subsidized fertilizer, superior seeds, agricultural tools and machinery, as well as access to capital and entrepreneurship training for young farmers.

Fertilizer subsidies have long been implemented, along with various accompanying policies, such as fertilizer procurement, distribution, and monitoring of subsidized fertilizers. According to Darwis (2013), the implementation of the fertilizer subsidy policy has not been optimal, necessitating improvements such as: (a) increasing fertilizer allocation (quota) from one year's requirement to a two-year requirement breakdown; (b) establishing the final distribution point at the farmer group (line v); (c) establishing retail kiosks in accordance with appropriate regulations; and (d) allocating sufficient funds and appointing permanent staff for the operations of PPNS and KP3 officers. The national subsidized fertilizer allocation in recent years has consisted of urea, NPK, ZA, and organic fertilizers, distributed through official kiosks. Distribution is based on updated e-RDKK data.

Government agricultural machinery and seed assistance primarily consists of tractors, water pumps, combine harvesters, rice and corn seeds, and free fertilizer distributed directly to farmer groups (Joshi et al., 2019; Sims & Kienzle, 2017; Liao et al., 2022). Research on agricultural equipment and machinery (alsintan) assistance for horticulture generally focuses on evaluating distribution effectiveness, financial feasibility, and its impact on increased productivity. Studies have shown that the use of agricultural equipment such as tractors, water pumps, cultivators, and sprayers can reduce production costs and improve time efficiency, although a lack of technical training remains a challenge.

Handayani's (2022) study, "Effectiveness of Agricultural Equipment Distribution by the Food Crops and Horticulture Service (TPHP) in Tohtisari Village, Toili District, Banggai Regency," indicates that the distribution of agricultural equipment assistance has been quite effective, with targeted distribution and adequate outreach, thus helping to increase productivity and farm efficiency. However, achievement of program objectives remains limited by obstacles such as a lack of ongoing technical training for farmers and weak institutional frameworks (Becerra-Encinales et al., 2024; Minh et al., 2010; Vasavi et al., 2025; Davis et al., 2008). Equipment distribution has been monitored routinely, but the frequency and quality of training need to be improved to ensure optimal use and proper maintenance. Factors influencing distribution effectiveness include the characteristics of the distribution organization, environmental conditions, farmer/operator competency, and program implementation management (Baudot et al., 2024; Reis et al., 2020).

The results of a study by Rafi'e et al. (2026), entitled "Effectiveness of the Agricultural Machinery (Alsintan) Assistance Program in the Agricultural Infrastructure and Facilities (PSP) Sector of the Department of Agriculture in Danau Panggang District (Case Study: Manarap Hulu

Village and Darussalam Village)," indicate that overall program implementation is categorized as moderately effective. This indicates that not all of Campbell's effectiveness indicators have been optimally achieved. Regarding target success, equitable distribution of aid is still considered ineffective because agricultural machinery is not evenly distributed among groups and villages. However, the affordability of aid and its suitability to farmer groups are categorized as moderately effective, although it does not fully meet farmers' productive needs (Wens et al., 2022; Manyanga et al., 2025; Mahaputra et al., 2025; Abdul-Rahaman & Abdulai, 2018; Kansiime & Mastenbroek, 2016). Based on program satisfaction and input and output levels, the program is considered quite effective. The use of agricultural machinery can help reduce dependence on manual labor and accelerate agricultural work processes, although the benefits have not been felt evenly.

Furthermore, Rafi'e et al. (2026) found that aid distribution ran fairly smoothly, although not always on time. The availability of supporting resources such as fuel, operators, and other supporting facilities remained limited for some groups. Furthermore, the achievement of overall objectives was also categorized as quite effective due to increased productivity and work efficiency, although equitable access and benefits remained a major obstacle (Jenkins & Rodriguez, 2013; Yeboah & Mogre, 2024; Yang & Rho, 2007). The effectiveness of the Agricultural Machinery Assistance Program in the PSP Sector was influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors included the availability of supporting infrastructure, operator skills, support from the Department of Agriculture and field agricultural extension workers, internal group coordination, and the availability of an operational budget (Ragasa et al., 2016; Davis et al., 2019; Amghani et al., 2025; Pradiana et al., 2020). Meanwhile, inhibiting factors included farmers' limited ability to operate equipment, a lack of workshops and spare parts, limited maintenance and fuel budgets, weak group coordination, unsuitable land conditions, and low farmer awareness regarding agricultural machinery maintenance. Thus, the overall effectiveness of the program was categorized as quite effective, but still needed improvement for more optimal implementation.

Research related to farmer capital focuses more on access to capital. The results of Nurwati's (2023) research entitled "Access to Capital for Shallot Farmers in an Islamic Economic Perspective (Case Study of Keli Village, Woha District, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara)", show that access to capital for shallot farmers in Keli Village includes: (a) access to capital from middlemen/loan sharks; (b) access to capital from formulators (pesticide/pest and disease poison sellers); (c) access to capital from Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes); and access to capital through conventional banks. The systems used in accessing capital for shallot farmers are: (a) capital with an interest system; (b) capital with a deferred/debt system; and (c) capital with a system for settling late payments.

Research by Nurwati (2023) found that the practices of accessing capital for shallot farmers in Keli Village, viewed from an Islamic economic perspective, are in stark contrast to the laws, principles, and character of economics, which upholds the principles of justice. This system of accessing capital, particularly borrowing from middlemen/loan sharks, has resulted in many shallot farmers becoming ensnared in debt with exorbitant interest rates. Consequently, shallot farmers experience losses, ultimately resulting in their income falling below the poverty line. Consequently, such farmers are categorized as poor. Prioritizing government assistance that can increase income and support shallot farmer empowerment is necessary, one approach being the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP).

Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)

The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) has been widely used as an approach to support decision-making, including in determining priority assistance for communities, including farmers. The results of a study by Sari et al. (2023), entitled "Application of the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) Method in Determining Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance Recipients (Case Study: Sindang Jaya Village, Oransbari, West Papua)," showed that a decision-making

system applying the AHP method to determine direct cash assistance (BLT) recipients achieved approximately 90 percent accuracy and a 10 percent error rate from 60 alternatives derived from Sindang Jaya village population data.

The results of a study by Murni (2024) with the title "Application of the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) Method in Determining Recipients of the Family Hope Program (PKH) in Binjai Village, Medan Denai District", shows that the components of Poor Households (RTM) who become participants in the Family Hope Program (PKH) have 7 criteria as the basis for determining them, namely: Severe Disabilities, Elderly aged 70 years and over, Pregnant Women, Early childhood/Toddlers, Elementary School, Middle School, High School. The priority value for the criteria for Severe Disabilities and Elderly aged 70 years and over has the highest priority value, namely 0.295. Furthermore, the criteria for Pregnant Women, Early childhood/Toddlers occupy the second priority with a value of 0.127. Meanwhile, the criteria for Elementary School, Middle School, High School occupy the third priority with a value of 0.050. In the data of prospective PKH participant families, from a total of 100 family data, the results obtained are families eligible to receive PKH assistance amounting to 95 family data, and families that are not eligible to receive PKH assistance amounting to 5 family data. Based on the preliminary data obtained, the AHP method demonstrated a high level of accuracy in determining potential beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH).

The research by Joss & Cahyaningtyas (2025), entitled "Direct Cash Assistance Recipient Priority Assessment System Using AHP as a Decision Support Method," demonstrated that AHP provides a systematic and logical approach to addressing the previously manual and subjectivity-prone social assistance selection process. By establishing a hierarchical decision structure based on five main criteria, as outlined in Minister of Finance Regulation No. 108 of 2024, the system is capable of performing pairwise comparisons, calculating weights, and evaluating the consistency of assessments. The resulting Consistency Ratio (CR) of 0.07767 indicates that the weighting is valid and suitable for decision-making. The system was designed using the PHP programming language with a MySQL database and tested directly using actual village data. The simple user interface facilitates village officials in inputting data, assigning criteria and sub-criteria values, and automatically generating final scores and a list of recipients.

Research by Joss & Cahyaningtyas (2025) also shows that implementing a system with the AHP approach can produce accurate recommendations with a 90 percent agreement rate compared to manual deliberation results. This system not only improves the efficiency and speed of the selection process but also strengthens transparency and accountability in the distribution of social assistance. Therefore, this system is worthy of adoption as a prototype for data-driven decision-making at the village level and contributes to fairer, more efficient, and more accountable governance of social assistance distribution, both administratively and socially. Research related to the AHP approach in determining the priority of government assistance to support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency has not been found specifically. In this regard, conducting such research is deemed essential.

Empowering Shallot Farmers

Shallot farmer empowerment is an effort to increase capacity, technology adoption, and capital to increase the productivity of this commodity (Kusuma et al., 2025; Hariyana et al., 2025; Yasin et al., 2025; Salsabila et al., 2025). This program is crucial for food security and the rural economy, often implemented through the implementation of integrated pest management field schools (SLPHT), a revolving seed bank model, and efforts to optimize fertilizer and irrigation. In this case, the SLPHT model trains shallot farmers to identify and control pests naturally, while reducing the burden of chemical pesticide costs. Meanwhile, the revolving seed bank model aims to facilitate the independent availability of high-quality seeds at the farmer group level. Furthermore, fertilizer and irrigation optimization is achieved through training in the use of balanced base fertilizer and humic acid, as well as routine irrigation techniques during the dry season.

The results of a study by Fuadi et al. (2025) entitled "Farmer Empowerment Based on Participatory Action Research (PAR) to Increase Adoption of Shallot Cultivation in Tambakrejo Village" showed a significant increase in participation, understanding of cultivation techniques, and the desire to continue independent cultivation among shallot farmers. This research also demonstrates the effectiveness of the PAR approach in empowering farmers, encouraging collective learning, supporting sustainable agricultural practices, and building social and economic resilience in farmers.

The results of Syamsuddin & Hasrida's (2019) study, "Empowering Shallot Farmers to Improve Family Welfare in Kolai, Enrekang Regency," show that empowering shallot farmers to achieve family prosperity in Kolai Village requires shallot farmers to join farmer groups to better organize guidance from Agricultural Extension Workers (PPL). Furthermore, shallot farmers also need to work together to facilitate farm work. A factor hindering shallot farmer empowerment in achieving family prosperity is the fluctuating price of shallots. The proceeds from shallot sales are sometimes only enough to cover capital expenditures, while some farmers experience losses due to the volatile price of shallots, as they have invested substantial capital but have insufficient sales revenues. Supporting factors for shallot farmer empowerment in achieving family prosperity include favorable climate and weather conditions, as well as the availability of extensive land in Kolai Village.

Based on the research findings of Syamsuddin & Hasrida (2019), it is recommended that shallot farmers actively participate in various activities conducted by farmer groups, such as outreach by field extension workers on the use of organic fertilizers, land management, and the use of poisons in shallot spraying. Furthermore, the village government should provide funds to improve several access roads to the fields to facilitate farmers' work. The current, poor road conditions are a significant obstacle for farmers, especially when transporting shallots from the fields to their homes (Abdoellah et al., 2020; Fonjong, L., & Mbuli, 2025; Miassi et al., 2018).

The results of Rianto's study, "Farmers' Empowerment Through Shallot (*Allium cepa* L.) Cultivation in Mirit Village, Kebumen," show that the application of innovative shallot cultivation technology in Mirit Village is still suboptimal, ranging from variety selection, planting preparation, fertilization, irrigation, and harvesting. However, innovative technology used by farmers in Triharjo Village, Kretek District, Bantul Regency, is considered more effective, including the selection of superior varieties and optimal yields, coupled with post-harvest processing. The potential for developing shallot cultivation is supported by its strategic location, favorable soil conditions, and ease of collaboration with government agencies. The empowerment model for agricultural development in Mirit Village involves the community through cultivation guidance, from variety selection to harvest and post-harvest handling. Partnerships are then established with suppliers of superior seed varieties, cultivation production facilities, and shallot distributors.

For shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency, empowering them through proper post-harvest handling is key to ensuring their shallots have a flexible shelf life, allowing them to wait for the best selling price before releasing them to the market. The impact of priority-based government assistance on empowering shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency has not been extensively studied.

METHODS

Community Service Activities (PKM) were carried out on April 6-10, 2026 in Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi Province. PKM activities were carried out using the FGD approach. Specifically, the FGD was held on April 8, 2026, at the meeting room of the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) of Anggeraja District, Enrekang Regency (Figure 1). This FGD activity was attended by 30 meeting participants, each from: (1) the local government in this case from the Food Crops, Horticulture, and Plantation Service of Enrekang Regency (1 person); (2) agricultural extension coordinator of Anggeraja District, Enrekang Regency (1 person); (3) local field agricultural extension workers (3 people); (4) heads of farmer groups (5 people); and (5) shallot farmers (20 people).



Figure 1. FGD activities at BPP Anggeraja, Enrekang Regency

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a form of qualitative PKM where participants are free to discuss their attitudes toward a particular concept, idea, or concept with other group members. Furthermore, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) is an analysis used in decision-making using a systems approach, where decision-makers seek to understand the state of a system and assist in making predictions in decision-making. AHP is widely used in decision-making for multi-criteria planning, resource allocation, and prioritizing strategies in conflict situations. In AHP, priority setting is carried out by rationally capturing people's perceptions, then converting intangible factors into common rules for comparison. The stages in data analysis are as follows.

System Identification

System identification is carried out by studying several references to expand knowledge and discussing with experts or resource persons who are experts in related fields and understand the problem. This allows for the development of concepts relevant to the problem.

Hierarchy Construction

Developing a hierarchy or decision structure involves depicting system elements or decision alternatives in a hierarchical abstraction.

Pairwise Comparison

Creating a pairwise comparison matrix illustrates the relative contribution or influence of each element on each objective or criterion/interest at the next level. Determining the level of importance at each hierarchical level or opinion is done using the pairwise comparison technique. The pairwise comparison technique used in AHP is based on the judgment or opinion of decision-makers or individuals involved and knowledgeable about the problem. They are selected as respondents, then interviewed directly and assess the importance of each element compared to the others.

The assessment is carried out by weighting each component with pairwise comparisons, starting from the highest to the lowest level. Weighting is based on the judgment of the decision-makers, based on a comparison scale of 1-9. The comparison scale is used to quantify qualitative data. The pairwise comparison scale is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Pairwise comparison scale in AHP weighting

Mark	Explanation
1	Both elements are equally important
3	One element is slightly more important than the other element
5	One element is clearly more important than the other element
7	One element is very clearly more important than the other element
9	One element is absolutely more important than the other element
2,4,6,8	Values when in doubt between two adjacent values

Source: Saaty (1993); Ola (2012)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Glance at Enrekang Regency as a Community Service Activity Location

Enrekang Regency is geographically located between 3°14'36" and 3°50'0" South Latitude and 119°40'53" and 120°06'33" East Longitude, with an altitude varying between 47 and 3,239 meters above sea level, with most of its territory being mountainous/hilly. The regency covers an area of 1,821.53 km², or 3.89 percent of South Sulawesi Province. Enrekang Regency is divided into 12 sub-districts, with Maiwa District being the largest (400.74 km²), and Alla District being the smallest (35.34 km²) (BPS Enrekang, 2025).

Over the past few years, there have been changes in government administration, both at the sub-district and village/ward levels. In 1995, Enrekang Regency had only 54 villages/sub-districts spread across 5 districts. However, after several expansions, by 2024, the number of districts had increased to 12, and the number of villages/sub-districts had increased to 129. Of these, 121 villages/sub-districts were located on slopes/peaks, 1 village/sub-district was located in a valley, and 7 villages/sub-districts were located on the plains of Enrekang Regency.

The population of Enrekang Regency in 2024 was 232,865, consisting of 118,330 males and 114,535 females. This means the gender ratio of Enrekang Regency was 103.31. The population growth rate from 2023 to 2024 was 0.68 percent, with a population density of 0.13 people per square kilometer. The population aged 0-14 years is 52,204, the population aged 15-64 years is 161,051, and the population aged 65 and over is 19,610. The number of people aged 15 and over classified as part of the labor force is 136,228, and the number of people not in the labor force is 44,555. The number of people aged 15 and over classified as part of the labor force but categorized as openly unemployed is 2,052.

Based on primary occupation, 73,325 people aged 15 and over chose the agricultural sector as their primary source of income. Shallot farmers, in particular, account for 28.24 percent of the total farmers in Enrekang Regency. Furthermore, 12,191 people aged 15 and over chose the manufacturing sector as their primary source of income. Meanwhile, 48,660 residents aged 15 and over chose the service sector as their primary source of employment.

Not all residents of Enrekang Regency enjoy a prosperous life; some still live in poverty. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) Enrekang (2025), the number of poor people in Enrekang Regency is 24,060, or 11.25 percent of the total population. The majority of these poor people are believed to be farmers, including shallot farmers. To alleviate this poverty, the government has implemented several assistance programs, including national, provincial, and district programs, to empower farmers in the region.

Results of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to gather opinions on priority government assistance that could support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency. Through the FGD, 12 (twelve) types of government assistance needed by shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency were identified. These 12 (twelve) types of assistance are: (1) training/technical guidance; (2) internships; (3) dissemination of research results; (4)

production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides); (5) agricultural machinery (water pumps and installations/cultivators); (6) product marketing; (7) established farmer groups; (8) profit-sharing system regulations; (9) facilitation of capital fertilization; (10) construction/rehabilitation of farm roads; (11) reforestation/soil and water conservation; and (12) insurance premium subsidies.

The priority government assistance to support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency was determined using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) approach. The AHP results aimed to determine stakeholder perceptions and views on the priority of government assistance to support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency. The AHP principle is to compare the priority importance of one element with a new element at the same level based on specific considerations.

This analysis focused on empowerment aspects, including human development, business development, institutional development, and environmental development (Figure 1). Furthermore, the combined analysis of respondents at the third level revealed the priority of government assistance to support the empowerment of shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency, as shown in Figure 2.

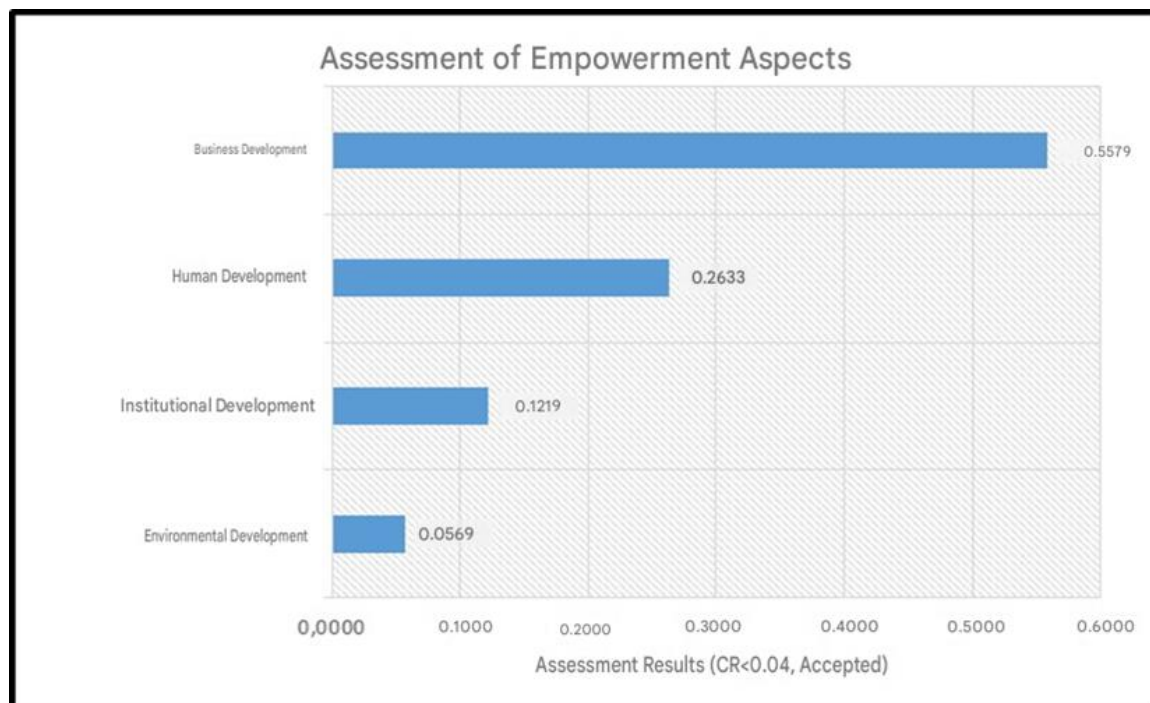


Figure 2. Results of the AHP Analysis at the Second Level of Determining the Level of Importance of Aspects of Empowering Shallot Farmers in Enrekang Regency, Including Aspects of Human Development, Business Development, Institutional Development, and Environmental Development.

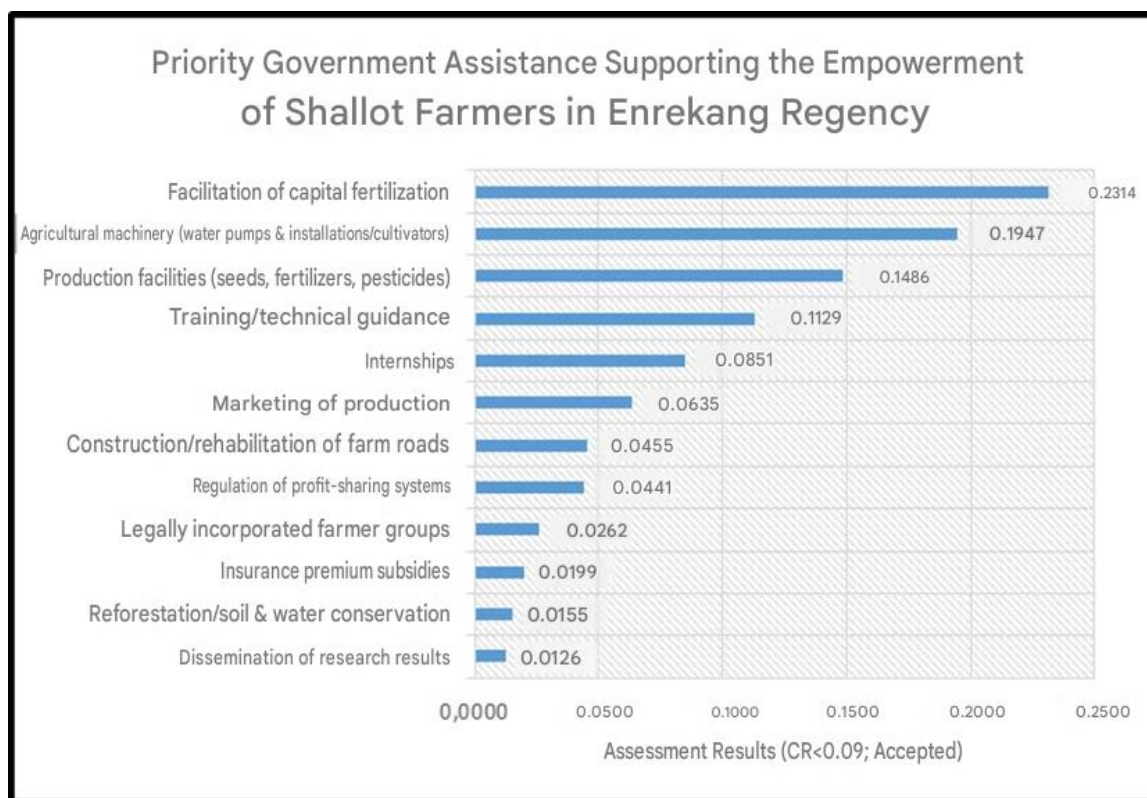


Figure 3. AHP Results at the Third Level of Determining the Priority of Government Assistance o Support the Empowerment of Shallot Farmers in Enrekang Regency.

Figure 3 shows that the priority of government assistance to support the empowerment of shallot farmers is facilitating capital fertilization with a weighting of 0.2314. This is followed, in order, by agricultural machinery (water pumps and installations/cultivators) (0.1947), production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) (0.14860), technical training/guidance (0.1129), internships (0.0851), marketing of produce (0.0635), construction/rehabilitation of farm roads (0.0455), regulation of profit-sharing systems (0.0441), established farmer groups (0.0262), insurance premium subsidies (0.0199), reforestation/soil and water conservation (0.0155), and dissemination of research results (0.0126).

Government Assistance Priorities to Support the Empowerment of Shallot Farmers

Respondents' Views and Assessments of Priorities for Government Assistance to Support the Empowerment of Shallot Farmers in the Regency Enrekang can be grouped into two categories: (1) high-priority assistance, if the assessment weight is greater than 0.05; and (2) low-priority assistance, if the assessment weight is less than or equal to 0.05.

High Priority Assistance

In general, respondents rated the assistance as high priority, respectively: (1) facilitation of capital fertilization; (2) agricultural machinery (water pumps and installations/cultivators); (3) production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides); (4) technical training/guidance; (5) internships; and (6) marketing of produce. The high priority assessment was based on the fact that this assistance represents a basic need for shallot farmers each planting season, primarily facilitating farming capital, water pumps and cultivators, and production inputs.

Shallot farmers require substantial farming capital each planting season. The required capital ranges from IDR 70 million to IDR 110 million per hectare per planting season (3-4 months). The largest component of shallot farming financing is seed purchase (44-50 percent), followed by fertilizer (15-20 percent), labor (20-25 percent), and pesticides in the form of plant protection costs, with the amount of the cost depending heavily on the level of pest and disease

infestation. Given the significant financial needs, respondents believe that facilitating capital fertilization needs to be prioritized in government assistance to shallot farmers. Planned and consistent capital fertilization will encourage farmers to set aside a portion of their production income to support preparations for the next planting. This is crucial considering that many shallot farmers have limited capital.

The government once provided agricultural capital assistance in the form of a revolving fund program to farmers. This revolving fund served as a trigger to ease the financial burden on farmers. However, this revolving fund program was not sustainable because it was initially distributed to only one, two, or three farmers. Subsequently, it ceased to be distributed because the revolving fund was used for other purposes unrelated to farming activities. Of course, the government has many options for providing capital assistance to farmers, both in the form of direct cash assistance (BLT) and direct non-cash assistance. Specifically, direct non-cash assistance can include assistance with water pumps and their installations. With water pumps and their installations, shallot farmers can farm not only during the rainy season but also during the dry season. Another agricultural machine that shallot farmers desperately need is a cultivator. Shallot farmers use cultivators to cultivate their land, making it loose and easy to form beds, plant furrows, and create irrigation and drainage channels. This significantly contributes to increased farm productivity.

Furthermore, the availability of production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides) remains a challenging issue for shallot farmers during the planting season. Seeds are often available but not superior. Superior seeds are available but expensive. Subsidized fertilizer is sometimes unavailable when needed. Even when available, the quantity is limited, making it insufficient to meet demand. Similarly, pesticides are perceived as prohibitively expensive by farmers. However, production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides) are essential for shallot farmers and must be available at the start of the planting season. This means that without these inputs, farmers cannot farm. Farmers who do not farm do not have a source of income to support their families. This situation led respondents to view assistance for production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides) as a high-priority category over other forms of assistance.

Respondents also rated training/technical guidance and internships as high-priority assistance. This is because training/technical guidance and internships enable shallot farmers to improve their knowledge, skills, and capacity in managing shallot farms. This increased knowledge, skills, and capacity can drive increased production, productivity, and income. Marketing of the produce is a key factor in achieving this. The primary challenge faced by shallot farmers in marketing their produce is the unilaterally determined price set by collectors or middlemen.

This phenomenon is often found among shallot farmers who are in debt to collectors or middlemen. Based on this consideration, respondents assessed that marketing assistance for their produce is a category of assistance that deserves high government priority. Overall, this high-priority assistance focuses more on empowering shallot farmers through business development (e.g., production facilities, agricultural machinery, marketing) and human development (e.g., training/technical guidance, internships). This means that if the government can implement some of the high-priority assistance, it can support the empowerment of shallot farmers, both in terms of business development and human development.

Low Priority Assistance

Respondents gave assessments in the low priority assistance categories, respectively, namely: (1) construction/rehabilitation of farm roads; (2) regulation of the profit sharing system; (3) legal entity farmer groups; (4) agricultural insurance premium subsidies; (5) reforestation/soil and water conservation; and (6) dissemination of research results. Based on this assessment, it can be said that respondents still think that aspects of farming insurance, reforestation/soil and water conservation, as well as dissemination of research results are not urgent matters for shallot farmers. The same thing can be seen from the results of the assessment

of aspects of development/rehabilitation of farm roads, regulation of the profit sharing system, and farmer groups with legal entities also received an assessment in the low priority assistance category.

There are several things that underlie respondents in providing assessments in the low priority assistance category. First, reforestation/conserving land and water. According to respondents' understanding, reforestation/soil and water conservation is not one of the basic needs of shallot farmers. With this understanding, it is only natural that reforestation/land and water conservation receives less attention. Even though the facts on the ground show that farmers freely clear land in sloping areas, and then process and plant shallots intensively. In a short time, this land clearing has not shown a significant impact. And that portrait is what is recorded in the minds of most respondents. However, in the long term, this condition has the potential to cause environmental damage. Without efforts to reforest/conserve land and water, the land could experience serious erosion so that its fertility decreases sharply, water sources can disappear, and if heavy rain falls it can cause floods and landslides. This means that in the next few years, the sustainability and viability of shallot farmers' farming will be threatened.

Second, subsidies for agricultural insurance premiums. Respondents' views regarding agricultural insurance premiums are less encouraging. Respondents who relatively rarely experience crop failure or low production will feel at a loss when spending additional financing in the form of insurance premiums even though they receive subsidies. In fact, some people think that participating in a farming insurance program means they are indirectly "praying" for their crops to experience crop failure or low production. This phenomenon is of course contrary to the main aim of providing farm insurance premium subsidies. Farming insurance premium subsidies are used as insurance to compensate farmers for losses in the event of crop failure or low production due to natural disasters (floods, droughts, landslides), as well as explosive attacks by plant-disturbing organisms. With this compensation, it is hoped that farmers will be helped in procuring production facilities and other needs for the next planting season.

Third, regulation of the profit sharing system. Respondents' views regarding the regulation of the profit sharing system are generally determined by the land ownership status of most shallot farmers. Shallot farmers who work on their own land do not really question the regulations on the profit sharing system. The same thing applies to shallot farmers who work on other people's land using a profit sharing system. This is understandable because land owners have a very strong position in determining the profit sharing system. When farmers do not comply with the production sharing system determined by the land owner, the land cultivation rights are immediately transferred to other farmers. This condition is what makes most respondents not question the regulation of the profit sharing system and give an assessment in the low priority aid category. In fact, regulation of the profit sharing system, especially in the form of regional regulations (perda), is important to create a sense of justice and mutually beneficial cooperation between land owners and sharecroppers.

Fourth, legally incorporated farmer groups. Respondents' views on legally incorporated farmer groups are based on their experiences as group administrators and members. Most shallot farmers do not perceive any fundamental differences, particularly in terms of benefits, between legally incorporated farmer groups and non-incorporated farmer groups. Farmers have so far focused solely on preparing all the necessary requirements for land cultivation, planting preparation, plant maintenance, and harvesting. The legality of farmer groups has not received sufficient attention. This fact led respondents to rate legally incorporated farmer groups as a low priority for assistance. This is not entirely in line with government policy encouraging attention to the legality of farmer groups. The legality of farmer groups is crucial, given that the government requires all assistance allocated to farmers to be directed through farmer groups and not to individuals. This means that farmer groups must have a clear organizational structure, evidenced by a management decree from the Regent, to exclude bogus farmer groups.

Fifth, construction/rehabilitation of farm roads. Respondents' views regarding the construction/rehabilitation of farm roads were largely influenced by the location of their respective farms. The local government has significantly contributed to the construction of farm roads. Village roads also function as farm roads in shallot production centers. This facilitates the smooth flow of transportation for production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural machinery), including the transportation of harvested crops. Therefore, the construction/rehabilitation of farm roads in some locations is considered adequate. Meanwhile, in other locations, road construction is not feasible due to steep slopes. These considerations led respondents to rate farm road construction/rehabilitation as a low priority.

Sixth, dissemination of research results. Respondents rated dissemination of research results as a low priority. This assessment is understandable, considering that shallot farmers, with their years of farming experience, are highly selective in adopting innovations or new findings derived from research. Therefore, when innovations or new findings emerge, farmers will not immediately implement them in the field. Farmers need to adapt and be confident that the innovations or new findings derived from research will benefit their farms. Until farmers are convinced, it will be very difficult for them to implement these innovations or new findings. This requires engaging community leaders and farmer group leaders to demonstrate their implementation, which can then be replicated by other farmers.

Overall, this low-priority assistance focuses more on empowering shallot farmers through institutional development (e.g., establishing legally incorporated farmer groups, regulating profit-sharing systems), and environmental development (e.g., reforestation/soil and water conservation, insurance premium subsidies, and the construction/rehabilitation of farm roads). This means that if the government is unable to implement some of these low-priority assistance programs due to priorities and limited budgetary constraints, implementation of institutional and environmental development within the shallot farmer empowerment program could face obstacles.

CONCLUSION

Government assistance to shallot farmers with high priority includes: facilitation of capital fertilization with a weighting of 0.2314, followed, respectively, by agricultural machinery (water pumps and installations/cultivators) (0.1947), production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) (0.14860), technical training/guidance (0.1129), internships (0.0851), and marketing of produce (0.0635). Government assistance to shallot farmers with low priority, respectively, includes: construction/rehabilitation of farm roads (0.0455), regulation of profit-sharing systems (0.0441), legal farmer groups (0.0262), insurance premium subsidies (0.0199), reforestation/soil and water conservation (0.0155), and dissemination of research results. (0.0126). Overall, government assistance to shallot farmers in the high-priority category tends to lead to shallot farmer empowerment in terms of business development and human development, while government assistance in the low-priority category tends to lead to shallot farmer empowerment in terms of institutional development and environmental development.

SUGGESTION

The results of the analysis of government assistance priorities using the AHP approach to support shallot farmer empowerment need to be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, especially officials within the Enrekang Regency Government, to be used as a basis for planning, specifically for providing assistance to shallot farmers in Enrekang Regency.

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