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Public services at Motaain State Cross Border Post: Approaches and Challenges

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Abstract---*Motaain National Border Post (PLBN) is a border post between the Republic of Indonesia (RI) and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL) which plays an important and strategic role in providing immigration, customs, quarantine, and security services for border crossers between the two countries. As a gateway for entry and exit from Indonesia to RDTL and vice versa, PLBN Motaain must be able to provide maximum service by the achievement targets, namely fast, efficient, and friendly public services. The results of qualitative research using observation, interview, and documentation data collection techniques, show that public service governance from an organizational structure approach, service processes, and collaboration between existing agencies, has several problems which are challenges in public service governance at PLBN Motaain. These challenges include limited human resources, limited budget, facilities, and logistics, illegal levies, and limited coordination between agencies. This condition must be addressed immediately to be able to provide effective, efficient, and friendly public services.*

Keywords---*Cross-Border Posts, Public services, Challenges in governance.*

Introduction

Border area management is all efforts to maintain the existence of a country which is characterized by protecting its sovereignty, territory, and population from various threats (Mangku, 2018). Threats that often arise in border areas are dominated by national border issues, shifting border markers, economic activities, illegal crossings and smuggling, and theft of natural resources. Border issues have complex dimensions, there are several crucial factors involved in them such as state jurisdiction and sovereignty, politics, social, economic, and defense, and security. For this reason, a country needs to determine its territorial boundaries with certainty so that it can determine the extent of its responsibilities (Anthopoulos et al., 2007).

Managing territorial boundaries is not something easy, so a policy and various approaches to managing borders are needed that are more evaluated, precise, and integrated (Rinduk 2019; BNPR RI, 2015). The border areas of a country are no longer considered the backyard of a country but instead are the front edge of the face of the country bordering other countries. Therefore, it is necessary to get the attention of the government and society from both

countries. This is the case with the border area between Indonesia and Timor Leste which is regulated through the 2005 Provisional Agreement which sets the land border between Indonesia and Timor-Leste as long as 268.8 kilometers with 907 coordinate points (Singih, 2024).

Indonesia has been carrying out border-related negotiations since 2001 with the transitional government formed by the United Nations (UN) in East Timor, namely The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Then, negotiations continued between Indonesia and the Timor Leste Government since 2002 through the Joint Border Committee. These negotiations resulted in a Temporary Agreement in 2005 which had to be revised again until it became a permanent agreement (Ibrahim, 2024). The agreement only covers 96% of land border matters. There are 4% border matters unfinished land, namely the borders in the Noel Besi–Citrana (Naktuka), Bidjael Sunan–Oben, Subina-Oben, and Dilumul-Memo areas due to differences in border interpretation between the two countries.

The land border between the Republic of Indonesia (RI) and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL) has several important points known as National Border Crossing Posts (PLBN). Some of the main land border posts between RI and RDTL are: 1) PLBN Motaain: Located near Atambua, East Nusa Tenggara, (2) PLBN Motamasin: Located in the Malacca region, East Nusa Tenggara, (3) PLBN Wini: Located in Timor Regency North Central, East Nusa Tenggara, (4) PLBN Napan: Located in the Oecusse region, Timor Leste, (5) Serasan PLBN: Located in the Oecusse region, Timor Leste (www.menpan.go.id).

Each PLBN functions as the main entry and exit point between Indonesia and bordering countries, providing immigration, customs, quarantine, and security services. Good border area management will also influence the quality of public services in the border area. According to the Decree of the Minister for Administrative Reform No. 63/KEP/M.PAN/7/2003, public service is a service process activity carried out by service providers to meet the needs of the people served. Therefore, public service is one manifestation of the function of the state apparatus, apart from being a state servant, but also a public servant.

As one of the PLBNs between RI and RDTL, the Motaain PLBN is an important border and has a strategic position as a gateway for entry and exit from Indonesia to Timor Leste. The extent to which PLBN Motaain can manage border areas will show how immigration, customs, quarantine, and security services are managed at the border. It is interesting to know and analyze the management of land border areas considering that PLBN Motaain focuses on fast and efficient public services, and how PLBN Motaain faces challenges or problems at the border (Bennett & Iossa, 2006; Speer, 2012).

Methodology

The data analysis used is qualitative descriptive data analysis which aims to analyze the governance of the Indonesia - Timor Leste land border as well as the challenges faced in the public services provided by PLBN Motaain including immigration, customs, quarantine, and security services at the border. Data was collected from March to September 2024 through interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with informants who contributed to the governance of land border areas, the government, and the community in the Motaain PLBN area, which was determined using purposive sampling. Observation through direct observation of the objects studied and existing documentation related to land border area governance (Bowen et al., 2017; Qiao et al., 2018; Heriard-Dubreuil, 2001).

Results and Discussion

Border Posts are the front porch of a country, where whether a country's identity is good or not can be seen from whether the management of the border area is good or not. PLBN Motaain has an important and strategic role as RI's leading region before RDTL. Based on interviews with the leadership of PLBN Motaain, it was stated that the important aspects of public services at PLBN Motaain are:

- 1) Management of Cross-Border Trade, where PLBN Motaain plays an important role in facilitating cross-border trade between Indonesia and Timor Leste, which can improve the local economy.
- 2) CIQS services include efficient Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security (CIQS) services to ensure smooth cross-border activities.
- 3) Infrastructure development is carried out by constructing PLBN buildings and adequate infrastructure to support cross-border activities and increase user comfort.
- 4) Strict supervision and control of cross-border activities to prevent the spread of illegal goods and disease.
- 5) Collaboration between various agencies such as the police, immigration and plantations in the context of effective and efficient services.

Good public service governance can be seen from the aspects of: a) organizational structure, b) service processes and c) collaboration between agencies. The conditions of the Motaain PLBN related to these three aspects are as follows:

a) The organizational structure of PLBN Motaain consists of:

- 1) The Head of PLBN is tasked with leading the operations and administration of PLBN.
- 2) Head of Immigration, responsible for immigration and emigration inspections.
- 3) Head of Customs, manages inspection of imported and exported goods.
- 4) Head of Quarantine Division, supervises inspection of agricultural and animal products to prevent the spread of diseases and pests.
- 5) Head of Security, ensures security in border areas and supervises cross-border activities.
- 6) Administrative Officer, handles administration and documentation related to PLBN operations.
- 7) Service Officer, provides services to PLBN users, including the inspection process and related information.
- 8) Collaboration between agencies, various agencies such as the police, immigration and plantations work together to ensure optimal management.

This organizational structure ensures that every aspect of service at PLBN Motaain is managed well and efficiently, including immigration, customs, quarantine and security.

b) The service process at PLBN Motaain is managed with the principles of speed and efficiency, especially for foreign officials and users who have special needs. Some service processes include:

- 1) Document and Immigration Inspection: checking the authenticity and validity of official documents such as passports, visas and trade documents for ensure that they are eligible to enter or exit the country.
- 2) Customs Inspection: inspection of imported or exported goods to ensure compliance with customs rules and trade regulations.
- 3) Quarantine Inspection: inspection of agricultural products and animals to prevent the spread of diseases and pests.
- 4) Security Checks: are routine surveillance and patrols to maintain security in border areas and ensure that there are no illegal activities.
- 5) Administration and Services: is assistance provided by the PLBN to passersby regarding administrative processes and information related to the services provided by the PLBN.

c) Collaboration between agencies at PLBN Motaain is important to ensure efficient and coordinated services, so that they can provide optimal services for cross-border users. Some collaborations between agencies in PLBN Motaain include:

1. CIQS (Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security) collaboration is a collaboration that occurs between:
 - a) Customs officers (Customs) with immigration officers to ensure that goods brought across the border comply with customs regulations.
 - b) Immigration officers coordinate with security and customs officers to check travel documents and ensure that border crossers comply with immigration regulations.
 - c) Quarantine officers (Quarantine) work together with customs officers to check goods that have the potential to carry disease or pests.
 - d) Security officers work together with all other agencies to maintain order and security in the border area.
2. Collaboration with Government Agencies and Other Institutions is PLBN Motaain's collaboration with:
 - a) Local police to handle security and order issues.
 - b) Timor Leste Consulate in Atambua to facilitate travel and immigration services for Timor Leste citizens.
 - c) TNI (Indonesian National Army) monitors borders, maintains the security and sovereignty of border areas.
3. Collaboration in Training and Capacity Building:
 - a) Joint training to increase the capacity and skills of officers from various agencies.
 - b) Regular meetings between agencies to discuss emerging issues and find joint solutions.
4. Collaboration in Integrated Information Systems:

- a) Integrated Data Management System to share information between various agencies, making coordination and decision making easier.
- b) Adopting new Technology and Innovation to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services at the border.

Based on observations and interviews, several problems were found that were challenges in PLBN Motaain's public services, namely:

1) Limited resources.

Based on the results of interviews, it is known that there are only six PLBN officers at each picket, while the number of Indonesian citizens and foreigners passing through PLBN Motaain is 500 to 800 people per day. Even on Fridays and Saturdays, crossing numbers can reach 600 to 1000 people per day. Apart from the limited number of human resources, there are also limited budgets and facilities that need attention. Because limited budget and facilities can hamper PLBN operations and development.

2) Service process

Delays in the service and inspection process are not only due to limited human resources at PLBN Motaain, but also due to logistical limitations related to distance and accessibility of goods delivery and movement of people. The existence of illegal levies made by crossing officers to expedite the service process is the cause of the slow service process. This condition causes the public's trust in PLBN officers to decline.

3) Collaboration between agencies

Ineffective coordination between agencies due to differences in priorities, poor communication, incompatibility of duties and responsibilities between agencies due to lack of joint training, has a big impact on the smoothness of the service process provided by PLBN Motaain.

Based on several of these obstacles, it can be stated that limited human resources and logistics have an impact on the smoothness of the service process provided by PLBN Motaain. The comparison of the number of picket personnel with the number of border crossers has an impact on the smoothness of mobility in and out of PLBN Motaain. High work intensity provides opportunities for human errors to occur, such as lack of valid document checks, illegal levies, lax supervision, and even giving rise to illegal activities such as smuggling and human trafficking. Meanwhile, the availability of infrastructure and logistics is not optimal, communication is not smooth due to differences in the priorities of each agency, which has a big impact on the smoothness of public services provided by PLBN Motaain.

Several steps have been taken to overcome this problem, namely building buildings with adequate facilities, adding daily picket personnel by arranging picket schedules, increasing agency cooperation, handling complaints by carrying out supervision and control (reducing the NTT ombudsman), and collaborating in regular monitoring and evaluation. between related agencies, carrying out external cooperation with Timor Leste security and consulates (Medeiros et al., 2021).

The construction of a PLBN with electronic system facilities is intended not only to facilitate the public service process but also to represent the state because apart from a good physical building, it must also be able to provide excellent service for users. With adequate facilities and human resources, it is hoped that it will facilitate the movement of Indonesian people to Timor Leste, and vice versa. The maximum service provided by PLBN Motaain, apart from the administrative aspect, is also an effort to strengthen RI's diplomatic relations with RDTL. Because PLBN's function as a diplomatic bridge will be achieved if PLBN Motaain can provide fast, efficient, and friendly services to border crossers between the two countries.

Conclusion

Public services at PLBN Motaain include immigration, customs, quarantine, and security. The success of public services can be seen from the organizational structure approach, service processes, and collaboration between agencies at PLBN Motaain. The existence of PLBN Motaain as a PLBN which has an important role and strategic position as a cross-border post between Indonesia and RDTL has problems that become challenges in the process of providing maximum public services (Liu & Li, 2020; Xie et al., 2017). These challenges include limited human resources, limited budget, facilities, and logistics, illegal levies, and limited coordination between agencies. This condition must be addressed immediately to be able to provide effective, efficient, and friendly public services as the PLBN Motaain target can be realized.

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