

The Role of the Jayapura City Border Management Agency in the Jayapura City *Sister City* Program with Vanimo and Wewak Papua New Guinea

Melyana Ratana Pugu*, Melpayanti Sinaga

Universitas Cenderawasih, Indonesia

Email: puguratana@yahoo.com*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of the *Jayapura City Border Management Agency* in the *Sister City* program with Vanimo and Wewak, Papua New Guinea. This program is expected to strengthen bilateral relations and improve the welfare of people in border areas. The research method used is qualitative, with a case study approach, where data are obtained through in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, including government officials, local communities, and non-governmental organizations. Analysis of related documents is also carried out to explore existing policies and programs. The results of the study are expected to show that the *Border Management Agency* plays an important role in facilitating collaboration between the City of Jayapura and cities in Papua New Guinea. This role includes the development of the economic sector, the promotion of cultural exchanges, and the resolution of security issues arising in the border region. In addition, the study is expected to find that challenges such as lack of infrastructure and lack of accurate information can hinder the effectiveness of the program. The output of this research is in the form of strategic recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the *Sister City* program, including strengthening communication networks and cooperation between related institutions. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of policies that support better border management, as well as improve the welfare of the people on both sides. These results can also serve as a reference for further research on inter-city cooperation in border areas.

Keywords: Role, Border Management Agency, Jayapura City, Sister City, Vanimo, Wewak,

INTRODUCTION

The border region between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea is rich in social, economic, and cultural dynamics (Metherall et al., 2022; Mandibondibo et al., 2022). The city of Jayapura, located in Papua Province, has strong geographical and cultural ties with cities in northern Papua New Guinea such as Vanimo and Wewak (Korwa & Rumabar, 2024). These three cities are part of the Melanesian region, which shares common cultural roots and historical ties (Blades, 2020; Heathcote, 2021). In the context of international relations, traditional top-down diplomacy has not fully addressed the social dynamics and community needs in the border region (Jackson, 2018; Teturan et al., 2019). Therefore, Sister City-based cooperation serves as a strategic alternative for building more contextual, participatory, and community-oriented relationships (Utomo & Widian, 2024; Fortunoff et al., 2024; Ameyaw et al., 2024).

In recent years, a *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* between the City of *Jayapura* and *Vanimo* and *Wewak* has been signed as an initial commitment to the *Sister City* program (Prasittisopin et al., 2024; Kencana et al., 2024). However, its implementation has not been optimal (Prasittisopin et al., 2024; Santoso et al., 2023). The cooperation program has not been elaborated into an operational action plan, and the lack of coordination between agencies and countries, along with the absence of evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, has caused stagnation of the initiative (Medeiros, 2020; Klatt & Winkler, 2022; Prasittisopin et al., 2024). This gap between normative commitment and ground-level reality indicates challenges in effectiveness (Dołzbłasz, 2021; Ameyaw et al., 2024). Meanwhile, collaboration opportunities in sectors such as education, border trade, health services, and culture-based tourism continue to grow but have not been systematically facilitated through effective inter-city cooperation platforms (Bontenbal, 2009; Cross, 2020; Fortunoff et al., 2024).

This situation is exacerbated by the scarcity of scientific studies focusing specifically on the development of the *Sister City* model in Indonesia's eastern border region (Jackson, 2018; Sasra et al., 2022). Most existing research concentrates on security or physical development aspects of the border, while cultural diplomacy and local cross-border cooperation perspectives remain largely understudied (Grincheva, 2023; Clarke, 2020; Medeiros, 2017). In fact, this approach is highly relevant to promoting inclusive development based on local potential and strengthening social integration among communities (Brunet-Jailly, 2022; Sohn, 2014). Amid the growing importance of sub-national diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific context, the need for an applicable and contextual *Sister City* cooperation model becomes increasingly urgent (Kossa et al., 2021; Sasra et al., 2022; Alvarez, 2020).

Two prior studies have addressed border diplomacy and cross-border cooperation, but neither focused specifically on the *Sister City* model within Indonesia's eastern border regions. Evanson and Fok (2020) examined cross-border collaboration between Indonesia and Malaysia in the contexts of security and trade. Although highlighting economic relations, their study does not fully address cultural and social dynamics between neighboring communities. Another study by Soraiya et al. (2019) analyzed border city cooperation in the European Union, focusing on cultural diplomacy and social integration through *Sister Cities*, but its findings have limited applicability to the Indonesian context, where local traditions, governance structures, and regional tensions play a significant role.

Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by analyzing in depth the potential, challenges, and opportunities for *Sister City* cooperation between *Jayapura*, *Vanimo*, and *Wewak*. It will produce a roadmap for structured cooperation implementation, policy recommendations for adoption by local and national governments, and academic outputs enriching the literature on cultural diplomacy and border area development. Thus, this research is expected not only to strengthen Indonesia's role in the eastern region but also to position *Sister City* cooperation as a model of local diplomacy replicable in other border areas.

The Role of the Jayapura City Border Management Agency in the Jayapura City Sister City Program with Vanimo and Wewak Papua New Guinea

The research seeks to explore the challenges, opportunities, and potentials of *Sister City* cooperation among *Jayapura*, *Vanimo*, and *Wewak*. The expected outcome is to create a local diplomacy model fostering economic growth, cultural exchange, and social integration in Indonesia's eastern border areas. The study will contribute to academic literature on cultural diplomacy and border management while providing actionable insights for policy and community development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to understand in depth the role of the Jayapura City Border Management Agency in the Sister City program with Vanimo and Wewak, Papua New Guinea.

The research was conducted at the Office of the Border Management Agency of Jayapura City, Indonesia, the selection of this location was based on its relevance to the Sister City program and border dynamics.

Data collection techniques used were:

- a) In-Depth Interviews: Involve stakeholders such as government officials, members of the Border Management Agency, local communities, and non-governmental organizations. This interview aims to gain diverse perspectives on the implementation of the Sister City program.
- b) Observation: Observe firsthand activities related to the Sister City program and the interaction between communities in the two cities.
- c) Document Analysis: Collects and analyzes policy-related documents, activity reports, and other materials relevant to the Sister City program.

The data obtained from interviews and observations will be analyzed using coding techniques, in which key themes are identified and grouped. The results of the document analysis will also be integrated to provide a comprehensive overview.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, data triangulation will be carried out by comparing information from various sources (interviews, observations, and documents). The responses from the informants will also be verified to ensure accuracy.

This research will adhere to the ethical principles of research by obtaining permission from informants and maintaining the confidentiality of their identities. The participation of informants will be voluntary, and they will be provided with clear information about the purpose of the research.

With this research method, it is hoped that the results obtained can provide a deep understanding of the role of the Border Management Agency in the Sister City program and its impact on communities on both sides.

Research stages conducted were:

- 1) Stage I: Preparation, literature collection, preparation of interview instruments.
- 2) Stage II: Field data collection (interviews, observations, documentation).
- 3) Stage III: Data analysis and formulation of the role of the Jayapura City border management agency.

- 4) Stage IV: Stakeholder validation and preparation of outputs (policy briefs, academic papers, scientific articles).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Jayapura City Border Management Agency in the implementation of the Sister City Program with the Cities of Vanimo and Wewak

The Jayapura City Border Management Agency has an important role in the implementation of the Sister City program with the cities of Vanimo and Wewak in Papua New Guinea. One of the main roles of this agency is as a mediator in establishing communication and cooperation between local governments and communities in the three cities. By organizing meetings, seminars, and discussion forums, these bodies can create a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences that are beneficial for regional development.

In addition, the Border Management Agency is also responsible for designing and implementing cooperation programs that focus on economic and social development. Through initiatives such as cultural exchanges, skills training, and infrastructure development projects, the agency seeks to improve the welfare of the people in Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak. These programs not only strengthen inter-city ties but also encourage regional economic growth.

The agency also plays a role in facilitating collaboration between the private sector and civil society in both countries. By engaging local business actors, Border Management Agencies can support mutually beneficial business initiatives, such as cross-border trade and investment. This is important to create jobs and improve the living standards of people in border areas.

The Border Management Agency also has the responsibility to monitor and evaluate activities carried out within the framework of the Sister City program. By conducting periodic evaluations, this agency can identify successes and challenges faced, so that it can make the necessary adjustments to ensure that the program runs effectively and sustainably. Thus, the role of the Border Management Agency is crucial in realizing harmonious and effective cooperation between Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak.

The Border Management Agency as a facilitator of cooperation between the three cities in Social, Economic, and Cultural aspects

The Jayapura City Border Management Agency can play a key role in facilitating cooperation between Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak by developing various programs that focus on social, economic, and cultural aspects. First, in the social aspect, this body can organize activities that promote cultural exchange, such as art festivals and music performances involving artists from the three cities. This activity not only provides a platform for artists to show their culture but also strengthens the sense of unity and mutual understanding between people from different backgrounds.

Second, in the economic context, the Border Management Agency can facilitate

The Role of the Jayapura City Border Management Agency in the Jayapura City Sister City Program with Vanimo and Wewak Papua New Guinea

collaboration between local entrepreneurs in the three cities through the organization of trade fairs and business forums. By inviting business actors from each city to share experiences, strategies, and investment opportunities, this agency can create a network of mutually beneficial businesses. This will encourage local economic growth and increase the competitiveness of products from the three cities in the regional market.

Third, in the aspect of education, the Border Management Agency can introduce student and educator exchange programs. Through this program, students and teaching staff from Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak can learn from each other and share knowledge. This activity not only improves the quality of education in each city but also strengthens relationships between communities through direct interaction and shared experiences.

Fourth, the Border Management Agency can also facilitate cooperation in the health sector. By organizing seminars and workshops in the field of health, the agency can help increase public awareness and knowledge on important health issues. This cooperation could include the exchange of medical personnel and joint vaccination programs that will provide direct benefits to the communities in the three cities.

Finally, this agency needs to monitor and evaluate all programs implemented to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. By gathering feedback from the community and relevant stakeholders, the Border Management Agency can tailor these programs to make them more relevant and useful. In this way, cooperation between Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak can develop sustainably and have a positive impact on all parties involved.

Challenges faced by the Border Management Agency in carrying out its role in the Sister City program

The Jayapura City Border Management Agency faces various challenges in carrying out its role in the Sister City program with Vanimo and Wewak. One of the main challenges is the difference in policies and regulations between countries. Each country has a different legal and regulatory framework, which can hinder collaboration on certain projects. For example, strict regulations regarding cross-border trade can make it difficult for businesses to participate in joint economic initiatives.

Another significant challenge is cultural and language differences. People in all three cities have different cultural backgrounds, which can affect the way they interact and communicate. For example, misunderstandings in communication can hinder effective cooperation. Border Management Agencies need to create programs that are sensitive to these differences and facilitate intercultural dialogue to build mutual understanding.

In addition, infrastructure problems are also a big challenge. Many border areas still have inadequate infrastructure, such as roads, transportation, and health facilities. This may limit public access to programs held within the framework of the Sister City. This agency needs to work with local and central governments to improve infrastructure to support more effective program implementation.

Challenges in funding are also an important issue. Intercity cooperation programs often require considerable financial resources. Border Management Agencies must seek adequate sources of funding, both from the government and from the private sector, to ensure that programs can be implemented properly. Without sufficient financial support, many initiatives risk stalling before achieving their goals.

Then, challenges in coordination between institutions also need to be considered. In carrying out the Sister City program, various government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector need to collaborate. Lack of coordination between these agencies can lead to duplication of efforts or even conflicts in program implementation. The Border Management Agency should be an effective liaison to ensure all parties are involved and working towards a common goal.

Finally, the challenges of the community itself are also a factor that cannot be ignored. There are times when people do not understand the benefits of the Sister City program, so they do not participate actively. This agency needs to conduct more intensive socialization and education to explain the benefits and importance of this cooperation for their welfare. By raising public awareness, the Border Management Agency can optimize participation and support from local communities.

The impact of the Sister City program on the development of border areas managed by the Jayapura City Border Management Agency

The Sister City program has a significant impact on the development of border areas managed by the Jayapura City Border Management Agency. One of the main impacts is the increase in economic cooperation between Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak. With various trade and investment initiatives, local businesses can take advantage of new opportunities to expand their markets. This has the potential to increase people's incomes and create jobs, which is especially important in border areas that often face economic challenges.

In addition, this program also has an impact on infrastructure development. Within the framework of cooperation, infrastructure projects, such as the construction of roads, bridges, and public facilities, can be more accessible. The Border Management Agency can submit projects to the central government and donor agencies, which will improve the quality of infrastructure in the border areas. Better infrastructure will support the mobility of people and goods, as well as encourage faster economic growth.

From a social point of view, the Sister City program contributes to improving relationships between communities. Through cultural exchanges, educational activities, and social programs, people in the three cities can get to know and understand each other. This encourages mutual respect and tolerance, which is crucial in maintaining social stability in border areas. Societies that are more socially connected tend to be more cooperative in facing common challenges.

In the field of education, the program opens up opportunities for the exchange of students and educators. Students and teachers from Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak

can learn from each other and share knowledge. This not only improves the quality of education in each city but also broadens cultural insight and understanding. With more diverse learning experiences, young people in border areas will be better prepared to face global challenges.

The Sister City program also has a positive impact in terms of public health. With cooperation in the health sector, such as vaccination programs and training of medical personnel, people in border areas can access better health services. The Border Management Agency can facilitate health activities involving medical personnel from the three cities, which will improve the overall quality of health services.

Furthermore, the long-term impact of the Sister City program can be seen in strengthening the identity of border areas. With close cooperation and various joint initiatives, people will feel prouder and have a sense of ownership of their territory. This can encourage active community participation in regional development, thereby creating a more resilient and competitive community. Thus, the Sister City program is not only about cooperation between cities, but also about building a better future for communities in border areas.

Strategies that can be implemented by the Border Management Agency to increase the effectiveness of the Sister City program between Jayapura, Vanimu, and Wewak Cities

The Jayapura City Border Management Agency can implement various strategies to increase the effectiveness of the Sister City program between Jayapura, Vanimu, and Wewak City. One of the key strategies is to build effective communication between all parties involved. This includes local governments, communities, and the private sector. By creating open communication channels, each party can convey ideas and input, so that the programs carried out are more in line with the needs and expectations of the community.

The second strategy is to develop training and capacity programs for Border Management Agency staff and related stakeholders. By improving skills and knowledge of project management, cooperation facilitation, and interstate culture, staff will be better prepared to face the challenges that arise in the implementation of the Sister City program. This training can involve experts from abroad or international organizations with experience in similar programs.

Third, the Border Management Agency needs to map the needs of the community in each city. Through surveys and group discussions, the agency can identify the most pressing issues and potential resources available. By understanding the needs of the community, the programs designed can be more relevant and have a greater impact. This approach will also increase community participation in any proposed initiatives.

Furthermore, strengthening cooperation with donor agencies and international organizations is also an important strategy. By establishing strategic partnerships, the Border Management Agency can obtain the financial and technical resources necessary to implement the program. Donor agencies often have extensive experience

and networks, so they can assist in designing and executing more effective projects.

The fifth strategy is to utilize information technology in the implementation of the Sister City program. By developing a digital platform for sharing information, data, and project outcomes, Border Management Agencies can improve transparency and accountability. Technology can also be used to facilitate communication between residents in the three cities, so that they can interact with each other and share experiences more easily.

Then, it is important for the Border Management Agency to develop a clear and measurable action plan. This plan should include both short-term and long-term goals, as well as measurable indicators of success. With a structured action plan, all parties can work more focused and directed and make it easier to evaluate the progress achieved.

Furthermore, the Border Management Agency needs to conduct intensive socialization activities to increase public awareness about the benefits of the Sister City program. Through information campaigns, seminars, and community activities, the community will better understand the purpose and potential of this collaboration. With increasing awareness, public participation in the programs held will be higher.

Finally, periodic evaluation and adjustment of the programs that have been implemented are very important. Border Management Agencies should conduct regular evaluations to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. By making adjustments based on feedback, the Sister City program can continue to grow and provide greater benefits to the communities in Jayapura, Vanimo, and Wewak.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the Jayapura City Border Management Agency plays a crucial role in the implementation of the *Sister City* program with Vanimo and Wewak by acting as a mediator, facilitator, and liaison between local governments and communities, as well as designing cooperation initiatives that strengthen social, economic, and cultural ties among the three cities. Despite these positive contributions to border area development, challenges such as policy discrepancies, insufficient infrastructure and funding, and coordination difficulties among institutions hinder the program's full effectiveness. To maximize benefits, strategic improvements in governance, resource allocation, and institutional collaboration are necessary. Future research should explore innovative coordination models and funding mechanisms that can overcome existing barriers, as well as assess the long-term impacts of the *Sister City* program on regional integration and community resilience in border areas.

REFERENCES

- Alvarez, M. (2020). The rise of paradiplomacy in international relations. *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/03/17/the-rise-of-paradiplomacy-in-international-relations/>

- Ameyaw, S., Agyemang, F. S. K., & Nkrumah, E. N. K. (2024). Sister city partnerships and sustainable development in emerging cities: Empirical cases from Ghana and Tanzania. *Cities*, 155, 105208. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.105208>
- Blades, J. (2020). West Papua: The issue that won't go away for Melanesia. *Lowy Institute Analysis*. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/Blades%20West%20Papua%20Upload%20AO150620.pdf>
- Bontenbal, M. (2009). Strengthening urban governance in the South through city-to-city cooperation: Towards an analytical framework. *Habitat International*, 33(2), 181-189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2008.10.016>
- Brunet-Jailly, E. (2022). Cross-border cooperation: A global overview. *Space and Polity*, 26(1), 73-95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754211073463>
- Clarke, D. (2020). Cultural diplomacy. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.543>
- Cross, B. (2020). The sister cities program and tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 36, 100750. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100750>
- Dołzbłasz, S. (2021). Open borders and cross-border cooperation in regional development. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 8(1), 147-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681376.2021.1912736>
- Fortunoff, W., Martens, C., & Méndez, J. A. (2024). A space for kinship in city diplomacy: Re-imagining sister cities amid global migration. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191x-bja10199>
- Grincheva, N. (2023). The past and future of cultural diplomacy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 29(3), 298-318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2183949>
- Heathcote, S. (2021). Secession, self-determination and territorial disagreements: Sovereignty claims in the contemporary South Pacific. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 34(3), 653-680. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156521000236>
- Jackson, T. (2018). Paradiplomacy and political geography: The geopolitics of substate regional diplomacy. *Geography Compass*, 12(1), e12354. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12354>
- Kencana, N., Permatasari, Y., & Putra, R. (2024). Kebijakan Pemerintah Kota Palembang melalui Sister City: Tantangan dan hambatan. *Jurnal Pemerintahan Dan Politik*, 9(4), 323-330. <https://doi.org/10.36982/jpg.v9i4.4641>
- Klatt, M., & Winkler, I. (2022). Institutional mapping of cross-border cooperation: INTERREG programme analyses with KEEP data. *European Planning Studies*, 30(10), 1957-1978. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2022.2058321>

- Korwa, J. R. V., & Rumabar, B. (2024, September 17). Challenges ahead for Indonesia-PNG cross-border cooperation. *Development Policy Centre Blog*. <https://devpolicy.org/challenges-ahead-for-indonesia-png-cross-border-cooperation-20240918/>
- Kossa, M., Lomaeva, M., & Saunavaara, J. (2021). East Asian subnational government involvement in the Arctic: A case for paradiplomacy? *The Pacific Review*, 34(4), 664-695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2020.1729843>
- Mandibondibo, P., Wanggai, S., Korwa, J. R. V., Lada, J. G., Utami, G. P., Rumabar, B., & Hardiansyah, D. (2022). State borders as center of economic growth: Case study of the East Arso District in the Indonesia–Papua New Guinea border. *Papua Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 2(1), 35-58. <https://doi.org/10.31957/pjdir.v2i1.1966>
- Medeiros, E. (2017). Cross-border cooperation in Inner Scandinavia: A territorial impact assessment. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 62, 147-157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2016.09.003>
- Medeiros, E. (2020). Cross-border integration, cooperation and governance: A systems approach for evaluating "good" governance in cross-border regions. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 37(4), 743-763. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2020.1855227>
- Metherall, N., De Fretes, D. R., Mandibondibo, F., & Caucau, T. (2022). Assessing the development impact of the Sota border post connecting Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. *Papua Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 2(2), 35-58. <https://doi.org/10.31957/pjdir.v2i2.2209>
- Prasittisopin, L., Kitkuakul, P., Chotchakornpant, K., & Rugkhapan, N. T. (2024). Implementing the Sister City policy: Perspectives from Thailand. *Nakhara: Journal of Environmental Design and Planning*, 23(2), 413. <https://ph01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/nakhara/article/view/255719>
- Santoso, M. A., Utomo, A. B., & Widiana, F. (2023). Strategizing sister city partnerships: Paradiplomacy, bilateral relations, and sustainable cooperation in Indonesia. *Journal of Paradiplomacy and City Networks*, 2(1), 1-16. <https://jumahi.umsida.ac.id/index.php/jumahi/article/view/35>
- Sasra, S. F., Korwa, J. R. V., & Ladiqi, S. (2022). The practice of paradiplomacy in Indo-Pacific region: Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal of Advances in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(1), 15-28. <https://journal.srnintellectual.com/index.php/ijassh/article/view/33>
- Sohn, C. (2014). Modelling cross-border integration: The role of borders as a resource. *Geopolitics*, 19(3), 587-608. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2014.913029>

The Role of the Jayapura City Border Management Agency in the Jayapura City Sister City Program with Vanimo and Wewak Papua New Guinea

Teturan, Y. E., Suwitri, S., Warella, Y., & Warsono, H. (2019). The management of the border area between Indonesia Republic and Papua New Guinea in the Sota region of Merauke regency. *Prizren Social Science Journal*, 3(1), 18-31.

Utomo, A. B., & Widiyana, F. (2024). Green sister city cooperation of Surabaya and Kitakyushu: Beyond ceremonial paradiplomacy. *Thammasat Review*, 27(2), 316-334. <https://sc01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/tureview/article/view/240960>