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Pseudo Synchronization or Substantive Harmonization? Reconstructing the Legal Design of Asta Cita's Manifestation in Sukabumi City's RPJMD 2025–2029

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Abstract: Indonesia's vertical planning system requires Regional Medium-Term Development Plans (RPJMD) to embody national strategic visions. The 2024–2029 Asta Cita doctrine, formalized through Presidential Regulation 12/2025, binds subnational governments to alignment. Yet fiscal constraints, sectoral fragmentation, and abstract harmonization parameters threaten substantive realization of national priorities at city level. This study examines the legal architecture, substantive embodiment, and structural impediments shaping the integration of Asta Cita into Sukabumi City's RPJMD 2025–2029. This research employs a normative-empirical legal method combining statute, conceptual, and case-study approaches. Primary legal materials include Law 25/2004 on the National Development Planning System, Law 23/2014 on Regional Government, Presidential Regulation 12/2025 concerning the 2025–2029 RPJMN, and Sukabumi City Regional Regulation 5/2025 on the RPJMD. Analysis proceeds through grammatical, systematic, and teleological interpretation, supplemented by vertical-horizontal harmonization mapping anchored in Legal Harmonization, Multi-Level Governance, and Policy Translation theories. Sukabumi's RPJMD demonstrates high formal compliance, absorbing all eight Asta Cita pillars into five missions, forty-five priority programs, and fourteen local flagship programs adapted to its non-maritime tertiary economy. Nevertheless, four structural impediments persist: vertical authority disharmony, regulatory time-lag from delayed central rules, sectoral institutional fragmentation evidenced by declining SAKIP scores from 79.54 to 76.36, sectoral data inconsistency, and extreme fiscal weakness where operational expenditure dominates the regional budget. This study proposes a triadic legal-design intervention comprising an Omnibus Planning Clause enabling Perkada-based adaptation to central updates, revitalized gubernatorial supervisory authority anchoring intergovernmental coordination forums, and impact-oriented Translational Key Performance Indicators replacing literal nomenclature matching across all vertical planning documents nationwide. While prior scholarship analyzes vertical planning synchronization at provincial level or formal authority distribution, this study pioneers a city-level juridical examination of Asta Cita's substantive translation, integrates three theoretical lenses, and operationalizes a novel Translational KPI framework as concrete legal-design instrument for resolving paper-compliance pathology in subnational planning.

Keywords: Asta Cita, Legal Harmonization, Legal Design, Multi-Level Governance, RPJMD.

INTRODUCTION

Development in a unitary state with decentralization, such as Indonesia, cannot be separated from a vertically integrated planning architecture between central and regional governments. The Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah/RPJMD) holds a strategic position as a key legal-administrative instrument bridging national strategic visions with the real needs of local communities during a single cycle of regional head leadership (Sjafrizal, 2023; Hendrikus, 2025). Following the inauguration of the President and Vice President for the 2024–2029 period, the national development direction was formulated into eight strategic missions known as Asta Cita and subsequently codified through Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2025 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029. The legal consequence of this codification is the emergence of a material obligation for all regional governments to align their RPJMDs with the substance of Asta Cita.

Problems arise when this alignment obligation collides with the reality of heterogeneous regional capacities, geographies, and fiscal spaces. Empirical studies on the RPJMD of Karawang Regency reveal that the absence of substantive synchronization results in program fragmentation and budget waste (Altas, 2023). Furthermore, central–regional synchronization success is determined not by mere textual compliance but by the capacity of the governance of synchronization networks covering inter-agency coordination, clarity of technical mechanisms, and the capacity of regional planners (Sakty et al., 2024). Institutional reality in Indonesia, however, reveals the fragility of this network: Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang) forums, designed as dialogical spaces, have shifted into annual ceremonies, so the fair and logical distribution of workloads between central and regional governments rarely occurs.

This juridical tension is further sharpened in the context of Sukabumi City. As an urban area of only approximately 48 km², without a coastline, with high dependence on Central Government transfer funds (65.95% of the revenue structure), Sukabumi City constitutes an ideal laboratory for testing the elasticity of Indonesian development planning law. RPJMD data reveal a structural paradox: the Human Development Index (HDI) increased from 75.44 (2021) to 77.69 (2024), yet the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) remained at 8.34%. This jobless growth phenomenon demonstrates that the generic approach of Asta Cita premised on food sovereignty, extractive industry downstreaming, and a maritime axis risks substantive deviation when implemented in regions with tertiary-urban characteristics.

A review of the literature reveals a significant research gap. Prior juridical studies tend to focus on one of three issues. First, macro-synchronization between the RPJMD and RPJPN as a structural approach (Sarah et al., 2022; Pasaribu, 2023). Second, the formal institutional distribution of authority between central and regional governments (Adhiatma, 2023; Putri, 2025). Third, the administrative accountability of the RPJMD at the provincial level (Lestari, 2024; Hendrikus, 2025). No study has yet comprehensively examined the manifestation of Asta Cita as a newly enacted vision-mission instrument at the city level using three analytical lenses simultaneously: Legal Harmonization Theory, Multi-Level Governance, and Policy Translation. These three theories are complementary: legal harmonization provides a normative framework, multi-level governance provides an institutional framework, and policy translation explains the operational framework at the ground level.

To substantiate this gap rather than merely assert it, the existing scholarship can be situated along three established strands and tested for adequacy. The first strand on RPJMD–RPJMN/RPJPJ macro-synchronization (Sarah et al., 2022; Pasaribu, 2023; Atas, 2023) treats

alignment as a structural and textual question and stops at the provincial or regency tier, leaving unexamined how a vision-mission doctrine is substantively translated at the city tier. The second strand on the formal distribution of central–local authority (Adhiatma, 2023; Putri, 2025; Haq et al., 2025) clarifies who holds planning competence but not whether the resulting documents genuinely advance national targets. The third strand on RPJMD accountability and data-system harmonization (Lestari, 2024; Hendrikus, 2025; Fatimah, 2024) evaluates administrative compliance without a theory of why formal compliance and substantive realization diverge. None of these strands addresses a newly enacted doctrine (Asta Cita under Presidential Regulation 12/2025) at the city level, and none combines a normative, institutional, and operational lens to diagnose the compliance–substance gap. The distinct contribution of this study is therefore threefold and falsifiable: it shifts the unit of analysis to the city tier, it integrates three theoretical lenses that prior single-lens studies applied in isolation, and it operationalizes a Translational KPI instrument that prior planning-law research has not proposed.

The urgency of this study lies in three aspects. First, regarding timing, Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 on the RPJMD 2025–2029 has just been enacted and stands as one of the first regional documents to explicitly adopt Asta Cita after Presidential Regulation 12/2025. Second, regarding substance, the research findings will serve as practical references for other regional heads currently drafting their RPJMDs. Third, regarding theory, this study offers a legal design construction that can improve the architecture of national development planning law more broadly.

Based on this background, this research aims to: (1) analyze the legal basis and position of Asta Cita in the national and regional development planning system; (2) examine the degree of normative compliance and substantive embodiment of Asta Cita in Sukabumi City's RPJMD 2025–2029; (3) identify the juridical-administrative impediments faced by the regional government in this alignment process; and (4) formulate legal design recommendations to strengthen legal certainty in development planning. The research questions addressed are: how does Indonesian positive law construct the obligation to align the RPJMD with Asta Cita, to what extent has Sukabumi City's RPJMD substantively manifested it, and what kind of legal design reconstruction can close the gap between formal compliance and substantive harmonization?

Literature Review

Legal Harmonization Theory as a Normative Framework

Legal harmonization is a systematic process of aligning legislation at the same level and across different hierarchies to prevent disharmony, contradiction, or regulatory overlap (Tresnadipangga, 2023). In contemporary discourse, harmonization is no longer understood as a corrective activity after enactment, but as an upstream effort integrated from the legislative planning stage (Chandra et al., 2022). This paradigm shift is relevant to RPJMD drafting because every substantive deviation from the RPJMN incurs significant legal and political costs.

Harmonization functions as a systemic instrument supporting sustainable national development goals (Simanjuntak, 2022). This thinking aligns with the view that legal harmonization should be regarded as an integrative effort to unify the direction of policy, where lower regulations are not only prohibited from contradicting (negative consistency) but must actively support the strategic targets of the higher national policy (positive consistency) (Anshori, 2020). It is this concept of positive consistency that becomes the key to assessing whether the manifestation of Asta Cita in Sukabumi City represents substantive harmonization or merely pseudo-synchronization.

Multi-Level Governance as an Institutional Framework

Multi-Level Governance (MLG) theory asserts that policy-making authority is no longer monopolized by the central government but is distributed vertically among different levels of government and horizontally among state and non-state actors (Hooghe et al., 2020; Marks & Hooghe, 2023). In the Indonesian context, regional governments are positioned as strategic actors translating national mandates into regulations adaptive and responsive to regional characteristics (Panyalai & Azis, 2022).

The main challenge of MLG in Indonesia is overlapping authority and asymmetric inter-regional capabilities (Zulaika, 2024). Vertical coordination failures often stem from the inability to build equal co-management between sectoral ministries and regional governments the central government tends to impose uniform targets without opening space for regions to manage their asymmetric capacities (Muhammad, 2025). The success of strategic policy is greatly determined by the clarity of operational discretion boundaries at each level: the center as macro regulator, the province as coordinator-supervisor, and the regency/city as executor based on local characteristics (Pratiwi, 2025).

Policy Translation as an Operational Framework

Policy Translation theory emerges to correct the limitations of classical implementation theory, which views policy execution as a mechanical top-down process. Translation proceeds through stages of adoption, adaptation, and recontextualization; its success depends on administrative capacity, resources, and the presence of policy brokers at the local level (Elg et al., 2025). Translation is often performed by intermediary actors who selectively choose policy elements deemed relevant, thereby producing variations in implementation across regions despite the uniformity of national policy documents (Bešić, 2025).

Translation practices are tied to local bureaucratic culture and technical language capacity (indicators, nomenclature); without terminology standardization and technical training, the downscaling of national policies into regional documents will produce systemic inconsistency (Yusof & Azalie, 2024). This concept is highly relevant in explaining the phenomenon of "linguistic acrobatics" in which a local ditch-improvement program in Sukabumi City is wrapped with the nomenclature "National Green Infrastructure-Based Disaster Mitigation" to appear synchronized with the macro Asta Cita agenda.

Conceptual Framework

This study integrates the three theories above into a unified analytical framework. Legal harmonization operates at the norm level, MLG at the institutional level, and policy translation at the operational level. These three layers are interdependent failure at one layer affects the others. For instance, the uncertainty of harmonization parameters (norm layer) will trigger conflicts of authority between agencies (institutional layer) and ultimately give rise to semantic compromise without substantive output (operational layer). This framework serves as the analytical lens for evaluating the manifestation of Asta Cita in Sukabumi City's RPJMD.

METHODS

This research is a legal research of a juridical-normative nature supported by limited empirical data (normative-empirical). The normative approach focuses on the examination of written legal norms, legal principles, and doctrines developed in legal science regarding national and regional development planning systems. Limited empirical data support is used to understand the implementation context of policy alignment.

To avoid overstating the empirical dimension, its scope and procedure are delimited explicitly. The empirical component here is a structured documentary and secondary-data study rather than a field study based on interviews or surveys; the term "normative-empirical" is used

in the limited sense that normative analysis is contextualised against verifiable administrative facts, not in the sense of primary social-science fieldwork. Three procedural steps were applied. First, document selection: the principal unit is Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 in its official post-DPRD-approval version, purposively chosen because it is among the first city-level RPJMDs enacted after Presidential Regulation 12/2025. Second, secondary-data collection: development indicators for 2021–2024 (HDI, open unemployment rate, SAKIP scores, and the fiscal structure) were drawn from official Statistics Indonesia (BPS) Sukabumi releases and the Regional Gazette, with each datum traced to its issuing institution. Third, validation: data currency was audited against the latest official publications, document authenticity was confirmed through the official gazette, and the author's reading was triangulated against the statutory text and at least three administrative-law sources. Stakeholder interviews and questionnaire instruments were deliberately not employed and are noted as a limitation, leaving primary-data collection to further research.

To address the research questions, three complementary legal research approaches are employed. First, the statute approach examines and interprets the legislation underpinning the development planning system, the regulation of regional autonomy, and the provisions concerning the drafting and evaluation of the RPJMD. Second, the conceptual approach uses legal concepts and theories such as regional autonomy, governmental authority, supervision and guidance, legal harmonization, and legal certainty. Third, the case approach specifically examines Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 on the RPJMD 2025–2029 as the unit of analysis.

The legal materials used are divided into three categories. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia; Law Number 25 of 2004 on the National Development Planning System; Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government; Law Number 1 of 2022 on Financial Relations between Central and Regional Governments; Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2025 on the RPJMN 2025–2029; Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 86 of 2017; and Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025. Secondary legal materials include textbooks, legal and public administration journals, scholarly articles, and relevant government policy studies. Tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries and regulation indexes.

The technique for collecting legal materials is library research on official documents, university repositories, and legal portals. To strengthen the empirical context, document studies were conducted on the Sukabumi City Regional Gazette and secondary data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) Sukabumi office on development indicators for 2021–2024. Instrument validity is maintained through three layers of verification: (1) legal auditing on the currency of the cited regulations, (2) authenticity testing of legal materials to ensure that the analyzed RPJMD document is the official post-DPRD-approval version, and (3) theoretical source triangulation by comparing the author's interpretation against at least three opinions of constitutional and administrative law experts.

Analysis of legal materials is conducted qualitatively and normatively using the legal reasoning method. The analytical stages include legal materials inventory, classification by research question, and interpretation via grammatical, systematic, and teleological methods. Subsequently, mapping was conducted between the eight Asta Cita pillars in the RPJMN 2025–2029 and the objectives, targets, strategies, policy directions, priority programs, and indicators in Sukabumi City's RPJMD. The mapping results were tested through a juridical synchronization matrix to assess the degree of alignment (full alignment, partial alignment, or divergence), which was then interpreted through the theoretical framework of legal harmonization, MLG, and policy translation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Legal Basis and Position of Asta Cita in the Planning System

Normative examination shows that Asta Cita stands as a *beleidslijn* or policy line formed by state administration through the discretionary authority of government (*freies ermesen*). Initially, Asta Cita was a political promise submitted to the General Election Commission (KPU) as a formal candidacy requirement. Following the inauguration of the President, this document obtained constitutional legitimacy and bound itself hierarchically downward. This juridical transformation was realized through the enactment of Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2025 on the RPJMN 2025–2029.

Article 19 paragraph (1) of Law Number 25 of 2004 serves as the principal juridical pillar requiring the elected President to enact the RPJMN as a translation of the vision, mission, and election action program within a maximum of three months after the swearing-in ceremony. Through this enactment, the eight pillars of Asta Cita transformed from political promises into a legal product binding under state administrative law. Article 19 paragraph (3) of the same law further obliges the RPJMD to follow the RPJMN, thus closing the legal chain of alignment perfectly at the normative level.

However, the degree of binding force of Asta Cita is not uniform across all levels of government. Table 1 presents the structure of the hierarchy of planning documents and their juridical nature in the Indonesian legal system.

Table 1. Hierarchy of Development Planning Documents and Their Juridical Nature

Document	Legal Form	Time Span	Position and Juridical Nature
RPJPN	Statute (UU)	20 Years	Macro-national master plan with the highest legal binding force; mandatorily serves as absolute reference for drafting the RPJMN, RPJPD, and RPJMD.
RPJMN	Presidential Regulation	5 Years	Operational translation of the elected President's vision, mission, and strategic agenda; binds ministries and agencies sectorally and binds regional governments substantively.
RPJMD	Regional Regulation (Perda)	5 Years	Translation of the regional head's vision, mission, and program; binds the regional domestic sphere and must be drafted in alignment with the macro targets of the RPJMN.

Source: author's analysis (2026)

The absence of quantitative parameters regarding the degree of "following" in Article 263 paragraph (2) of Law Number 23 of 2014 creates juridical ambiguity. The phrase "considering" applied to the RPJMD differs in intensity from the phrase "following" applied to the RPJPD both appear in the same law without firm operational boundaries. The implication is that central evaluators (the Governor and the Ministry of Home Affairs) hold broad discretion to accept or reject draft Regional Regulations on the RPJMD, which in turn opens the door to arbitrary evaluation.

Manifestation of Asta Cita in Sukabumi City's RPJMD 2025–2029

Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 sets the development vision of "Realizing an Innovative, Independent, Religious, and Nationalist Society of Sukabumi City," elaborated into 5 missions, 45 priority programs, and 14 regional flagship programs. Mapping results show that the five missions linearly absorb all eight Asta Cita pillars. The first mission

(vocational human resource development and health services) absorbs pillar 4; the second (practice of religious, social, and cultural values and strengthening of tolerance) absorbs pillar 1; the third (creative economy and tourism) absorbs pillars 3 and 5; the fourth (infrastructure and environment) absorbs pillars 6 and 8; and the fifth (governance) absorbs pillar 7.

Table 2 presents the juridical synchronization matrix of the manifestation of Asta Cita in Sukabumi City's RPJMD, together with the alignment status based on substantive analysis.

Table 2. Juridical Synchronization Matrix of Asta Cita's Manifestation in Sukabumi City's RPJMD

Asta Cita Pillar	Empirical Indicators in Sukabumi City's RPJMD	Contextualization Level	Synchronization Status
1 (Ideology, Human Rights)	100% enforcement of Regional Regulations by Civil Service Police; Tolerance Index in "Good" category; "Sukabumi Waqf City" Movement	High	Substantively aligned
2 (Food, water, energy sovereignty)	Access to potable water 97.82%; food sovereignty constrained by land conversion (150 ha); PLTS Cikundul-Cisarua initiative	Low	Pseudo-synchronization
3 (Employment, entrepreneurship)	Open Unemployment Rate 8.34% (2024) → target 6.88–7.37% (2029); BLK vocational program; "Menata Kebaikan Tech" platform	High	Substantively aligned
4 (Human resources, science, health)	HDI rank 7 in West Java; high SPM achievement in education and health; low Early Childhood Education; stunting program	High	Substantively aligned
5 (Downstreaming & industrialization)	Klassen Typology quadrant II; SME growth 2.66%; focus on MICE tourism and tertiary creative industry	Adaptive	Adaptive translation
6 (Equity, poverty reduction)	Sanitation access 44.76% (2023); poverty 7.20% → target 3.11–4.19%; slum management under 10 ha	Partial	Conditionally aligned
7 (Political, legal, bureaucratic reform)	Electronic Government Index; Regional Innovation Index; SAKIP 76.36; Merit System Index 0.78 → target 0.84	High	Substantively aligned
8 (Harmony with nature, tolerance)	Integration of RPPLH 2022–2052; Cimandiri Fault mitigation; flood control in settlement areas	High	Substantively aligned

Source: author's analysis of Sukabumi City Regional Regulation No. 5/2025 (2026)

The mapping shows varied degrees of alignment. Five of the eight Asta Cita pillars were substantively synchronized. One pillar (pillar 5) shows legally valid adaptive translation Sukabumi City converts the extractive industry downstreaming approach into the development of tertiary creative industries given geographical constraints. One pillar (pillar 6) is conditionally aligned because the ambition for poverty alleviation collides with fiscal constraints. The most problematic is pillar 2 (food, water, energy sovereignty) this pillar manifests clear pseudo-synchronization: rice production increase indicators are forced into the document even though, empirically, Sukabumi City lacks sustainable rice fields.

So that these categories rest on a transparent and replicable framework rather than authorial impression, each pillar is scored against three observable legal-administrative indicators, each answerable as present or absent from the RPJMD text and official data: (a)

normative anchoring, whether a program is explicitly linked to the pillar with a legal basis in the Regional Regulation; (b) factual executability, whether the empirical and resource preconditions exist, evidenced by a measurable baseline and target supported by official data; and (c) output-target contribution, whether the program's measurable output logically advances the corresponding macro target. The four categories are then defined as fixed combinations of these indicators: substantively aligned satisfies all three; adaptive translation occurs where the literal macro instrument is geographically or structurally inapplicable but is replaced by a functionally equivalent local program that still satisfies (a) and (c); conditionally aligned satisfies (a) and sets a measurable target but leaves (b) dependent on an unmet precondition such as fiscal capacity, so contribution is potential rather than realised; and pseudo-synchronization satisfies (a) in nomenclature only while (b) is absent, so the target is not executable and (c) cannot be met. Applying this rubric, pillar 2 fails indicator (b) because sustainable rice fields do not exist, which classifies it as pseudo-synchronization independently of authorial judgment, and the same test can be re-run by other researchers on any RPJMD.

Juridical and Administrative Impediments

Examination of Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 identifies four clusters of impediments hindering the substantive manifestation of Asta Cita. First, juridical impediments in the form of potential disharmony of authority due to the unclear "alignment" parameters in Presidential Regulation 12/2025 and Minister of Home Affairs Instruction Number 2 of 2025. The multi-interpretive wording of the obligation drives the drafting team to safeguard formal compliance through nomenclature alignment rather than substance. Additionally, there is a regulatory time-lag between the issuance of central regulations and the regional capacity to respond revising the RPJMD requires a lengthy legislative procedure with the DPRD, so the implementation of Asta Cita in the region operates without a valid umbrella regulation during transition.

Second, institutional impediments in the form of fragmentation of duties among regional apparatuses (ego-sectoral). Asta Cita pillars are inherently cross-cutting; stunting management, for example, requires the integration of the Health Office, the Office of Cooperatives-SMEs-Industry-and-Trade (Diskumindag), the Office of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo), and the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda). Coordination mechanisms that remain formal meetings without common commitment in distributing the burden of performance indicators cause Asta Cita programs to operate in fragmentation. Vertical coordination channels via the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) are bureaucratic-administrative rather than substantive two-way forums.

Third, administrative impediments take the form of sectoral data inconsistency. Utilization of integrated population data by Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPDs) has reached only 62.5%. Sukabumi City's Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP) score declined from 79.54 (2022) to 76.36 (2024) an indicator showing that the quality of performance-based planning is deteriorating. Regional drafting teams must simultaneously consider the RPJPN 2025–2045, RPJMN 2025–2029, West Java Provincial RPJPD, Sukabumi City RPJPD, and Sukabumi City Spatial Plan (RTRW), which have different enactment years, evaluation periods, and indicator nomenclatures.

Fourth, the most extreme budgetary impediment. Sukabumi City's total Regional Revenue ranges from IDR 1.17–1.35 trillion per year, with Operational Expenditure dominating at IDR 1.13–1.19 trillion. The fiscal space for Capital Expenditure leaves only IDR 48–149 billion. Locally-generated revenue (PAD) contributes only 32.82%, while 65.95% of revenue comes from Central Government Transfer Funds. This acute fiscal dependence creates

administrative-financial vulnerability: if the Central Government postpones transfers due to national economic shocks, all Asta Cita alignment programs risk paralysis.

Discussion

Pseudo-Synchronization as the Pathology of Legal Harmonization

The finding that Sukabumi City imposes food sovereignty indicators on its RPJMD despite the empirical lack of sufficient farmland validates the proposition that regional regulation harmonization is frequently trapped in procedural formality (Tresnadipangga, 2023). This phenomenon reflects the failure of positive consistency: regional norms not only fail to support the substance of national targets but instead generate distortion by imposing targets that cannot be factually executed (Anshori, 2020). It exemplifies the "linguistic acrobatics" explained by policy translation theory where the nomenclature "National Green Infrastructure-Based Disaster Mitigation" is used to wrap a local ditch-improvement program in order to appear synchronized with the macro agenda.

The theoretical implications are significant. First, the concept of legal harmonization needs to be reconstructed not only as negative compatibility (regional regulation does not contradict central regulation) but as positive contribution (regional regulation substantively contributes to the achievement of central targets). Second, harmonization parameters must be downscaled from the abstract level to the operational level by providing quantitative rubrics. Without such rubrics, the evaluation of the RPJMD by the Governor and the Ministry of Home Affairs will continue to be trapped in textual formality. Third, a distinction must be made between nomenclature synchronization and substantive synchronization the former is surface compliance, the latter is true harmonization.

Multi-Level Governance and the Failure of Vertical Co-Management

The finding that Sukabumi City experiences fragmentation of vertical coordination with central sectoral ministries reinforces the thesis on the failure of co-management in Indonesia's MLG (Muhammad, 2025). Central sectoral ministries often directly transfer programs to technical offices in the regions without going through the Bappeda coordination gate, thereby disrupting the priority structure established in the regional RPJMD. This phenomenon is not merely a technical coordination problem but a reflection of the lack of clarity in the boundaries of discretion: the center is inconsistent in playing its role as macro regulator because it also executes programs; the province is not optimal as coordinator-supervisor because the authority of the Governor as Representative of the Central Government (GWPP) has not been institutionally and budgetarily strengthened (Pratiwi, 2025).

This theoretical discussion yields a critical insight: Indonesia's MLG framework remains conventionally hierarchical-linear, not collaborative. The shift from government to governance has occurred only at the rhetorical level, not yet at the level of legal instruments. The central government still tends to impose uniform targets that assume homogeneous regional capacity, whereas the asymmetric reality of capabilities demands instrument differentiation (Zulaika, 2024). Without revitalization of the GWPP authority and the standardization of Musrenbang as a legal negotiation forum, this coordination failure will continue to recur.

Policy Translation and the Pathology of Paper Compliance

The decline of Sukabumi City's SAKIP score from 79.54 to 76.36 can theoretically be explained as a symptom of translation failure at the recontextualization stage (Elg et al., 2025). Drafting teams at the ground level lack adequate freedom to reconstruct macro guidelines into operational language suited to local administrative capacities and the work culture of the local bureaucracy. When translation discretion is eliminated, what remains is paper compliance on-paper compliance without substantive output.

This condition has been described as "harmonization paralyzed in implementation" (Bešić, 2025). In Sukabumi City, this paralysis is exacerbated by the limited capacity of planning human resources. Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 actually mentions the use of strategic management approaches, logic models, systems thinking, and system dynamics sophisticated instruments that theoretically can guarantee translation quality. However, the adoption of these methodologies faces constraints in the quantity and quality of regional analysts who understand the interconnection between central monetary-fiscal policies and regional operational programs. In other words, the instruments are available, but the translator's capacity remains weak.

Legal Design Reconstruction: A Triadic Intervention

Based on the three-layer analysis of failure above (norm, institutional, operational), this study proposes a triadic legal design reconstruction an intervention that operates simultaneously at all three layers. Table 3 presents the formulation of legal design recommendations together with their theoretical bases.

Table 3. Legal Design Reconstruction for the Harmonization of Asta Cita in the RPJMD

Layer	Legal Design Instrument	Operational Mechanism	Theoretical Basis
Norm	Omnibus Planning Clause within the RPJMD Regional Regulation	Provides normative delegation to the Regional Head to adjust Asta Cita targets directly through a Regional Head Regulation (Perkada) without amending the Perda, thereby preventing juridical time-lag	Legal Harmonization
Norm	Regulatory Interlocking Matrix	Mapping of article interconnections among the RPJPN, RPJMN, RPJPD, RPJMD, and RTRW, updated in real time through the Regional Government Information System (SIPD)	Legal Harmonization
Institutional	Revitalization of the Governor's Authority as Representative of the Central Government (GWPP)	Revision of the Government Regulation on Guidance and Supervision; granting juridical authority to reject draft RPJMDs that do not contain a commitment to Asta Cita	Multi-Level Governance
Institutional	Intergovernmental Planning Forum	Institutionalization of Musrenbangnas-Musrenbangda as a legal negotiation forum that produces an Intergovernmental Agreement binding the central and regional governments	Multi-Level Governance
Operational	Translational KPI (Impact Alignment)	Redefinition of RPJMD evaluation parameters by the Ministry of Home Affairs-Bappenas from nomenclature similarity to impact alignment; regions may freely formulate program names as long as outputs contribute to macro targets	Policy Translation
Operational	Real-Time SIPN-SIPD Integration	A single-data ecosystem connecting the central planning information system (SIPN) with the Regional	Policy Translation

Layer	Legal Design Instrument	Operational Mechanism	Theoretical Basis
		Government Information System (SIPD) for transparent performance tracking	

Source: author's reconstruction based on theoretical analysis (2026)

The original contribution offered by this study lies in the concept of Translational KPI as an operational bridge between the dogmatics of legal harmonization and the asymmetric reality of regions. This concept shifts the evaluation paradigm from literal nomenclature matching to impact alignment. In practice, this means that Sukabumi City can legally formulate tertiary creative economy programs as the implementation of the Asta Cita downstream industry pillar provided that the program output logically contributes to the national macroeconomic target. This study also expands the concept of legal harmonization by introducing the Omnibus Planning Clause as a new juridical elasticity instrument that brings planning law closer to the dynamics of central policy without sacrificing local legal certainty.

The limitations of this research must be honestly acknowledged. First, a case study on one city cannot be readily generalized to all regencies/cities in Indonesia given the heterogeneity of geography and fiscal capacity. Second, the SAKIP data and performance achievements used represent a 2022–2024 snapshot and therefore cannot capture the full impact of the implementation of Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025, which has only recently entered into effect. Third, the political dimension (the DPRD–regional head relationship) has not been deeply analyzed. Further research can broaden the unit of analysis to several cities with differing characteristics and use the quantitative Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to measure the effectiveness weight of each legal design instrument proposed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the juridical analysis of Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2025 on the RPJMD 2025–2029, this research yields three main conclusions. First, Asta Cita stands as a beleidslijn that has transformed into a binding legal norm through Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2025 and gives rise to a material obligation for regional governments to align their RPJMDs. However, the absence of operational parameters in the phrases "following" and "considering" in Article 263 paragraph (2) of Law Number 23 of 2014 creates a wide interpretative space and a risk of arbitrariness in the evaluation of draft RPJMD Regional Regulations.

Second, Sukabumi City's RPJMD 2025–2029 demonstrates a high degree of formal compliance through the absorption of the eight Asta Cita pillars into five missions, forty-five priority programs, and fourteen local flagship programs contextualized to the city's characteristics as a non-maritime urban area based on the tertiary creative economy. However, this formal compliance does not automatically translate into substantive harmonization. Five of the eight pillars were substantively synchronized, while the other three exhibit symptoms of pseudo-synchronization, conditional synchronization, or adaptive translation requiring stronger legal legitimation. The obstacles encountered are multilayered juridical, institutional, administrative, and budgetary with fiscal capacity falling within the weak category.

Third, this research offers a triadic legal design reconstruction working at the levels of norm, institution, and operation. At the norm level, the Omnibus Planning Clause and the Regulatory Interlocking Matrix are proposed. At the institutional level, the revitalization of the Governor as Representative of the Central Government and the standardization of the Intergovernmental Planning Forum are recommended. At the operational level, the concept of an impact-aligned Translational KPI and the real-time integration of SIPN-SIPD is offered. The theoretical implication is the need for a paradigm shift in legal harmonization from

negative compatibility toward positive contribution; the practical implication is the availability of a reconstruction guide for planning law adaptive to regional heterogeneity. The policy implication is that the Central Government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs and Bappenas, must immediately formulate Translational KPI operational guidelines and revise the Government Regulation on Guidance and Supervision to strengthen the effectiveness of vertical alignment following Presidential Regulation 12/2025.

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