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Reframing Collaborative Governance for Local Economic Empowerment: Institutional Insights from Traditional Culinary MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in strengthening local economies and preserving cultural identity. In Kabupaten Ogan Ilir, traditional culinary MSMEs hold significant potential as drivers of regional economic development; however, their management remains constrained by fragmented coordination, limited institutional capacity, and suboptimal stakeholder collaboration. This study aims to analyze the implementation of collaborative governance in managing traditional culinary MSMEs in Ogan Ilir Regency. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to examine the implementation of collaborative governance. The study is guided by the model proposed by Chris Ansell and Alison Gash, focusing on five analytical components: direct stakeholder dialogue, trust development, commitment to collaborative processes, shared understanding, and intermediate outcomes. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observational fieldwork, and document review, incorporating insights from local government institutions and associated actors, MSME actors, community groups, and supporting institutions. The findings indicate that collaborative governance practices have begun to develop but remain partially institutionalized. Dialogue mechanisms exist yet are not conducted routinely; trust among actors has improved at the institutional level but remains fragile operationally; and commitment is stronger within government institutions than among non-state actors. While intermediate outcomes such as increased business licensing, improved packaging, and digital marketing adoption have been observed, collaboration is still predominantly top-down and lacks sustained multi-actor engagement. Strengthening structured coordination forums, clarifying stakeholder roles, and enhancing participatory mechanisms are essential to achieving a more integrated and sustainable collaborative governance model for culinary MSME development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Collaborative governance involves multi-stakeholder engagement to address socio-economic challenges and promote sustainable development. This approach integrates public institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and international bodies to build trust, solve social problems, and promote economic well-being [1], [2]. Collaborative governance brings together diverse actors to jointly produce goals and strategies, sharing responsibilities and resources [2], [3]. Effective collaborative governance emphasizes equal voices, consideration, and political education, aiming to empower communities and reduce organizational constraints [4], [5]. Local governments act as mediators between citizens and the state, playing an important role in minority communities and economically disadvantaged areas [6], [7]. Collaborative governance can be undermined by power imbalances, where dominant groups control processes and marginalize local communities. Addressing this imbalance requires measures such as joint teams, facilitation training, and equal knowledge sharing [8]. Effective collaborative governance requires careful consideration of resource allocation and shared responsibilities to avoid mismatches between investments and objectives [9]. Local authorities in Hura use collaborative governance to increase women's employment, demonstrating the importance of local governments in mediating between stakeholders [6].

Community land tenure initiatives in the Highlands and Scottish Islands have shown that participatory governance can rebuild community capacity and redefine economic development [10]. Forming joint teams and training villagers as facilitators helps reduce power imbalances and improve collaborative governance outcomes [8]. Collaborative governance can create economically resilient communities by integrating diverse perspectives and fostering inclusive decision-making [11], [12]. By involving stakeholders in ecosystem management, collaborative governance promotes sustainable practices and reduces environmental impacts [9], [13]. Collaborative governance increases political engagement by involving citizens in policy design and implementation, thereby increasing trust and legitimacy in the government [2], [7]. Collaborative governance for local economic empowerment involves addressing power imbalances, ensuring that resource allocation aligns with goals, and encouraging inclusive participation. Successful examples from different regions highlight the potential of collaborative governance to create resilient, sustainable, and politically engaged communities [6], [8], [10], [11].

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the national and regional economies. They are often considered the backbone of economic stability, especially in times of crisis. In Indonesia, MSMEs have shown remarkable resilience due to flexibility, strong local ties, and reliance on local resources [14], [15], [16]. These companies contribute significantly to employment, industrial output, and regional development, making them indispensable to the country's economic framework [17], [18]. During economic downturns, while larger sectors may struggle, MSMEs often maintain stability and continue to operate effectively. This resilience is attributed to their ability to adapt quickly to changing market conditions and their deep-rooted connections in local communities [15], [16], [19]. For example, MSMEs in Indonesia are important for maintaining economic activity and providing job opportunities, even amid global economic challenges [19], [20], [21], [22]. Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs highlights the substantial contribution of MSMEs to the Indonesian economy. They account for a significant portion of the country's GDP, exports, and employment, underscoring their important role in economic development and stability [17], [23]. Despite facing many challenges such as limited access to finance and technology gaps, MSMEs continue to grow and drive economic growth through innovation and adaptability [20], [24]. In short, MSMEs are not only vital for economic stability but also for fostering inclusive growth and reducing regional disparities. Their ability to withstand economic shocks and contribute to the local economy makes them the cornerstone of Indonesia's economic resilience and development [16], [19], [23].

Ogan Ilir Regency, located in South Sumatra Province, is famous for its distinctive culinary heritage, which not only reflects the local cultural identity but also has significant potential as a regional economic driver through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Ogan Ilir's traditional culinary offerings, such as pindang, pegagan, bekasam, bludar cake, and semprong, are cultural riches that can be used to boost the tourism sector and the creative economy. MSMEs play an important role in the Indonesian economy, contributing significantly to economic growth and employment. In South Sumatra, MSMEs are crucial, with 75,569 operating in the province, yet only 12% leverage digital platforms to improve their business processes [25]. It shows substantial opportunities for growth and development through digitalization and improvement of business strategies. The culinary sector in Ogan Ilir has the potential to become a major tourist attraction, thereby boosting economic growth. The development of MSMEs in the culinary sector can turn these traditional foods into superior products that attract visitors and increase local income. However, developing MSMEs as tourist attractions requires more strategic government intervention in areas such as finance, marketing, and human resources [26].

Despite their potential, MSMEs in Ogan Ilir face several challenges, including limited access to capital, technological innovation, and marketing systems [27]. Overcoming these challenges through strategic planning and support can improve the competitiveness and sustainability of these companies. For example, leveraging technology and digitalization for marketing and management purposes can significantly increase the reach and efficiency of MSMEs [28]. The implementation of this collaborative governance is expected not only to strengthen the technical and economic capacity of MSME actors but also to strengthen regional cultural identity. Typical cuisine is not only a product of consumption, but also a representation of local values, history, and narratives that deserve to be defended and introduced more widely. Thus, the development of typical culinary MSMEs is not only an economic strategy but also an instrument for preserving the culture and identity of Ogan Ilir Regency amid modernization and globalization. Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing the form and mechanisms of collaborative governance between the government and non-government sectors in the development of typical culinary MSMEs in Ogan Ilir Regency. Through the collaborative governance framework, it is hoped that effective, inclusive interaction patterns can be identified, encouraging the sustainable growth of typical culinary MSMEs and contributing to improving the regional economy and preserving local culture.

2. THE COMPREHENSIVE THEORETICAL BASIS

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Effective collaborative governance involves integrating multiple sectors, including public, private, academic, and civil society. This multi-actor ecosystem governance can significantly enhance the performance of community-based MSMEs by leveraging the strengths and resources of diverse stakeholders [29], [30]. The Integrated Partnership Model for Digital Transformation of MSMEs (KTDSU) emphasizes the importance of technological innovation and social empowerment, integrating public, private, academic, civil society, and media sectors to drive MSME growth [31].

Institutional Support and Policy Frameworks

Government regulations and policies play a crucial role in facilitating MSME empowerment. For instance, the implementation of Governor Regulation Number 2 of 2020 in Jakarta aims to support MSME digital transformation, although it faces challenges such as limited technology infrastructure and low digital literacy [31]. Strategic coalition-building and actor alignment are essential for creating resilient and sustainable MSME ecosystems. Government institutions, local authorities, and technology companies often hold significant influence and can drive institutional support and financial access [29].

Capacity Building and Skill Development

Empowerment programs that focus on skills training, access to marketing, and the provision of production equipment can significantly enhance the capacity and economic independence of MSME actors [32]. The development of digital literacy and technical skills is particularly important for women entrepreneurs in the culinary MSME sector, as these skills directly impact their empowerment and business success [33].

Cultural and Local Wisdom Integration

Incorporating local creativity and cultural wisdom into MSME operations can strengthen innovation capacity and market relevance. Traditional culinary heritage, for example, can be leveraged to create distinctive products that appeal to both local and global markets. Aligning cultural identity with innovation-driven strategies, supported by capacity-building and institutional collaboration, enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of rural-based MSMEs [34].

3. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to examine complex social phenomena within their natural settings. A case study approach is considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth investigation of “how” and “why” questions, particularly when the issue under examination, product innovation among Micro, Small, and Medium

Enterprises (MSMEs), is closely embedded within a specific socio-institutional context. This research design enables a comprehensive analysis of the constraints faced by traditional culinary MSMEs and how public sector interventions shape their innovation trajectories. By concentrating on selected cases, the study seeks to generate contextualized insights into the functioning of collaborative governance and its implications for local economic empowerment.

Data collection involves multiple qualitative techniques to ensure depth and triangulation. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key informants, including MSME entrepreneurs, government representatives, and sectoral experts, allowing flexibility while maintaining focus on core research themes. In addition, focus group discussions with MSME actors are organized to capture shared experiences, collective challenges, and perceptions regarding policy support and collaborative processes. A documentary analysis of relevant regulations, policy reports, and institutional records is undertaken to understand the broader governance framework for MSME development. Complementing these methods, field observations are carried out within selected enterprises to directly examine production practices, innovation activities, and patterns of interaction with public institutions.

The collected data are examined using thematic analysis. This analytical procedure involves systematic coding to identify recurring patterns, central themes, and relationships among variables related to innovation and governance interventions. The interpretation emphasizes how these themes interact within the broader collaborative governance structure. Ethical standards are strictly upheld throughout the research process. All participants provide informed consent, are fully briefed on the study's objectives, and retain the right to withdraw at any time. Measures are taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of personal and institutional information.

Through this qualitative case study framework, the research aims to deepen understanding of the relationship between MSME innovation processes and governmental facilitation mechanisms.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The study is expected to enrich scholarly discussions on collaborative governance while offering practical recommendations to strengthen local economic empowerment strategies in the culinary sector.

1. Face-to-Face Dialogue

This indicator emphasizes the importance of direct interaction to build relationships and mutual understanding. Based on the interview and observation results, face-to-face dialogue generally exists but is inconsistent. This is because the government is more proactive in organizing, while business actors rely on ad hoc invitations. Digital communication (such as WhatsApp) is often a replacement, effective for efficiency but less in-depth than face-to-face communication. The main challenge is the lack of routine, which leads to sporadic participation, especially in remote areas. Implications: This dialogue is effective for socialization of licensing and training, but it needs to be increased in frequency for typical culinary MSMEs to be more inclusive.

Table 1. Stakeholder Perspectives on Communication Effectiveness and Challenges in MSME Assistance

Stakeholder	Key Findings	Effectiveness & Challenges
DPMPTSP	Routinely through annual socialization in 16 sub-districts, with interactive discussions and permit assistance. Communication via social media as support.	Effective (positive response from MSMEs), but it depends on the rotation schedule.
DISPERINDAG	Be flexible based on needs, not routine; focus on field visits and direct dialogue at the place of business. Priority is given to official cooperatives over associations.	Effective for practical assistance, but with less priority in associations such as Women Entrepreneurs.
Mrs. Rika Zidan (Culinary Pindang Pegagan)	Several times a year via training/socialization; daily via WhatsApp group. Periodic official visits (once every 2-3 months).	High, due to easy access and regular monitoring; please more often.
Asmaul Husna & Ranti (Women Entrepreneur)	Ad hoc, rarely routine; occasional visits to successful actors outside the region. Cooperation with the service is limited to a certain agenda.	It is not optimal; it is only temporary participation without a long-term plan.
Desy (Rolling Cakes Talang Balai)	Rarely with the service (only training agenda/bazaar); Monthly routine with the community via meetings/training. Communication via WhatsApp.	It has not been effective with the service because it is rare; it is better with the community.
Mrs. Zahuro (Cushion Cake)	Several times a year via service/community activities; daily via WhatsApp group. A visit to the office is rare but useful.	It is good enough to exchange opinions, but not regularly.
Sri (Kemplang Merjagat)	Only during certain agendas; Visits are infrequent (once a year). Communication via WhatsApp and face-to-face at the office/village hall.	It was quite helpful, but the need for help has not been fully met.
Cik Oni (Bekasam & Samber 3)	Visits and monitoring are rarely carried out.	It has not helped address the problems in MSMEs.
Yusnawati (Tekwan dry & kemplang dry)	There has been no effective use of communication.	The solutions and assistance for all the problems faced by MSMEs have not been provided.

2. Commitment to Process

This indicator assesses commitments through regulations, budgets, and monitoring. The government demonstrates strong commitment through regulation and evaluation, while business actors are more active individually. Challenge: Lack of written regulation in the community and invitation-dependent participation. Implications: The government's commitment to supporting culinary MSMEs is high, but it is necessary to involve business actors more deeply for sustainability.

Table 2. Stakeholder Participation, Regulatory Support, and Effectiveness of MSME Development Programs

Stakeholder	Key Findings	Effectiveness & Challenges
DPMPTSP	Regulation (Presidential Decree No. 28/2015); special budgets; Monitoring via LKPM. Positive impact on participation.	Strong, measured via increased reporting/investment.
DISPERINDAG	Written regulations/appeals; priority budgets; Field Monitoring. Success via real results.	Positive; focus on changing MSMEs' attitudes.
Mrs. Rika Zidan (Culinary Pindang Pegagan)	Attend if invited; active discussion/input. A great influence on the selling value.	High, for friendship and development.
Asmaul Husna & Ranti (Women Entrepreneur)	Without written regulations, budget from cash; Simple monitoring of business conditions.	Internal limited; The positive impact of exchanging information.
Desy (Rolling Cakes Talang Balai)	Always present/active questions and answers. Important for knowledge/networking.	High, even though the service program is not sustainable
Mrs. Zahuro (Cushion Cake)	Always present/active discussions; positive influence on sales/packaging.	High, driven by the desire to develop a business.
Sri (Kemplang Merjagat)	Always present/active questions and answers; A big influence on promotions/packaging	High, for insight and innovation motivation.
Cik Oni (Bekasam & Samber 3)	Not present because he had not participated in the training.	Low, due to a lack of information
Yusnawati (Tekwan dry & kemplang dry)	Not present because he had not participated in the training.	Low, due to a lack of information.

3. Shared Understanding

This indicator focuses on shared vision and differential adjustment. All agree that collaboration is important, but a top-down approach dominates. Business actors highlight their role as the motorbikes, while the government plays the role of facilitator. Challenge: Lack of active coordination. Implications: Understanding exists but needs to be strengthened through bottom-up collaboration for culinary MSMEs.

Table 3. Stakeholder Perspectives on Collaboration, Shared Vision, and Challenges in MSME Development

Stakeholder	Key Findings	Effectiveness & Challenges
DPMPTSP	Socialize the vision face-to-face; Overcome differences through collaborative flow. Even though it is top-down, it benefits everyone.	Achieved through continuous appeals.
DISPERINDAG	Gradual construction; vision of the regent. Collaboration with the private sector: a middle ground between interests.	Flexible, youth-focused, and excellent potential.
Mrs. Rika Zidan (Culinary Pindang Pegagan)	Collaboration is important to move up; The Benefits of Marketing. Problem: product distribution support.	Please remove the product at no cost
Asmaul Husna & Ranti (Women Entrepreneur)	Active communication to be in tune; national vision/mission. Collaboration has not stood out.	It needs to be improved via joint initiatives.
Desy (Rolling Cakes Talang Balai)	Collaboration is essential; The Benefits of Information/Innovation. Problem: location/marketing. Please train regularly.	Essential for competitiveness; Please support more.
Mrs. Zahuro (Cushion Cake)	Collaboration to help with capital/training. Problem: promotion/capital. Please be aware of this often.	Great benefits; Please fast halal certification.
Sri (Kemplang Merjagat)	Regular collaboration is expected; The Benefits of Development. Problem: marketing/equipment. Please continue to mentor.	Essential for expansion; please go down to the field often.
Cik Oni (Bekasam & Samber 3)	There is a need for collaboration among the government, the private sector, and academics so that activities can be carried out properly.	It is important to implement a monitoring routine and practical training.
Yusnawati (Tekwan dry & kemplang dry)	There needs to be clear cooperation between the government and the community, including the provision of capital.	Routine in the implementation of every aspect of training and empowerment

4. Intermediate Outcomes

This indicator evaluates initial outcomes such as innovation and effectiveness. Positive results include increasing NIB, promoting, and applying training science. Challenges: The program is still in progress, especially in remote areas and among young people. Implications: The results support the sustainability of culinary MSMEs, but accessibility challenges need to be addressed.

Table 4. Stakeholder Perspectives on the Effectiveness, Innovation, and Sustainability of MSME Development Programs

Stakeholder	Key Findings	Effectiveness & Challenges
DPMPTSP	Increase in NIB/LKPM; On-the-spot mentoring and innovation. High effectiveness via enthusiasm.	High, despite the geographical challenges.
DISPERINDAG	Transformation of MSMEs via groups; innovation in youth development. Effectiveness is processed.	Challenge: the lack of focus among young people.
Mrs. Rika Zidan (Culinary Pindang Pegagan)	Training is applied (taste/quality); tool assistance. Annual positive changes.	Continuous from the service; Packaging needs support.
Asmaul Husna & Ranti (Women Entrepreneur)	National participation; There are no new innovations yet. Low effectiveness.	Challenge: lack of active coordination.
Desy (Rolling Cakes Talang Balai)	Training is applied (promotion/packaging); Capital/Tool Assistance. Digital positive change.	Sustainable; innovation from training/initiatives.
Mrs. Zahuro (Cushion Cake)	Training is applied (packaging/marketing); licensing assistance. Social media changes.	Sustainable; There has been no assistance, tools/capital.
Sri (Kemplang Merjagat)	Training is applied (basic); group assistance. Packaging/marketing changes.	Continuous but theoretical; Please practice hands-on.
Cik Oni (Bekasam & Samber 3)	There needs to be training that is implemented with assistance in training and marketing	There needs to be real sustainability
Yusnawati (Tekwan dry & kemplang dry)	There is training that is applied with licensing and capital assistance	Further realization.

4.2 Discussion

This study finds that collaborative governance in the management of traditional culinary MSMEs in Kabupaten Ogan Ilir is currently situated in an emergent yet incomplete institutional phase. Although cross-sectoral interaction among government agencies, MSME actors, and community stakeholders has begun to develop, collaboration remains predominantly state-centered and administratively structured rather than deliberative and co-productive. This pattern confirms the processual perspective on collaborative governance proposed by Chris Ansell and Alison Gash, which emphasizes that effective collaboration evolves gradually through iterative dialogue, trust-building, shared understanding, and sustained commitment.

Face-to-face dialogue mechanisms are present but lack institutional continuity. Meetings tend to be program-driven and initiated by government authorities, limiting opportunities for bottom-up participation and joint agenda-setting. Consequently, interactions often focus on administrative compliance rather than strategic problem-solving. This suggests that communication within the collaborative arena still reflects bureaucratic coordination rather than deliberative governance. The absence of routine, structured dialogue restricts learning processes among stakeholders and reduces the likelihood of collective ownership of development initiatives.

Trust dynamics further illustrate the transitional nature of collaboration. Institutional trust in government has improved due to visible administrative reforms such as licensing facilitation and promotional support. However, operational trust among actors remains fragile, particularly when programs are perceived as inconsistent or short-term. This distinction indicates that legitimacy generated through formal institutional performance does not automatically translate into relational trust at the implementation level. In this context, trust operates largely as a pragmatic calculation rather than as a stable social norm.

The study also identifies asymmetrical commitment across stakeholders. Government institutions demonstrate relatively strong commitment supported by regulatory mandates and budget allocations, whereas MSME participation tends to be instrumental and benefit-driven. Limited organizational capacity among MSME associations constrains their collective action, thereby reinforcing state dominance in collaborative processes. Such an imbalance suggests that the collaborative arena is not yet characterized by equitable power-sharing, a widely considered defining condition of mature collaborative governance.

A shared understanding among actors is beginning to form at the conceptual level. Stakeholders generally agree that strengthening culinary MSMEs is essential for both local economic growth and tourism development. Nevertheless, this normative consensus has not yet been translated into clearly differentiated roles, joint performance indicators, or shared accountability mechanisms. As a result, collaboration produces incremental improvements, such as increased business registrations, improved product packaging, and expanded digital marketing adoption, but has not yet generated systemic transformation within the local economic ecosystem.

Taken together, these findings indicate that, in this case, collaborative governance is transitioning from coordination-based interaction toward partnership-based governance but has not yet achieved full institutional maturity. The persistence of hierarchical structures, uneven participation, and limited trust suggests that collaboration remains procedural rather than transformative. This transitional condition should not be interpreted as failure but rather as an expected phase within the evolution of multi-actor governance systems.

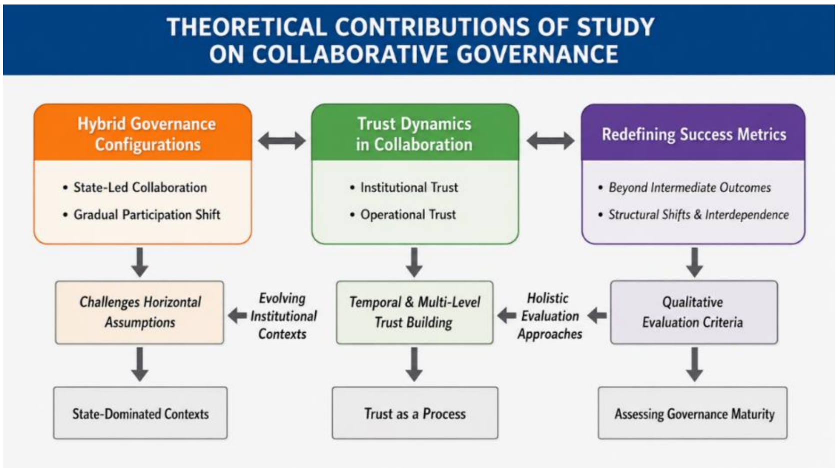

Figure 1. Theoretical Contributions of the Study on Collaborative Governance

Tabel 4. Strategic Directions, Governance Interventions, and Expected Institutional Outcomes for MSME Development

No.	Strategic Direction	Key Intervention Focus	Governance Objective	Expected Institutional Outcome
1	Institutionalizing Deliberative Platforms	Formal establishment of scheduled and transparent multi-stakeholder forums for joint planning, monitoring, and evaluation	Ensure continuity of dialogue and reduce reliance on ad hoc coordination	Greater stability, transparency, and sustained inter-actor collaboration
2	Strengthening Collective Capacity of MSMEs	Organizational development of MSME associations and intermediary institutions beyond technical training	Enhance bargaining power, collective representation, and effective participation in governance processes	More balanced participation and a stronger institutional voice of MSMEs
3	Integrating Economic and Tourism Strategies	Development of a long-term regional strategy linking culinary MSMEs with tourism, including measurable targets and sustainable funding	Promote cross-sectoral synergy and policy coherence beyond short-term political cycles	Improved policy consistency and long-term regional competitiveness
4	Establishing Trust Consolidation Mechanisms	Implementation of transparent monitoring systems, feedback channels, and consistent policy execution	Strengthen relational trust and policy predictability	Reduced uncertainty and improved confidence among small enterprises
5	Transitioning Toward Co-Production Governance	Gradual shift from top-down interventions to participatory co-production models	Increase stakeholder ownership and policy relevance	Institutional transformation toward genuine multi-actor partnership

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the implementation of collaborative governance in the management of typical culinary MSMEs in Ogan Ilir Regency has a fairly good basis for collaboration, but the implementation is still not optimal. The involvement of local governments, MSME actors, communities, and the private sector has been established, but coordination among stakeholders remains partial and lacks a structured work mechanism. Regional policies related to MSME development are available, but their implementation faces obstacles due to the capacity constraints of diverse business actors and the lack of a collaborative system that integrates planning, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, efforts to strengthen regional culinary identity have been inconsistent, so the potential of culinary MSMEs has not been fully realized. Thus, current conditions indicate that collaborative governance is beginning to take shape. However, it still needs to be strengthened in terms of coordination, roles, and joint strategies to enable the management of typical culinary MSMEs in Ogan Ilir Regency to operate more effectively and sustainably.

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