

# Regional Green Development in East Kalimantan: Toward an Inclusive Energy Transition



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**Just Energy Transition in Coal Regions**



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# Ringkasan Eksekutif

## Gambaran umum studi

Pemerintah Indonesia telah menunjukkan komitmennya dalam penanganan perubahan iklim, di antaranya melalui ratifikasi *Paris Agreement* sekaligus penyampaian *Second Nationally Determined Contribution* (NDC). Komitmen tersebut menegaskan arah kebijakan menuju transisi bertahap dari perekonomian yang bergantung pada bahan bakar fosil. Proses transisi ini diperkirakan akan menimbulkan implikasi ekonomi dan sosial yang signifikan, khususnya bagi daerah yang memiliki ketergantungan terhadap sektor batu bara. Proses ini juga dianggap dapat memperburuk permasalahan ketimpangan gender di daerah tersebut. Di sisi lain, transisi dari bahan bakar fosil juga dapat menjadi peluang untuk mendorong struktur ekonomi dan sosial yang lebih adil dan inklusif.

Studi ini secara kritis mengkaji transformasi ekonomi pasca-batu bara melalui perspektif responsif gender, dengan fokus pada Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan interseksionalitas untuk menilai upaya transformasi ekonomi terhadap beragam kelompok perempuan dan laki-laki. Analisis lebih lanjut dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana berbagai hambatan yang saling beririsan memengaruhi kapasitas perempuan dalam berpartisipasi dan memperoleh manfaat dari transisi energi. Selain itu, studi ini juga menelaah potensi pembangunan ekonomi daerah dalam menciptakan peluang yang lebih setara bagi kelompok gender yang beragam. Dengan demikian, studi ini bertujuan untuk menghasilkan rekomendasi yang dapat mendukung para pemangku kepentingan dan pengambil kebijakan dalam mendorong transformasi pembangunan daerah Kalimantan Timur yang lebih inklusif dan berkeadilan.

## Temuan utama

Studi ini menemukan bahwa terdapat hambatan struktural yang terus membentuk peluang ekonomi bagi perempuan di sektor-sektor strategis Kalimantan Timur, yakni sektor pertambangan batu bara, perkebunan kelapa sawit, serta usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM).

Pada sektor pertambangan, khususnya pertambangan batu bara, perempuan masih menghadapi keterbatasan akibat persepsi pemberi kerja terkait kapasitas warga lokal dan hak reproduksi pekerja perempuan serta pengaturan kerja yang belum sensitif gender. Norma sosial yang berkembang juga memperkuat persepsi bahwa sektor pertambangan merupakan ranah kerja laki-laki semata. Ekspansi pertambangan turut mendorong konversi lahan dalam skala besar. Bagi beberapa perempuan, hal ini mengurangi akses terhadap lahan yang sebelumnya dimanfaatkan untuk pertanian dan mata pencaharian skala kecil.

Di sektor perkebunan kelapa sawit, perempuan masih terkonsentrasi pada pekerjaan yang bersifat padat karya dan sering kali informal dalam sistem perkebunan. Tetapi, dengan skema pembayaran berbasis volume, upah seringkali hanya dibayarkan pada laki-laki meskipun terdapat perempuan yang turut berkontribusi dalam proses produksi. Karakteristik struktural ini, ditambah dengan ketidaksesuaian antara sistem kerja perkebunan dengan praktik perkebunan masyarakat adat, membatasi kemampuan perempuan untuk memperoleh manfaat yang setara dari pertumbuhan sektor ini.

Sebagai respons atas keterbatasan peluang di sektor formal, banyak perempuan beralih ke UMKM yang bersifat subsisten. Meskipun memberikan fleksibilitas, sektor ini umumnya memberi penghasilan yang cenderung rendah. Selain itu, pelaku usaha perempuan masih menghadapi kendala terkait kepemilikan aset, akses terhadap kredit formal, akses pasar, serta dukungan usaha dalam rumah tangga mereka. Faktor-faktor ini pun menghambat usaha untuk “naik kelas” ke skala usaha yang lebih besar.

Momentum transisi dari batu bara dianggap sebagai peluang untuk mendorong pembangunan yang lebih berkelanjutan dan inklusif. Akan tetapi, studi ini menemukan bahwa strategi transformasi ekonomi Kalimantan Timur belum secara memadai mengintegrasikan perspektif gender. Strategi yang telah disusun masih berfokus pada identifikasi sektor potensial dan komoditas unggulan tanpa disertai analisis mengenai distribusi pelaku ekonomi berbasis gender maupun kendala spesifik yang dihadapi perempuan dan laki-laki.

Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa kebijakan pembangunan Kalimantan Timur belum optimal dalam mendukung partisipasi ekonomi perempuan. Pertama, komitmen pengarusutamaan gender belum sepenuhnya tercermin dalam dokumen perencanaan. Dalam hal ini, isu kesetaraan gender belum ditempatkan sebagai prioritas strategis dalam RPJMD Kalimantan Timur 2025–2029. Kedua, kesetaraan gender juga tidak dimasukkan dalam indikator kinerja utama daerah, yang berimplikasi pada melemahnya insentif politik bagi kepala daerah untuk mengentaskan permasalahan terkait. Ketiga, porsi anggaran untuk program pengarusutamaan gender masih cukup kecil apabila dibandingkan total belanja daerah. Terakhir, pendekatan pengarusutamaan gender yang ada cenderung berorientasi programatik dan hanya dilaksanakan oleh satu perangkat daerah dengan sumber daya terbatas. Hal tersebut ditambah dengan belum optimalnya pemanfaatan instrumen kunci, seperti data terpilah maupun analisis dampak berbasis gender, dalam penyusunan kebijakan pembangunan daerah.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Overview

The Government of Indonesia has demonstrated its commitment to addressing climate change through, among other measures, the ratification of the Paris Agreement and the submission of its Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). This commitment affirms a policy direction toward a gradual transition away from an economy dependent on fossil fuels. Such a transition is expected to generate significant economic and social implications, particularly for regions that remain highly dependent on the coal sector. It is also widely recognized that this process may exacerbate existing gender inequalities in such regions. At the same time, however, the transition away from fossil fuels may create opportunities to foster a more equitable and inclusive economic and social structure.

This study critically examines post-coal economic transformation through a gender-responsive lens, with a focus on East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. It adopts an intersectional approach to assess economic transformation efforts in relation to diverse groups of women and men. Further analysis is conducted to identify how multiple, overlapping barriers affect women's capacity to participate in and benefit from the energy transition. In addition, the study explores the potential of regional economic development to create more equitable opportunities for diverse gender groups. Accordingly, the study aims to generate recommendations that can support stakeholders and policymakers in promoting a more inclusive and just development transformation in East Kalimantan.

## Key Findings

The study reveals that structural barriers continue to shape women's economic opportunities in East Kalimantan's strategic sectors, namely coal mining, palm oil plantations, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

In the mining sector, particularly coal mining, women continue to face constraints arising from employers' perceptions regarding the capacity of local workers, women workers' reproductive rights, and work arrangements that remain insufficiently gender-sensitive. Prevailing social norms further reinforce the perception that mining is exclusively a male domain. The expansion of mining activities has also driven large-scale land conversion. For some women, this has reduced access to land previously used for agriculture and small-scale livelihoods.

In the palm oil plantation sector, women remain concentrated in labour-intensive positions and are often employed informally within plantation systems. Moreover, under volume-based payment schemes, wages are frequently paid only to men, even when women contribute to the

production process. These structural characteristics, combined with the misalignment between plantation work systems and the livelihood practices of Indigenous communities, limit women's ability to benefit equally from the growth of this sector.

In response to limited opportunities in the formal sector, many women turn to subsistence-oriented MSMEs. Although this sector offers flexibility, it generally yields relatively low incomes. In addition, women entrepreneurs continue to face constraints related to asset ownership, access to formal credit, market access, and business support within their households. These factors also hinder their ability to scale up to larger business operations.

The transition away from coal is widely regarded as an opportunity to promote more sustainable and inclusive development. However, this study finds that East Kalimantan's economic transformation strategy has not yet adequately integrated a gender perspective. Existing strategies remain focused on identifying promising sectors and leading commodities, without being accompanied by an analysis of the gender distribution of economic actors or the specific constraints faced by women and men.

The study also finds that East Kalimantan's development policies have not been optimal in supporting women's economic participation. First, the commitment to gender mainstreaming has not been fully reflected in planning documents. In this regard, gender equality has not been positioned as a strategic priority in East Kalimantan's 2025–2029 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). Second, gender equality has not been incorporated into the region's key performance indicators, thereby weakening political incentives for local leaders to address related issues. Third, the budget allocated to gender mainstreaming programmes remains relatively small compared to total regional expenditure. Finally, the existing approach to gender mainstreaming tends to be programmatic in orientation and is implemented by only one regional apparatus with limited resources. This is further compounded by the suboptimal use of key instruments—such as sex-disaggregated data and gender impact analysis—in the formulation of regional development policies.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation/ Acronym	Full Term in Indonesian	Full Term in English
AKD	Alat Kelengkapan Dewan	Parliamentary bodies within the House of Representatives
CSO	Organisasi masyarakat sipil	Civil society organisation
DFAT		Department of Foreign and Trade (Australia)
DME	Dimetil eter	Dimethyl ether
FLFPR	Tingkat Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja Perempuan	The Female Labour Force Participation Rate
GDP	Produk Domestik Bruto	Gross Domestic Product
GRDP	Produk Domestik Regional Bruto	Gross Regional Domestic Product
GEDSI	-	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion
JETP	-	Just Energy Transition Partnership
LPPD	Laporan Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Daerah	Regional Government Administration Implementation Report
MoHA	Kementerian Dalam Negeri	Ministry of Home Affairs
KADIN	Kamar Dagang dan Industri Indonesia	Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
KSPI	Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia	Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions
MSME	Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P2KGPA Universitas Mulawarman	Pusat Penelitian Kesetaraan Gender dan Perlindungan Anak, Universitas Mulawarman	Research Centre on Gender Equality and Child Protection, Universitas Mulawarman
PUG	Pengarusutamaan Gender	Gender Mainstreaming
RPD	Rencana Pembangunan Daerah	Provincial Development Plan
RPJMD	Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah	The Provincial Medium-Term Development Plan

<b>RUPTL</b>	Rencana Usaha Penyediaan Tenaga Listrik	The National Electricity Supply Business Plan
<b>SME</b>	Usaha Kecil dan Menengah	Small and Medium Enterprise
<b>TPAK</b>	Tingkat Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja	Labour Force Participation Rate
<b>TPTEK Team</b>	Tim Percepatan Transformasi Ekonomi Kaltim	The Economic Transformation Acceleration Team of East Kalimantan

# I. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Indonesian government has committed to the global initiatives to hold the global warming and mitigate its impacts by signing up the Paris Agreement and submitting its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the second of which was submitted on 27 October 2025. Among the main strategies it offers are policies and programmes to gradually transition from the national economy sustained by fossil fuel to one that is more sustainable, relying on renewable energy sources.

The energy transition from coal to renewable energy will have profound economic and social implications for coal-dependent regions. Coal-dependent communities will have to face immediate adverse risks, including widespread job losses, even as the long-term environmental and economic benefits of the transition materialize. Research has shown that gender disparities intensify during transitions of this magnitude (Lahiri-Dutt *et al.*, 2022). Women, who are often excluded from direct employment in the coal sector, tend to be overlooked in compensation and retraining programmes. Their labour in the care economy remains undervalued, and women in households that experience economic distress and mass unemployment are vulnerable to the risks of gender-based violence. A transition that neglects the differentiated impacts across gender groups risks entrenching existing inequalities and reproducing historical injustices. These concerns underscore the need for gender-responsive policy frameworks that are not only inclusive in design but also attentive to the lived realities of marginalized groups.

Energy transitions offer a critical entry point for examining climate justice and equality, as shifts in energy systems often expose power imbalances embedded in political and policy processes (Delina and Janetos, 2018). Despite its challenges, the shift from coal to clean energy presents a critical opportunity to promote greater equity in economic and social structures. To achieve this, policy development and implementation must be guided by principles of justice and inclusivity, which ensure new employment opportunities, prioritize labour rights, improve working conditions, and advance gender equality, democratic participation, and social justice (Just Transition Research Collaborative, 2018).

As one of the countries that relies heavily on coal, Indonesia has attracted international support to enhance its policy design to move away from coal dependence. One such sort of support comes from the International Climate Initiative for Just Energy Transition (IKI-JET). It focuses on helping East Kalimantan and South Sumatra, Indonesia's main coal producing regions, in developing the economic transformation to reduce their coal dependence. The repercussions of coal decline will be especially pronounced in coal-dependent regions, such as East Kalimantan. In 2020, Indonesia's coal sector employed around 250,000 workers (Adiatma & Suryadi, 2022).

If the transition takes place, East Kalimantan alone is projected to lose nearly 16,900 coal mining jobs by 2050 (Tate *et al.*, 2023). The socioeconomic consequences of these losses extend beyond employment and threaten the welfare of entire communities reliant on this sector.

With the support of IKI-JET, the East Kalimantan government has developed a plan for the economic transformation that is integrated into its Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) for 2025-2029. In this policy document, the local government has laid out its strategies to transition away from coal dependence, among others, through economic diversification and downstreaming. These policies would be translated and detailed by various provincial government offices in more technical policy documents.

This study endeavours to understand how the policies developed by the local government to transition away from coal dependence have incorporated gender equality concerns. In light of gender equality policies that have been introduced by the national government, the study assesses how the policy design has addressed the issues of gender inequality in a coal-based economy and how it depicts ways to transform it.

## 1.2 Objectives

This study seeks to critically examine the post-coal transition, particularly regional economic diversification, through a gender-responsive lens. A transition that overlooks gendered socio-economic dynamics risks deepening pre-existing structural inequalities. Gender-responsive policies and interventions are therefore critical to ensure that the shift away from coal does not exacerbate marginalization, but creates new opportunities for inclusive development.

Ultimately, this study aims to generate actionable insights that can guide stakeholders and decisionmakers in advancing inclusive and equitable transformation within regional development. It emphasizes the importance of addressing the practical and strategic needs of women while recognizing their potential contributions. This study employs an intersectionality-informed approach to assess the gendered dimensions of the coal phase-out. The transition does not affect all women equally; factors such as age, socio-economic status, and indigenous identity shape the extent and nature of vulnerabilities. By incorporating these intersecting dimensions, the study highlights how overlapping forms of marginalization influence people's access to resources and capacity to influence within the broader structures of power.

## 1.3 Key Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned objectives, this study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent do intersecting challenges undermine women's capacity to engage in and benefit from the energy transition?

- 2) What potential opportunities does green regional development offer for diverse gender groups to ensure equitable participation in the just energy transition?

## 1.4 Research Methods

This study explores how the green regional development can support more equitable gender participation in Indonesia, with a particular focus on East Kalimantan. The region is selected as it presents a compelling case due to its dominant role in national coal production. East Kalimantan alone contributed 47.92% of national output in 2021 (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2025c; Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2022). The province is one of the wealthiest in the country, with Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) per capita nearly three times the national average. The economy of East Kalimantan transitioned from being predominantly forestry-based between 1970 and 1990 to being largely driven by extractive industries, including coal, oil, and gas (Bappeda Kaltim, 2020). In 2023, approximately 79.10% of East Kalimantan's GRDP came from coal mining (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2024).

However, this economic strength is not without risks. The province experienced a decline in GRDP per capita between 2019 and 2020, primarily due to the sharp drop in global coal prices and reduced production volumes (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2024). These fluctuations underscore the structural vulnerability associated with East Kalimantan's heavy reliance on coal as a primary economic driver. In addition, the progressive depletion of coal reserves compounds this risk, as the long-term viability of extractive activities cannot be sustained indefinitely.

These dynamics further reinforce the urgency of diversifying the regional economy before fiscal and labour market pressures intensify. Consequently, East Kalimantan occupies a critical position at the intersection of risk and opportunity. The province faces potential socio-economic disruption if transition efforts are delayed, yet it also holds strategic potential to pioneer a more planned and just transition pathway.

The selection of East Kalimantan as a case study is also driven by strategic institutional considerations. In 2024, the provincial government established the Regional Energy Forum, a multi-stakeholder platform tasked with formulating regional energy transition pathway and advising on the integration of the pathway into the Regional Long-Term Development Plan 2025–2045. The forum brings together government representatives, private sector actors, academics, labour unions, and civil society organizations. This institutional platform offers an important opportunity for cross-sectoral stakeholder coordination and participatory policymaking.

This study was conducted in three main phases: (i) Preparation, (ii) Data Collection, and (iii) Data Analysis. The preparation phase involved initial engagement with the Regional

Development Planning Agency of East Kalimantan to ensure alignment with local priorities and to generate policy-relevant insights for shaping the green regional development in the area. Following this, the research team initiated data collection which combined desk study, including extensive review of literature and policies, quantitative secondary data analysis and interviews with relevant key stakeholders. These methods were designed to capture more comprehensive pictures, including a wide range of perspectives from key stakeholders, regarding the regional development of East Kalimantan. The data analysis phase then examined the interlinkages between gendered challenges and opportunities within East Kalimantan's economic transformation pathway.

### **1.4.1. Preparation**

To establish continuous stakeholder engagement, this study commenced with an initial consultation with the Regional Development Planning Agency of East Kalimantan. The consultation was conducted online to accommodate time constraints and limited availability, particularly among government counterparts. This initial engagement aimed to align the research design with the priorities and policy needs of the local government. By incorporating feedback from government representatives, the research team refined key inquiries to enhance the relevance and applicability of this study. Loffreda et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of stakeholder involvement in research, further arguing that limited engagement often leads to weaker research uptake and reduced policy impact. Therefore, this early-stage consultation is crucial in ensuring that the study produces practically valuable and policy-responsive insights.

To support an ethical and well-managed data collection process, the research team secured ethical clearance from the National Research and Innovation Agency and obtained research permits from the Ministry of Home Affairs at the provincial level. These approvals ensure compliance with national research regulations and institutional standards. Ethical clearance plays a central role in safeguarding the rights, safety, and confidentiality of research participants. It also provides a clear framework for responsible data handling and informed consent.

The study adheres to the ethical standards issued by the Commission of Ethics in the Social Humanities Affairs, National Research and Innovation Agency No. 832/KE.01/SK/09/2025.

### **1.4.2. Data Collection**

This study adopts a qualitative approach to examine how gender considerations are integrated into post-coal transition pathways in East Kalimantan. The data collection focuses on identifying both challenges and opportunities for different gender groups to participate in and benefit from these pathways. It consists of two main components: desk study and interviews.

- a) Desk study

This activity provides a comprehensive understanding of the existing landscape of gender integration in Indonesian policies that shape women’s economic opportunities, including those related to regional development and economic transformation plans. It examines publicly available reports from government agencies and non-governmental institutions, relevant regulations, published journal articles, and other key documents.

In addition, the study incorporates secondary data analysis using both publicly accessible datasets and the National Labour Force Survey from Statistics Indonesia, accessed through SMERU’s internal database. This combined qualitative and quantitative review helps contextualize current policy frameworks, labour market dynamics, and gendered patterns relevant to the post-coal transition.

b) Interviews

Interviews were conducted to examine the gendered impacts, challenges, and opportunities associated with the post-coal transition in East Kalimantan. They also explored potential strategies for inclusive green job creation, with particular attention to expanding women’s participation in a low-carbon economy.

In total, the interviews involved informants from 17 institutions, including provincial government agencies across multiple sectors, business associations, labour unions, academic institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), indigenous community councils, and the Economic Transformation Acceleration Team of East Kalimantan (TPTEK Team). This diverse range of informants enables the study to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives across institutional and community contexts, thereby strengthening the analytical depth of the findings. The list of informants is presented on the table below.

Table 1. List of informants

Category	Institution	Number of Informants
Government	Economic Affairs and Natural Resources Division, Regional Development Planning Agency	2
	Governance and Human Development Division, Regional Development Planning Agency	1
	Office of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection	3
	Office of Industry, Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs	3
	Office of Manpower and Transmigration	1

	Office of Energy and Mineral Resources	1
	Regional Research and Innovation Agency	4
Private sector	Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN)	1
Labour union	Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (KSPI)	1
Academia	Research Centre on Gender Equality and Child Protection (P2KGPA), Universitas Mulawarman	1
	Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Mulawarman	1
CSO	Yayasan Mitra Hijau	2
	Perkumpulan Nurani Perempuan	1
	Pokja 30	1
	WALHI	1
Indigenous community	Regional Indigenous Community Council	1
Others	The Economic Transformation Acceleration Team of East Kalimantan (TPTEK Team)	1

### 1.4.3. Data Analysis

In analysing the data, this study adopted an explanatory approach. Data from desk study and interviews were systematically examined using repeated coding to identify key themes related to gendered economic opportunities in the post-coal transition, including social, economic, and cultural barriers affecting different gender groups. The analysis also reviewed the existing landscape of regional development plans to assess whether, and to what extent, gender considerations have been integrated into policy frameworks and implementation strategies. This provided a broader institutional perspective and helped identify entry points for incorporating more gender-responsive approaches into future policies. By synthesizing insights from community-level findings and institutional assessments, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of how coal phase-out processes have the possibility to reshape the relationship between production and social reproduction aspects within coal-dependent communities.

## II. Gender Perspectives in Policies: A Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Gender Perspectives of Indonesian Policies

Gender mainstreaming (*pengarusutamaan gender/ PUG*) was formally introduced into Indonesia's development policy framework through Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 9/2000. Since then, it has been incorporated into a wide range of policies and programmes, including national poverty alleviation initiatives (Shech & Mustafa, 2010). Nevertheless, because its primary legal foundation is limited to a presidential instruction, an instrument with relatively weak enforceability, PUG implementation has depended heavily on the political will and administrative priorities of individual institutions and subnational governments. This institutional arrangement helps explain why some regional governments have continued to issue regulations and policies that reproduce gender inequality (Misiyah, Agustiana, & Utami, 2025, p. 47). The Ministry of Law, through the Directorate of Human Rights Instruments, has identified at least 94 discriminatory policies; of these, 85 remain in force, one has been revised, and eight have been revoked (Komnas Perempuan, 2024, p. 86).

More recently, several international development partners—including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the World Bank—have promoted the Gender, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GESI/GEDSI) approach, particularly through empowerment-oriented programmes such as those in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector. Compared with PUG, GEDSI adopts a broader, more integrated equality framework that addresses gender equality, disability inclusion, and other dimensions of social exclusion (SKALA, 2025). In this context, “social inclusion” commonly refers to individuals and groups who experience marginalisation due to constraints such as limited access to services, geographic isolation, socio-economic status, and other intersecting factors. Unlike PUG, which is institutionalised through state legal instruments, GEDSI has largely been advanced through donor-supported, project-based interventions implemented by development agencies, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), ministries, and civil society organisations. Notably, the GEDSI perspective has begun to enter the national policy architecture: Law No. 59/2024 on the 2025–2045 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) integrates GEDSI principles, although detailed implementing regulations are still required to operationalise these commitments in practice.

## 2.2 Identification of Gender Perspectives of Indonesian Policies

Because gender mainstreaming is implemented unevenly across government units and remains heavily contingent on policymakers' political will within each unit, it is important to critically assess whether individual policies have in fact integrated gender considerations in a meaningful way. MacArthur et al. (2023) propose a three-layered framework for analysing gender integration in programmes and policies. This framework synthesises insights from several established approaches, including those developed by Kabeer (1994), Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996), and Moser (1989, 1993). As summarised in Table 2, the framework comprises four categories of gender integration, five motivators, and two overarching tendencies.

Table 2. Three layers framework by MacArthur et al. (2023)

Gender Integration Categories	Primary Programme Motivators	Potential Tendencies	Description
Gender-Insensitive	Welfare	Instrumental	Fails to take gender dimensions into account and may inadvertently reproduce or reinforce existing inequalities. Interventions at this level tend to focus primarily on practical needs without addressing underlying gender relations.
Gender-Sensitive	Efficiency & Equity	Instrumental	Recognises gender roles and differences, but operates within existing gender structures rather than seeking to transform them. The emphasis remains largely on practical needs rather than structural inequalities.
Gender-Responsive	Empowerment	Instrumental → Transformative	Seeks to empower individuals, particularly women, and begins to address gender-based disadvantages. However, broader structural and institutional barriers remain largely unchanged, even as interventions move in a more strategic direction.
Gender-Transformative	Transformative Equality	Transformative	Seeks to challenge and transform the norms, structures, and power relations that sustain gender inequality. Interventions at this level address strategic gender interests and aim to generate long-term structural change.

Source: Adapted from the three-layer framework by MacArthur et al. (2023)

The four categories of gender integration represent a hierarchy of policy engagement with commitments to gender equality, ranging from the lowest level—gender-insensitive—to the highest—gender-transformative. This hierarchical logic, however, does not apply in the same way to the five programme motivators. Although these motivators are also ordered conceptually, MacArthur et al. (2023, p. 7) reject the assumption that policy or programme approaches evolve in a simple linear progression from one stage to the next. Instead, they argue that these motivations are cumulative, with higher-order motivations encompassing a broader range of

normative commitments and objectives. Similarly, the two tendencies—instrumental and transformative—are described as “potential” tendencies because programme outcomes cannot always be neatly classified as addressing either practical or strategic gender interests alone. Rather, these interests are often interconnected, and effective interventions ideally engage both dimensions simultaneously (MacArthur et al., 2023, pp. 7–8).

MacArthur et al. (2023, p. 6) further emphasise that policies and programmes often cannot be assigned to a single category or motivator in a rigid manner, as a single intervention may incorporate multiple strategies at once. Moreover, the eventual effects of a policy or programme are shaped not only by its design but also by the capacities, interpretations, and practices of those responsible for implementation. As a result, an intervention formulated within one category may, in practice, generate outcomes that diverge from its intended orientation when implementers possess differing levels of understanding or institutional capacity.

Table 3. Gender analysis of several policies in Indonesia

Policies	Tendencies
<i>Specific Policy</i>	
Gender Mainstreaming (Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000)	Transformative
Law No. 7 of 1984 Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Transformative
Law on Removal of Domestic Violence (Law No. 23 of 2004)	Responsive
Penal Law of Sexual Crime (Law No. 12 of 2022)	Transformative
Law on Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 8 of 2016)	Responsive
Law on the Welfare of the Elderly (Law No. 13 of 1998)	Insensitive
Law on Health (Law No. 17/2023)	Responsive
Law on Maternal and Child Welfare (Law No. 4 of 2024)	Responsive
<i>Policies Related to Governance, Resource Management, and Economy</i>	
Regional Autonomy Law (Law No. 23/2014 partially repealed by Law No. 1/2022)	Sensitive
Village Law (Law No. 6/2014, amended by Law No. 3/2024)	Sensitive
Elections (Law No. 7/2023, Law No. 7/2017)	Sensitive
Law on the 2025-2045 National Medium-Term Development Plan (Law No. 59/2024)	Transformative

Law on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (Law No 18 of 2017, amended by Job Creation Law 2023).	Sensitive
Law on Job Creation/Omnibus Law (Law No. 6/2023)	Insensitive
Investment (Law No. 6/2023 on Job Creation)	Insensitive
Forestry (Law No. 41 of 1999 amended by Law No. 6 of 2023 on Job Creation)	Insensitive
Energy (Law No. 30/2007 & Government Regulation No. 40/2025)	Insensitive
Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Law No. 32/2024 Amending Law No. 5/1990)	Insensitive
Mineral & Coal Law (Law No. 2/2025)	Insensitive
Tourism Law (Law No. 18/2025)	Insensitive

Source: Analysed by the authors

Applying this framework to selected Indonesian laws and regulations reveals marked variation in the extent to which gender perspectives are integrated. As shown in Table 3, while some policies can be characterised as gender-transformative, others remain clearly gender-insensitive. In general, gender perspectives are most visible in policies directly associated with women’s needs, including those concerning sexual violence, domestic violence, and maternal and child welfare. By contrast, regulations in sectors commonly treated as gender-neutral—such as mineral and coal, energy, and forestry—tend to show limited engagement with gender issues. In motivational terms, many of these regulations prioritise tangible outputs, reflecting an underlying assumption that such outputs are the principal determinants of public welfare. As a result, their orientation is largely instrumental, with greater emphasis on addressing practical needs than on challenging structural inequalities.

Even so, policies that appear gender-responsive or gender-transformative are not always free from gender bias. Law No. 4 of 2024 on Maternal and Child Welfare illustrates this tension. On the one hand, the law contains transformative elements, particularly in its attempts to challenge conventional norms around caregiving by encouraging men’s involvement in childcare and recognising women’s reproductive labour through paid leave provisions. On the other hand, it may also reproduce gender inequality by reaffirming women’s association with domestic responsibility (Khaidarulloh & Maratus, 2024). This indicates that the presence of transformative provisions within a policy does not, in itself, guarantee a fully transformative orientation.

More fundamentally, the adoption of a gender-transformative policy should be seen as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for advancing gender equality. The incorporation of transformative principles in formal policy does not automatically lead to transformative

programmes or implementation outcomes. Whether gender justice is realised in practice depends on a broader set of enabling conditions, including consistency in technical implementing regulations, adequate budget support, the political commitment of implementing institutions, and broader social values that shape how gender justice is interpreted and enacted.

Against this backdrop, the three-layered framework developed by MacArthur et al. (2023) offers a useful analytical lens for assessing how the Government of East Kalimantan has incorporated gender perspectives into its efforts to transform the regional economic structure.

### III. The Landscape of Women's Economic Empowerment in Indonesia: A Literature Review

#### 3.1. More educated than ever, yet facing unequal opportunities

Indonesia has recorded measurable, albeit incremental, progress in advancing women's economic empowerment in recent years. This trajectory is reflected in its performance on the Global Gender Gap Index, where Indonesia improved from 94th in 2024 to 97th in 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2025). Gains are particularly evident in women's representation in decision-making roles. Between 2006 and 2025, the gender parity score for legislators, senior officials, and managers rose from 20.5% to 49.4% (World Economic Forum, 2025).

This momentum has been further reinforced by a landmark ruling of Indonesia's Constitutional Court in July 2025, which mandates proportional women's representation in the membership and leadership of parliamentary bodies (AKD) within the House of Representatives, including a minimum 30% quota for leadership positions (Mahkamah Konstitusi RI, 2025). The decision is widely regarded as a substantive measure to secure women's presence in strategic policy-making spaces.

Women are also steadily narrowing the gender gap across all levels of education in Indonesia. The most pronounced progress is observed in tertiary education (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2025a). In 2011, male and female enrolment rates in higher education were nearly identical, at 18.08% and 18.02% respectively. By 2025, this pattern had reversed, with women significantly more likely to enrol in tertiary education than men. Female enrolment reached 35.98%, compared to 29.88% for males, which indicates a sustained shift in educational attainment trends.

However, structural barriers continue to constrain women's economic participation. Female labour force participation has remained largely stagnant over the past two decades and only recently converged with the Southeast Asian regional average, reaching 56.63% in August 2025 (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2025b). These persistent gaps underscore that, despite notable advances at the macro level, women's economic empowerment in Indonesia remains shaped by enduring multifaceted challenges. The following section outlines the key challenges that continue to shape women's economic participation in Indonesia.

## **3.2. Structural challenges to women's economic empowerment**

### **3.2.1. Limited provision of childcare facilities**

Evidence from recent studies shows that marriage and parenthood are strong predictors of women's withdrawal from the labour force in Indonesia (O'Donnell et al., 2022). Around 40% of women who exit paid employment after marriage or childbirth do not return to wage work. One key driver of this trend is the limited availability of formal childcare facilities.

Childcare provision remains heavily reliant on unpaid family arrangements or informal care. Within prevailing social and cultural norms, caregiving responsibilities are primarily assigned to women. As a result, women are far more likely than men to leave paid employment to perform care work.

Although the Education Law No. 20/2003 formally covers early childhood education provision from birth to six years, its implementation remains uneven. Policy attention has largely focused on children aged four to six, with minimal investment in services for children aged zero to three. Public provision is also extremely limited, with only around 4% of kindergartens public owned as of 2020 (O'Donnell et al., 2022). This gap is further reflected in low public spending, which stood at approximately 0.04% of GDP in 2022 (O'Donnell et al., 2022). This level is far below the OECD average of 0.7 per cent, which indicates a substantial underinvestment in early childcare infrastructure.

### **3.2.2. Lack of progressive parental leave policies**

Beyond childcare facilities, Indonesia's parental leave framework remains relatively unprogressive. Current regulations place a disproportionate emphasis on maternity leave, while largely overlooking the role of fathers in caregiving.

Law No. 4/2024 guarantees pregnant women a mandatory three-month maternity leave. Under specific post-natal conditions, this leave can be extended to a total of six months. The law also protects women from dismissal during maternity leave. Additionally, wage entitlements are maintained in full for the first four months, then followed by 75% pay in the fifth and sixth months. In contrast, fathers are entitled to only two days of paternity leave, with a possible extension of up to three additional days.

This stark disparity raises concerns regarding unintended labour market consequences for women. Extended maternity leave, when not balanced by adequate paternal leave, may discourage employers from hiring or promoting women. It also entrenches the notion that childcare is primarily a woman's responsibility. As a result, the existing parental leave policy

landscape risks reproducing gendered economic exclusion rather than advancing shared caregiving and gender equality at the household level.

### **3.2.3. Joint income taxation as a disincentive to women's formal employment**

Although no regulation explicitly restricts married women from engaging in wage work, Indonesia's household-based taxation system may indirectly discourage women's economic participation (Nasruddin, 2022). In Indonesia, the incomes of spouses are combined and treated as a single tax unit, with the husband designated as the head of household. Separate taxation is only permitted under specific conditions, such as a prenuptial asset separation agreement or an explicit choice to file independently.

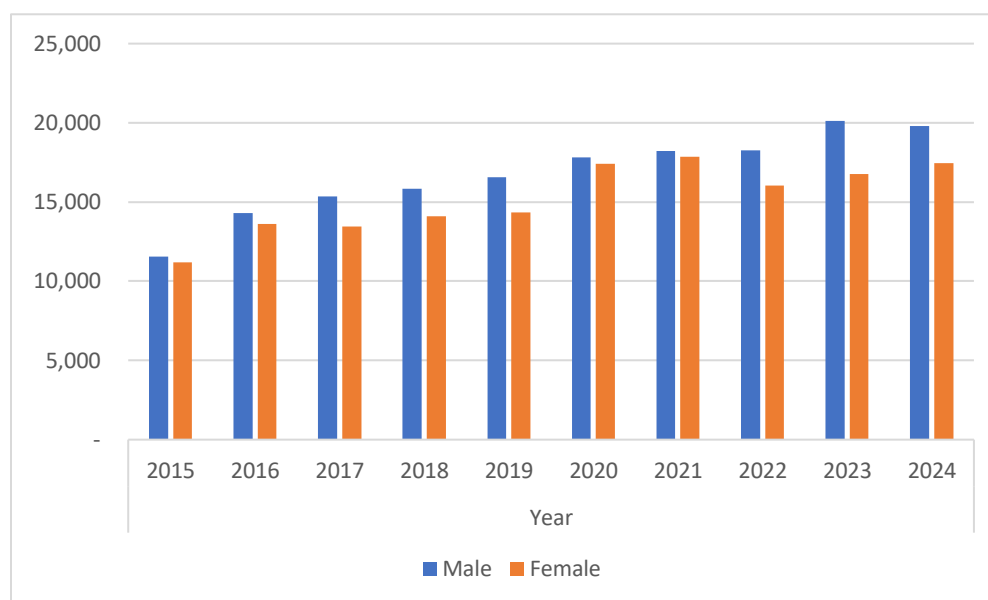
Within this framework, the income of the second earner, who is typically the woman, is often taxed at a higher marginal rate. As a result, additional earnings may yield relatively low net returns, particularly when weighed against childcare expenses and unpaid care responsibilities. This can reduce the financial incentive for women to remain in or enter paid employment. The system also creates administrative barriers, as women must reapply for a new tax identification number following divorce or widowhood.

### **3.2.4. Prevailing labour market structures and women's concentration in lower-paying jobs**

Despite sustained efforts to enhance competitiveness and job creation, Indonesia's existing labour market policies continue to exhibit structural gender bias. A study finds that women are often channelled into sectors and roles with lower productivity and lower wages (World Bank, 2020). This pattern is evident in sectoral employment trends. In 2018, services overtook agriculture as the largest employer of women. However, most female employment in services remains concentrated in low-productivity activities. These include, for instance, retail positions in mobile phone outlets and convenience stores. Such roles offer limited opportunities for skills development and career advancement. As a result, policy-driven employment growth does not translate into equitable economic gains for women.

Data from Statistics Indonesia on average hourly wages further reinforce concerns regarding gender disparities in the labour market (see Figure 2). Between 2015 and 2024, average wages increased for both men and women, indicating overall improvements in earnings. However, male workers consistently earned higher hourly wages than female workers throughout the period. The gap widened notably after 2021, resulting in men earning 19,787 rupiah per hour compared to 17,457 rupiah for women in 2024.

**Figure 1. Average worker wages in Indonesia (in rupiah per hour), 2015–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

Women's strong presence in entrepreneurship further reflects these constraints. An estimated 64.50% of Indonesia's 37 million micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in 2018 were owned by women (Kusumawardhani et al., 2022). Yet, the majority of these businesses operate at micro and small scale. Many are one-person enterprises designed to supplement household income. Consequently, women-owned MSMEs tend to be smaller and generate lower revenues than those owned by men.

These outcomes are closely linked to prevailing approaches to women's economic empowerment. Programmes largely focus on short-term entrepreneurship training or the distribution of basic production tools. Far less attention is given to market expansion, access to finance, or structured matchmaking with investors and buyers. Limited support for women to remain in wage employment after childbirth further compounds this issue. In the absence of adequate care and workplace support, many women turn to self-employment for its flexibility. While this choice enables caregiving, it often comes at the cost of high-paying permanent positions.

### 3.2.5. Workplace abuse and harassment

Abuse and harassment in the workplace remain a significant yet often underacknowledged barrier to women's economic empowerment. They discourage women from remaining in certain sectors, particularly those with weak protection mechanisms. A survey from International

Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that workplace violence and harassment remain widespread in Indonesia (International Labour Organization, 2022). Around 75.93% of women reported experiencing some form of violence or harassment at work. This prevalence highlights a severe constraint on women's participation in the labour market.

At the level of legal frameworks, Indonesia has made notable progress toward gender equality. In 2022, the government enacted Law No. 12 on the Crime of Sexual Violence, which criminalizes both physical and non-physical sexual harassment in employment and provides avenues for criminal sanctions and civil remedies.

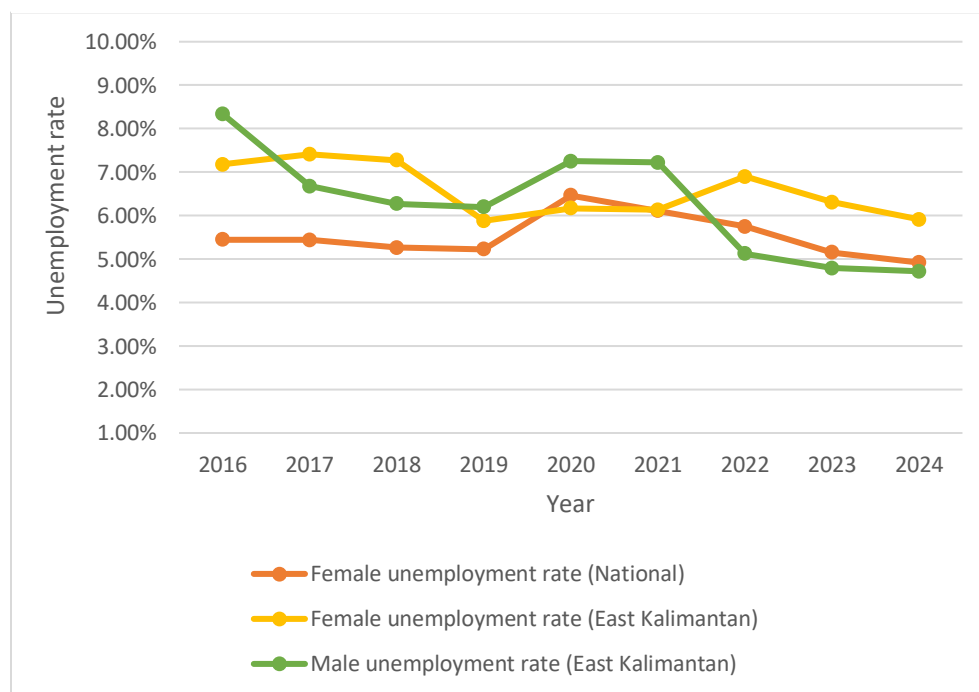
However, implementation gaps remain evident. In the same year, media report revealed a sexual assault case within the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, where efforts were allegedly made to resolve the case by marrying the victim to the perpetrator (Bhwana, 2022). This incident illustrates the persistent divide between progressive legislation and everyday practices, which further exposes the limits of legal reform in the absence of strong enforcement and institutional accountability.

## IV. East Kalimantan: Shifting the Development Path toward Sustainable Future

### 4.1. Geography and demographics

Most of East Kalimantan’s 2.1 million-labour force is employed. However, its unemployment rate is a little bit higher at 5.33% than the national figure at 4.85%. It is even the highest in the region, with the North Kalimantan as the lowest at 3.85%. Almost 40% of them are working in sectors of farming, forestry and fisheries, and big and small trading businesses (BPS of East Kalimantan, 2025a). East Kalimantan female unemployment is also higher than male unemployment at almost 6%, and higher than the national female unemployment rate of around 5% as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 2. Comparison of unemployment rates at the national level and in East Kalimantan (in per cent), 2016–2024**

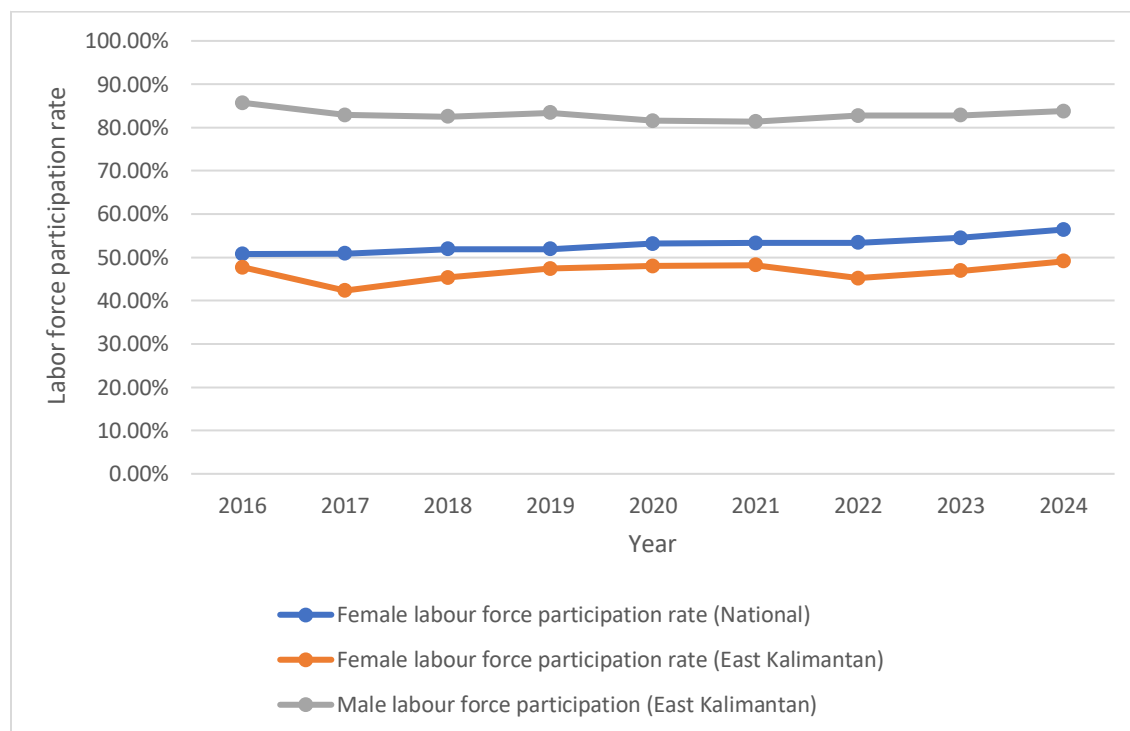


Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

Compared with men, women in East Kalimantan participate in the labour market at substantially lower rates, although female labour force participation has shown an upward trend

since the COVID-19 period. Their participation rate is also lower than the national average, as shown in Figure 4. This gap partly reflects the larger share of women who remain outside the labour force due to unpaid domestic responsibilities, schooling, or a preference not to engage in paid work. Female labour force participation also exhibits a life-cycle pattern: it is relatively high (approximately 40–60%) in women’s 20s to early 30s, declines thereafter, and increases again in their late 40s to early 50s. A similar pattern is observed nationally and is commonly attributed to the “double burden” borne by women, who must reconcile paid employment with unpaid care and household work (Cameron, 2023). These constraints are compounded by inadequate policies and infrastructure that would enable women to combine domestic and professional roles, including flexible working arrangements, reliable childcare services, and accessible transportation (Dong & Merdikawati, 2023).

**Figure 3. Comparison of labor force participation rates at the national level and in East Kalimantan (in per cent), 2016–2024**

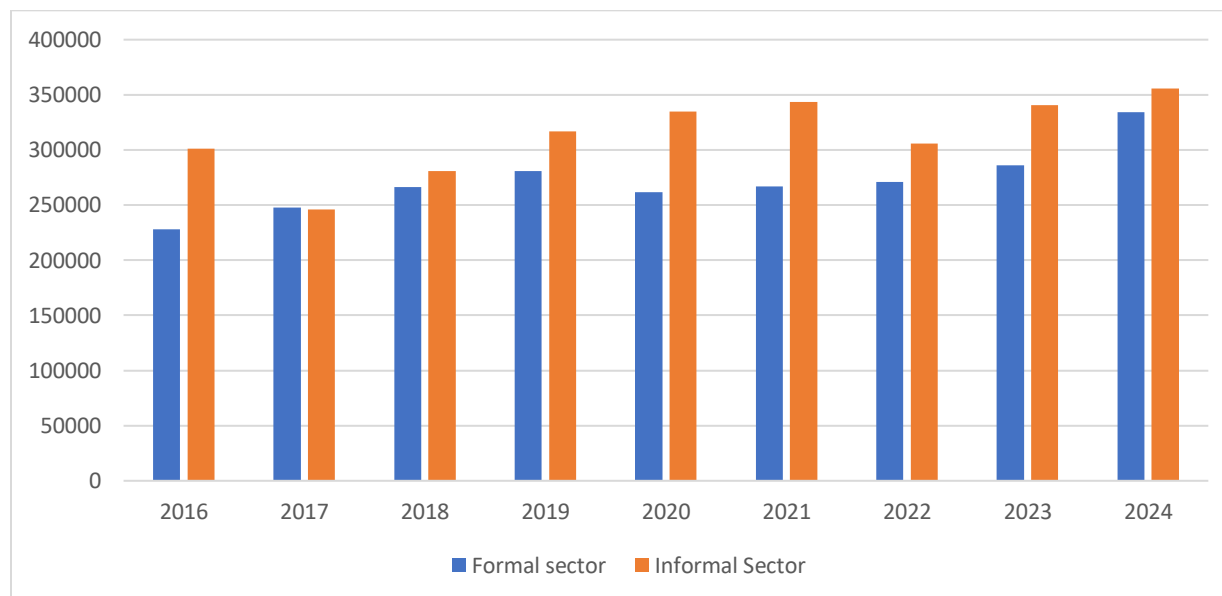


Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

There has been a transformation of work opportunities for women in East Kalimantan. In the past, especially before Covid-19, more women worked in the informal sectors. In 2016, the number of female workers in the formal sector was only 230,000, while the informal sector employed 300,000. By 2024, as Figure 5 indicates, the gap had almost closed, with formal-

sector employment rising significantly to 340,000 and informal-sector employment reaching 355,000.

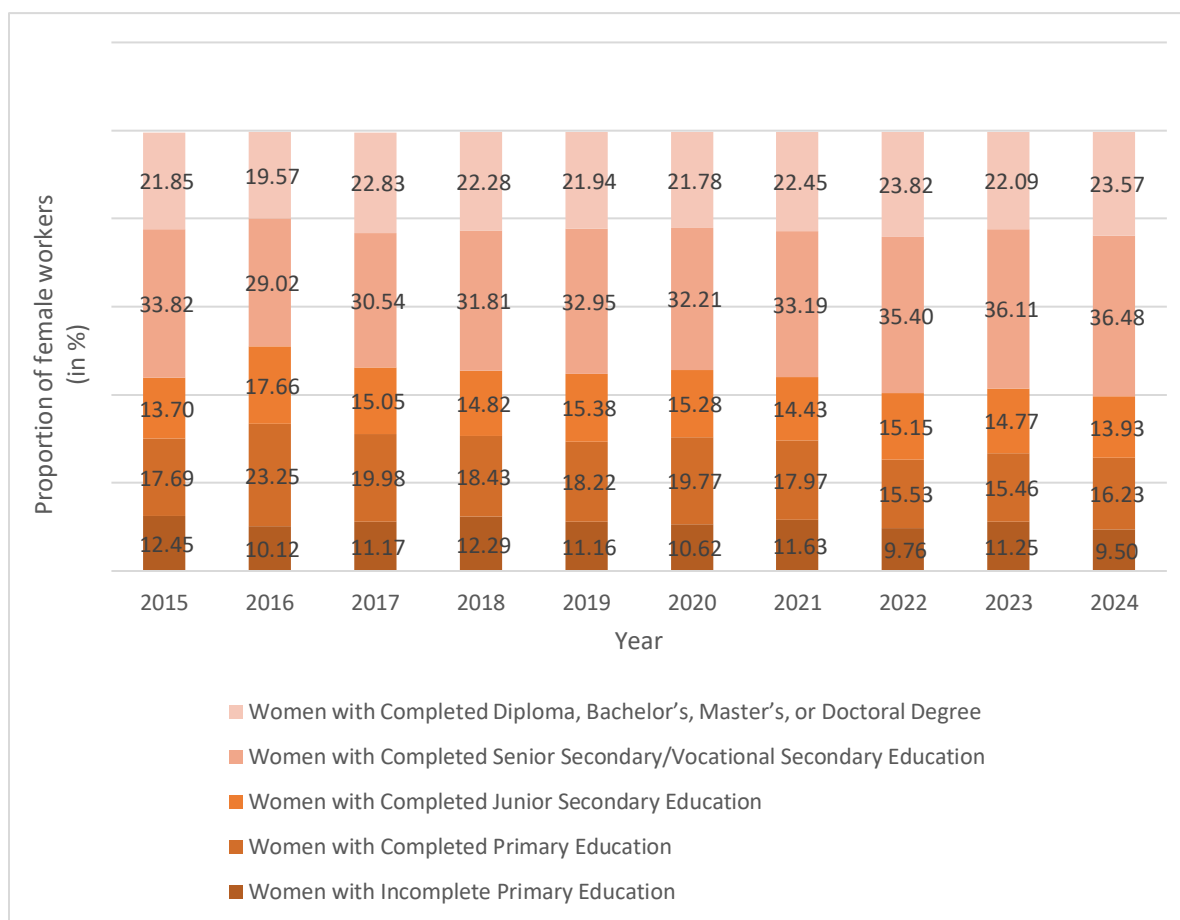
**Figure 4. Number of female workers in formal and informal sectors**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

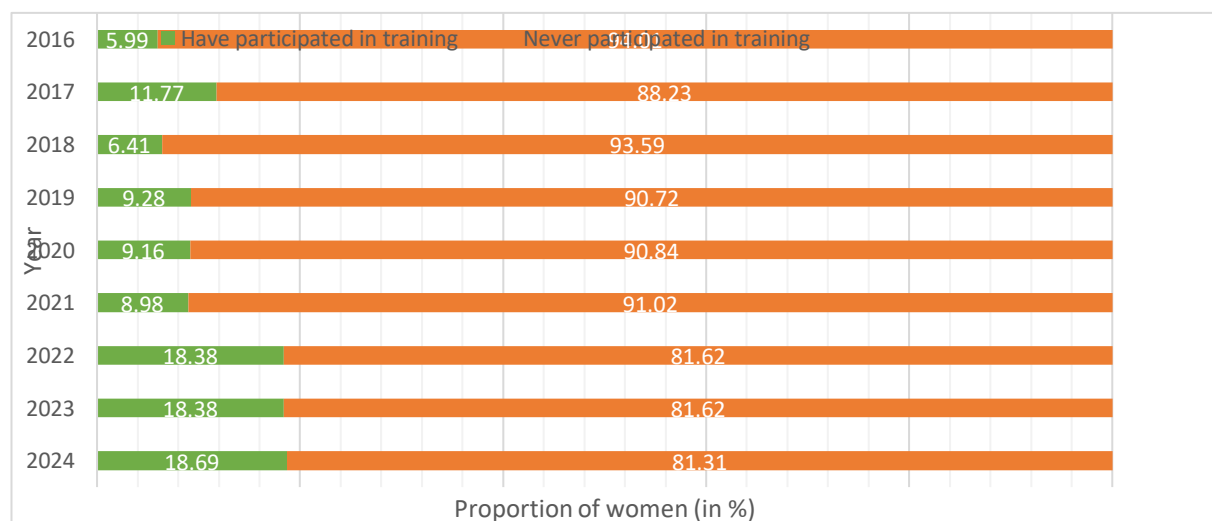
Women who are in the labour market show a trend of increasing capacity, in terms of educational and skills attainment, and training that they have attended. As presented in Figure 6, most of them, about 60%, have finished senior high school or higher degree. Although still significant, the number of female workers who only finished junior high or primary school is decreasing. Other indicators, such as proportion of female workers that attended training (Figure 7) and worked using the internet (Figure 8), also confirm the improvement of their capacity.

**Figure 5. Proportion of female workers by highest level of education attained (in per cent), 2015–2024**

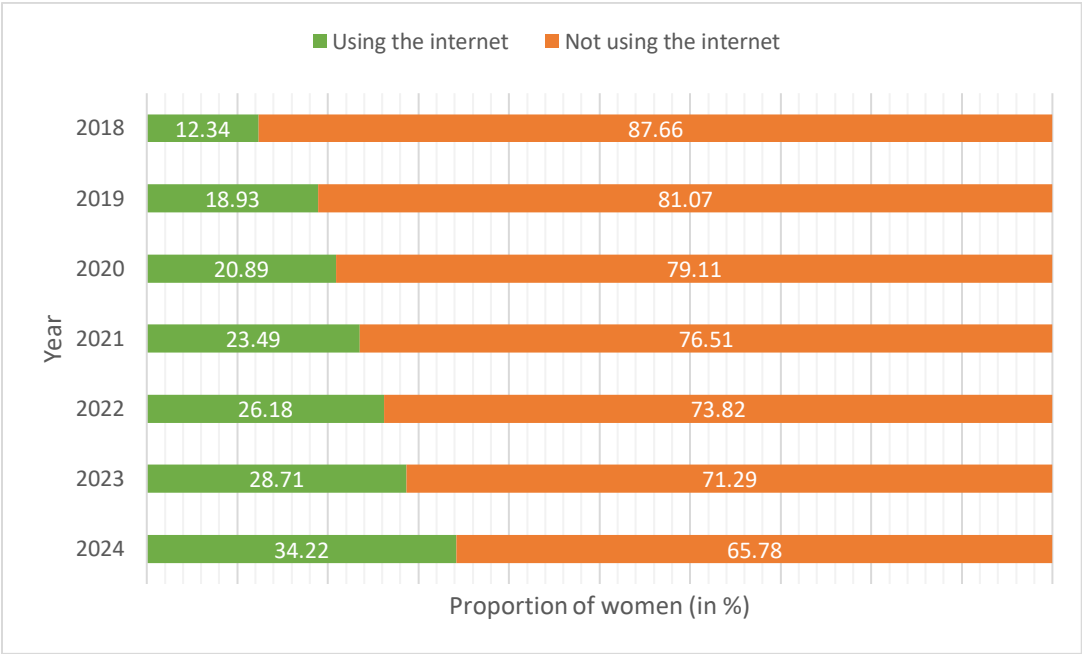


Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

**Figure 6. Proportion of women in the informal sector with prior participation in training programs (in per cent), 2016–2024**



**Figure 7. Proportion of women using the internet in their main occupation (in per cent), 2018–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

Although women workers have experienced improved employment opportunities and working conditions, they remain vulnerable due to intersectionality—that is, the overlapping social identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, class, ability, and sexuality) that expose them to distinct and compounding forms of marginalization. Dong and Merdikawati (2023) have shown that Indonesian female workers face many challenges, such as drop out of formal sector during childbearing period, increasing gender wage gap, decreasing marriage age, and childbearing. Such challenges are also relevant to female workers in East Kalimantan, although an analysis of available secondary data suggests that female workers with their intersectionality seem to be better off in some aspects over the year. For example, women-headed households that were previously described as suffering from poverty and various types of marginalization (Zulminarni, 2014) now seem, as Table 4 indicates, to be better off due to having fewer household members and, therefore, a lighter burden on female workers. Female workers with disabilities also got more work opportunities over the years after the Covid-19 pandemic, as shown by Figure 9. Women that work in the mining sector were also covered by better social security (Table 5). However, female workers in sectors outside mining still have limited or no access to social securities (Table 6).

Table 4. Average number of family members based on the status of the head of household in East Kalimantan, 2016–2024

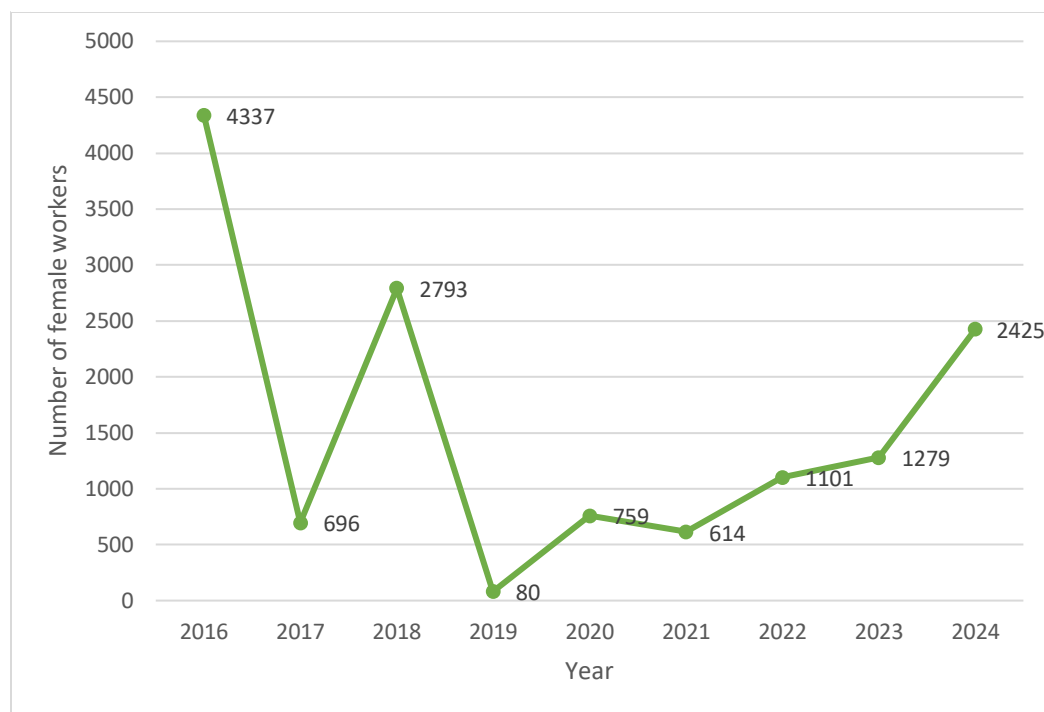
Category	Year								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
WHH* Working	2.61	2.82	2.79	2.64	2.6	2.84	2.47	2.6	2.49
WHH* Not Working	3.19	2.7	3.11	2.87	2.66	2.96	2.16	2.39	2.12
WNHH** Working	4.65	4.55	4.46	4.28	4.25	4.31	4.04	4.09	4.03
WNHH** Not Working	4.58	4.66	4.63	4.45	4.46	4.52	4.15	4.15	4.09

\* WHH = Women Headed Household

\*\* WNHH = Women non-Headed Household

Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

**Figure 6. Number of female workers with disabilities, 2016–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

**Table 5. Proportion of female workers in mining sector that have various social securities in East Kalimantan (in per cent), 2016–2024**

Category of Social Security	Year							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
Health insurance	91.67	90.47	71.48	74.93	68.90	84.33	85.29	79.97
Employment injury security	91.67	75.04	62.97	74.03	68.90	84.33	71.62	86.75
Old age security	30.56	19.34	23.57	51.76	31.95	52.75	24.96	29.45
Pension security	30.56	19.34	9.15	36.20	19.15	31.90	11.43	16.11
Death security	76.40	36.79	54.55	63.53	55.98	84.33	52.73	51.64
Annual/sick/maternity leave	76.40	76.53	38.41	62.70	53.89	80.28	45.39	54.21

Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

Table 6. Proportion of female workers outside of mining sector that have social securities in East Kalimantan (in per cent), 2016–2024

Category of Social Security	Year							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
Health insurance	24.71	24.95	24.09	25.76	24.54	24.24	25.56	26.11
Employment injury security	14.09	17.27	18.73	19.80	17.91	18.43	21.11	21.80
Old age security	7.05	11.74	13.32	13.86	11.79	13.08	12.84	13.95
Pension security	9.07	11.50	11.56	11.56	10.25	8.87	8.77	9.65
Death security	6.91	13.81	15.47	16.34	15.09	13.43	16.02	15.22
Annual/sick/maternity leave	17.28	22.03	18.51	19.95	17.70	18.44	17.10	25.95

Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

## 4.2. Economic transformation in East Kalimantan: downstreaming and diversification strategies

Given its current economic structure, East Kalimantan remains highly dependent on coal mining for employment and local economic activity. The mining sector directly employs around 9.69 per cent of the provincial workforce (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2025). Other estimates suggest that approximately 211,781 coal mine workers are employed across 420 operating mines (Taş *et al.*, 2025). These figures capture only formal employment, implying that the true scale of labour exposure is likely higher due to widespread informal work.

Economic dependence on coal extends well beyond direct mining jobs. A wide range of supporting industries, particularly transportation and logistics, are closely linked to coal production. Coal terminals, which form a critical part of this infrastructure, are heavily concentrated in Kalimantan with 28 terminals, compared to 10 in Sumatra and 7 in Java (Taş *et al.*, 2025). Informal economic activities have also emerged around mining sites. These include small-scale trading of food, beverages, and daily necessities for miners and local workers.

This deep reliance on coal places East Kalimantan in a vulnerable position. Fluctuations in domestic and international coal demand pose significant economic risks. The gradual depletion of coal reserves further intensifies this exposure. These dynamics underscore the urgency of developing alternative economic strategies to offset potential job losses and revenue declines during the coal phase-down.

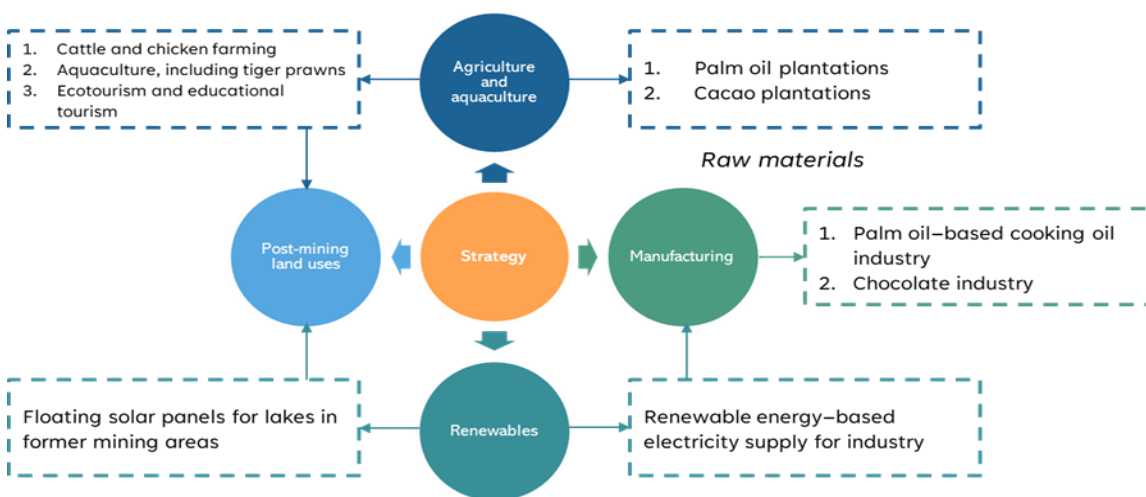
As East Kalimantan stands at a pivotal moment in redefining its development trajectory, the urgency of economic transformation has drawn growing attention from policymakers and development partners alike. In late October 2024, the first Regional Consultation Forum was convened by *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) in collaboration with the East Kalimantan Provincial Government. The forum served as a platform for stakeholders to provide input on the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the province’s economic transformation agenda. Participants represented a wide range of sectors, including local government, academia, financing institutions, and industry representatives.

Building on these discussions, the Economic Transformation Acceleration Team of East Kalimantan (TPTEK Team) was established through collaboration between Bank Indonesia and the provincial government. The team further developed a strategy framework to promote alternative economic sectors to expand the region’s economic structure and presented its findings in December 2024.

#### 4.2.1. The framework for economic transformation strategy of East Kalimantan

The TPTEK Team identified two core strategies for economic transformation pathway in East Kalimantan, namely economic diversification and commodity downstreaming. In general, the strategy is formulated by identifying economic sectors with strong potential to drive growth beyond the mining industry. These sectors are intended to serve as alternatives to gradually reduce East Kalimantan’s dependence on coal mining activity. Priority sectors include agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, as well as manufacturing and tourism.

**Figure 9. Framework of economic transformation of East Kalimantan**



Source: TPTEK team, 2025

Within this framework, the construction sector is not prioritized for further development, despite its significant economic contribution. This is because construction activity is closely tied to the operations of the mining sector. Its economic effects are therefore seen as highly dependent on mining cycles and largely temporary in nature. As a result, the sector is not viewed as a long-term anchor for structural transformation.

Beyond sectoral focus, the strategy also identifies leading regional commodities for development and downstreaming. Livestock commodities such as cattle and poultry, along with tiger shrimp, are targeted for productivity and value enhancement. In parallel, commodities such as palm oil and cocoa are prioritized for downstream processing to increase domestic value added and strengthen local supply chains.

Although not explicitly stated in the framework, coal remains included as a commodity for downstream development within the same strategy. Planned pathways involve processing coal into dimethyl ether (DME), methanol, and green ammonia. While the strategy acknowledges the potential repurpose of former mining land, the continued role of coal indicates a gradual approach to reducing reliance on the sector. This suggests that the underlying assumption of the strategy is a phased reduction of coal dependence, rather than an explicit coal phase-out.

#### **4.2.2. The progress of East Kalimantan's economic transformation agenda**

The effectiveness of the proposed agenda ultimately depends on the institutional arrangements and implementation mechanisms through which the economic transformation strategy is operationalized in East Kalimantan. The key strategies that have been formulated are expected to be implemented primarily by the provincial government through relevant line agencies. These include, but not limited to, the offices responsible for industry, trade, cooperatives and MSMEs; food security and agriculture; tourism; energy and mineral resources; as well as manpower and transmigration. Their roles will be central in translating strategic priorities into concrete programmes and activities. At the same time, effective implementation will require coordination beyond government institutions. Collaboration with the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), and communities will be essential to ensure broader ownership and impact.

For the proposed strategies to be effectively operationalized, they must be formally integrated into the 2025–2029 East Kalimantan Provincial Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). This document serves as the primary reference for programme formulation and budget allocation across provincial government agencies during the planning period. Once enacted through regulation, the RPJMD provides the basis for the preparation of five-year Strategic Plans for each line agency. These plans are subsequently translated into annual Regional

Government Work Plans, through which aligned programmes are assigned funding in the provincial budget.

At the time of data collection of this study in September 2025, the RPJMD draft had been completed but had not yet received formal approval. Consequently, there was no immediate follow-up in the form of policies or programmes derived directly from the strategic framework developed by the TPTEK team. Since then, the RPJMD has been formally enacted through East Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 1/2025. This sequencing helps explain the earlier absence of concrete implementation measures, despite the existence of the economic transformation strategy.

### **4.2.3. From “resource curse” to “resource cures”**

A substantial body of literature has examined the complex relationship between natural resource endowments and economic development at the national level (Ross, 2016; Van der Ploeg, 2011; Venables, 2016). One of the most prominent concepts emerging from this literature is the “resource curse,” which describes situations in which resource abundance fails to translate into sustained economic growth or meaningful poverty reduction (Costa & Santos, 2013). A key manifestation of this phenomenon is limited economic diversification, as natural resources tend to dominate export revenues and fiscal income (Bahar & Santos, 2018; Ross, 2017). Over time, these dynamics often weaken the manufacturing sector, as resource rents encourage rent-seeking behaviour and crowd out productive investment (Sachs & Warner, 1999).

For policymakers in resource-rich contexts, the central challenge of resource-led development lies in converting underground assets into productive physical and human capital that can generate long-term prosperity (Morrison, 2012). In this regard, growth in the non-resource economy is widely recognized as a critical indicator of successful diversification. This perspective underscores the importance of broad-based structural transformation, rather than continued reliance on extractive activities. Without such transformation, resource-dependent regions risk remaining trapped in cycles of volatility and unequitable development.

Against this backdrop, East Kalimantan faces a critical opportunity to leverage the current transition as a catalyst for more sustainable economic growth. The key question is whether the existing economic transformation strategy is sufficiently transformative to address structural dependence on natural resources. Equally important is identifying the conditions required to optimize this momentum. The findings of this study indicate that there are issues that warrant closer attention in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the transformation agenda.

#### **a) Lack of clearer role allocation and coherent understanding of outcomes**

At a technical level, effective implementation requires that each line agency has a clear and shared understanding of its respective role within the transformation strategy. Such

clarity is essential to translate the concepts of economic diversification and downstream development into coherent and complementary work plans.

In general, the RPJMD, as the primary development planning document of East Kalimantan, has incorporated economic transformation as a strategic regional agenda. The document outlines broad priorities related to sectoral diversification, value addition, and competitiveness. The RPJMD also demonstrates alignment with several elements of the provincial economic transformation strategy.

However, as a macro-level planning document, its substance remains relatively general. It sets out overarching goals but does not provide detailed operational guidance. Specific information regarding which agencies are responsible for particular actions, as well as clear timelines and sequencing, is not comprehensively articulated. As a result, the translation of strategic priorities into implementable programmes may lack clarity.

“In general, energy transition and economic transformation are already included in the RPJMD because they are considered strategic issues. However, the RPJMD is a macro-level document, so not all components are detailed within it. If further specification is required, it needs to be elaborated in more strategic planning documents. As a result, when certain agencies try to identify ‘which part is our responsibility,’ it is not going to be explicitly stated in the RPJMD.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, male, 12 September 2025)

In addition, coordination across agencies and across sectors within the same agency remains limited. Institutional silos continue to shape policy implementation, which reduce opportunities for integrated planning. The absence of clear role delineation can create uncertainty regarding mandates and accountability. This situation complicates efforts to ensure that different agencies contribute coherently to shared transformation objectives.

“Thus far, we have not become part of the Regional Consultation Forum. Based on our observation, coordination related to energy transition and economic diversification is also not specifically outlined in the RPJMD. In practice, many initiatives appear to be driven by external actors, such as IKI-JET.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, female, 15 September 2025)

“Our division has never been invited to joint discussions with other divisions within the agency regarding economic diversification. Cross-division coordination has not yet taken place. Coordination usually occurs only within each respective division.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, female, 22 September 2025)

The lack of derivative documents, such as a detailed roadmap, further contributes to fragmented understanding among agencies. Without a common operational reference, interpretations of economic transformation priorities may vary across institutions. This increases the risk of uncoordinated initiatives and uneven implementation. Divergent approaches may emerge even when agencies share similar development objectives.

Furthermore, without well-defined responsibilities, agencies may pursue overlapping initiatives or prioritize activities that do not align with the broader strategic objectives. Clear role allocation therefore serves as a mechanism to mitigate the risks of programme duplication and fragmented implementation, while also improving the efficiency of resource use.

For instance, one line agency has initiated efforts to align the green economy agenda with the RPJMD by incorporating projections of labour demand regarding green jobs into the five-year Regional Manpower Plan. However, in the absence of a detailed transformation roadmap, the reskilling and upskilling framework includes the construction sector, which is not fully consistent with the sectors prioritized in the economic transformation strategy. This illustrates how well-intentioned initiatives can diverge from strategic direction when guidance is insufficiently specific.

“From our side, affected workers will be directed toward several sectors, such as construction (particularly related to the new capital city), services and trade, as well as plantations and forestry. We plan to provide training for communities and job seekers in mining areas with skills relevant to these sectors.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, male, 12 September 2025)

In addition, line agencies need a strong understanding of the long-term outcomes that the strategy seeks to achieve. This includes a shared understanding of how individual programmes contribute to structural transformation beyond short-term outputs. Such strategic orientation is particularly important where agencies are expected to innovate or develop policy interventions beyond their traditional mandates. A common understanding of long-term goals can provide the confidence and direction needed for agencies to explore new approaches. It also helps ensure that innovation remains aligned with the overarching transformation agenda rather than resulting in isolated initiatives.

“There is still no clear roadmap for the overall economic transformation, particularly for major sectors such as mining and for how MSMEs are expected to transition from it. Clear guidance on ‘who does what’ and on long-term targets is still lacking. A more detailed roadmap is needed to translate the RPJMD into actionable steps. From our perspective, we also need clearer direction on what we should do in relation to the economic transition plan, as guidance on this agenda has so far been limited.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, female, 17 September 2025)

**b) Lack of certainty regarding post-mining economy**

At a more structural level, the principal challenge arises from persistent ambiguity surrounding the direction of economic transformation in East Kalimantan. This ambiguity reflects competing policy signals and uneven alignment across levels of government. On the one hand, the local government faces growing pressure from the national government to prepare for a post-mining scenario. This pressure has necessitated the rapid formulation of a regional economic transformation strategy.

On the other hand, uncertainty at the national level continues to shape local decision-making. This uncertainty is evident, for instance, in Indonesia's evolving coal phase-down trajectory. The 2025–2034 National Electricity Supply Business Plan (RUPTL) sets out a more moderate transition pathway compared to earlier commitments under the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). While RUPTL targets a renewable energy share of 35 per cent by 2034, or approximately 46 GW, this remains below the JETP target of 56 GW by 2030. The inclusion of additional coal- and gas-based generation capacity in the near term further complicates expectations around the pace of coal decline. These national-level signals make it difficult for local governments to plan decisively for a post-coal future.

This situation is further shaped by the prevailing view that authority over mine closure lies primarily with the national government rather than provincial administrations. As mining permits and closure decisions are largely governed at the national level, local governments have limited leverage to initiate or mandate coal mines' retirement. As a result, there is currently no dedicated local roadmap, programme, or policy that explicitly addresses the closure or retirement of coal mines.

The absence of such instruments is also closely linked to the lack of a development framework that formally commits to a post-coal transition. Consequently, economic transformation is not yet framed around an imminent structural shift away from coal. Instead, the transformation agenda is largely positioned as a risk-mitigation response to projected declines in coal demand, particularly from global markets. The emphasis is on adapting to potential market contractions rather than proactively restructuring the regional economy.

“This is why we do not agree with using the terms ‘mine closure’ or ‘mine shutdown.’ In my perspective, the process should be driven by market mechanisms that naturally lead to a gradual decline. If we simply say, ‘close it,’ we also lack the authority to do so. Mining permits are often issued directly by the central government, sometimes without prior notice. This is why the RPJMD does not address mine closures explicitly. Discussions on mine closure are

limited to post-mining arrangements, focusing on what should be done after mining activities end, rather than on the act of closing the mines themselves.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, male, 12 September 2025)

This framing has created uncertainty for local business actors, both within and beyond the coal sector. Without clear signals on the future operation of coal mines, private firms have limited incentives to invest in business model diversification, workforce reskilling, or post-mining land rehabilitation. In the absence of targeted preparatory measures, economic activity in East Kalimantan continues to follow a business-as-usual trajectory, despite growing recognition of long-term transition risks.

“Thus far, we have been asked by the government to actively participate by sending representatives to provide input on business diversification and investment planning. However, at its core, the business community remains deeply uncertain. The most basic question we continue to ask is: *when, exactly, will coal be phased out?*”

(Interview with a business association representative, male, 13 September 2025)

### **4.3. Economic transformation as a catalyst for reducing women’s vulnerabilities**

Ideally, when the full economic and social value of women’s caregiving work is acknowledged, it challenges the prevailing assumption that men’s higher monetary income automatically translates into greater decision-making power, particularly within households. Such recognition highlights that household well-being is sustained not only through paid work but also through unpaid care and domestic labour.

In practice, however, caregiving work remains largely invisible and undervalued. In this context, women’s access to income and control over economic resources becomes a critical pathway to strengthening their bargaining position. Existing studies show that income generation enhances women’s decision-making power, agency, and self-confidence, while also improving their social standing within the community (Hill, 2011; Kabeer & Natali, 2013). When women have independent earnings, their contributions are more readily recognized, and their voices carry greater weight in household and community-level decisions.

Against this backdrop, the economic transformation strategy that has been developed for East Kalimantan has yet to adequately recognize the importance of gender inclusion. The strategy does not explicitly acknowledge the need to transform the local economic structure in ways that expand equitable opportunities for women. As a result, gender considerations remain peripheral rather than integral to the envisioned development pathway.

The strategy is primarily framed around identifying economic sectors with strong growth potential beyond mining and promoting leading regional commodities. However, it does not include an assessment of how women and men are currently distributed across these sectors as economic actors. The labour market is implicitly treated as a homogeneous group, despite significant gender differences in labour force participation. Given the dominance of men in the existing economic structure, the sectors prioritized in the strategy largely reflect existing patterns of male economic participation.

“The assessment of this strategy does not include discussions on gender or gender mapping. The focus of the strategy is primarily on how the provincial government can pursue economic diversification. It emphasizes shifting economic activities from upstream sectors toward downstream development as quickly as possible. The analysis mainly examines projected economic growth under different economic transformation scenarios.”

(Interview with a representative from the TPTEK Team, male, 10 September 2025)

Moreover, the strategy does not account for gender-specific constraints or opportunities within economic diversification and downstreaming initiatives. There is no analysis of how women and men might engage differently in these processes or benefit unevenly from them. Based on the frameworks for gender integration used in this study, this indicates that the economic transformation strategy for East Kalimantan remains largely gender and intersectional insensitive, as it neither systematically incorporates gender analysis nor proposes targeted measures to promote more inclusive economic participation.

To ensure that the ongoing economic transformation in East Kalimantan goes beyond sectoral shifts requires medium- and long-term strategies that deliberately expand women’s economic participation. A focus solely on transitioning from extractive to non-extractive sectors risks reproducing existing gender inequalities if participation pathways are not explicitly addressed.

From a medium-term perspective, women’s economic opportunities can be strengthened by leveraging the existing economic landscape, particularly through MSMEs where women are already highly represented. In parallel, medium-term strategies can also expand women’s access to formal employment opportunities emerging from downstreaming and value-added industries, such as in agricultural downstreaming. Over the longer term, creating a more gender-inclusive economic structure will depend on investments in social infrastructure that reduce gender-based barriers to labour market participation.

#### **4.3.1. Expanding women’s economic participation through MSME development**

The high concentration of women in the informal sector suggests that entrepreneurship represents a potentially important pathway for expanding women’s economic opportunities in

East Kalimantan. Informal business activities can provide flexible entry points into income generation, particularly in contexts where access to formal employment remains limited. However, without targeted support, most women-owned businesses tend to remain subsistence-oriented and vulnerable to economic shocks. This underscores the need for integrated interventions that enable women entrepreneurs to transition from survival-based activities toward growth-oriented enterprises with higher productivity and sustainability.

Women's participation in the entrepreneurial economy is inherently shaped by the broader ecosystem in which businesses operate. One study conceptualizes entrepreneurial ecosystems as comprising eight interrelated pillars, including access to markets, human capital, finance, support systems and mentors, regulatory frameworks, education and training, cultural norms, and universities as drivers of innovation and enterprise development (World Economic Forum, 2013). In practice, women-owned businesses are not inherently less productive than those owned by men. However, persistent gender biases limit women's access to key ecosystem resources, which constrains their ability to scale and formalize their businesses (Ahl, 2006; Bosse & Porcher L., 2012). When ecosystem policies and support mechanisms are designed without explicit attention to these gendered barriers, they risk reproducing structural disadvantages. As a result, well-intended entrepreneurship policies may inadvertently fail to enable female entrepreneurs to realise their full economic potential.

In general, the call to further develop local MSMEs ecosystem is broadly aligned with the policy direction outlined in the East Kalimantan Medium-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJMD) 2025–2029, which emphasizes the promotion of inclusive economic growth through creative and digital economy. The RPJMD highlights support for MSMEs through improved access to finance, skills development, business management training, and mentoring for participation in digital markets.

Notably, there is a favourable enabling condition for this approach, as women's access to the internet in East Kalimantan has shown a steady upward trend (see Figure 8). Data from Statistics Indonesia indicate that the share of women using the internet for work-related purposes has nearly tripled from 12.34 per cent in 2018 to 34.22 per cent in 2024. This steady progression suggests a gradual shift in how women engage with economic activities, including through digital platforms. Although this level of use remains below its potential, the sustained increase suggests that women in East Kalimantan are becoming more digitally literate and increasingly capable of engaging with technology beyond basic consumption. The fact that internet use is linked to work activities indicates emerging opportunities for women to leverage digital tools for income generation, business development, and market access. Within this context, the RPJMD's emphasis on digital markets related to MSME support could be particularly impactful if it explicitly targets female entrepreneurs.

The RPJMD also emphasizes assistance for export-oriented MSMEs through capacity-building, financing mechanisms, and logistical facilitation. This strategy is expected to strengthen foreign

exchange earnings and expand international trade linkages, thereby contributing directly to regional economic growth. When explicitly directed toward women-owned businesses, such support can open alternative pathways for meaningful economic participation. This is particularly relevant given women's limited access to high-paying employment in dominant sectors, such as mining. Export-oriented entrepreneurship offers the potential for higher value addition, more stable demand, and improved income prospects compared to subsistence-oriented activities. By enabling women entrepreneurs to integrate into global value chains, these measures can enhance women's economic visibility. Over time, this approach can help reposition women from the margins of the local economy toward more productive and resilient forms of economic engagement.

Furthermore, within the economic transformation strategy of East Kalimantan, MSMEs are expected to play a significant role in the development of ecotourism and educational tourism areas. These sectors are often linked to services such as accommodation, food and beverages, handicrafts, cultural products, and local guiding, where women are already actively involved through informal activities. With appropriate support, these existing activities could be upgraded into higher-value enterprises.

“Ecotourism and educational tourism have the potential to be more gender-inclusive because they involve entire communities. In contrast, the mining sector predominantly employs men. In East Kalimantan, women's economic potential is largely concentrated in MSMEs, such as souvenir production and culinary businesses. However, the government has been slow in incorporating inputs from consultation forums and has shown inconsistency in developing supporting infrastructure, for example in designated tourism villages.”

(Interview with a local CSO representative, female, 12 September 2025)

Ecotourism and educational tourism also tend to rely on local knowledge, cultural practices, and environmental stewardship, which creates space for women's skills and experiences to be recognized as economic assets. However, realizing this potential requires deliberate efforts to address constraints related to upgraded knowledge regarding business innovation, access to more capital, sales and marketing skills, and business formalization. Without such targeted measures, the benefits of tourism-led growth risk being unevenly distributed, with women remaining confined to low-paid and invisible roles within these emerging sectors.

### **4.3.2. Expanding women's economic participation through agricultural downstreaming**

Beyond MSMEs, downstreaming initiatives embedded in economic transformation strategy of East Kalimantan also present significant potential to expand women's economic participation. Compared to extractive activities, downstream industries are generally more labour-intensive

across processing, quality control, packaging, and administrative functions. These activities tend to require a broader range of skills and are less physically demanding, which can lower entry barriers for women relative to the mining sector.

Downstreaming also offers the prospect of more stable and regulated working conditions than those commonly found in volume-based work in palm oil plantations. While the palm oil sector remains a major contributor to the regional economy, its downstream segments, such as palm oil-based cooking oil processing, shift employment away from informal and output-driven arrangements toward factory-based or semi-formal work. Such settings are more likely to provide regular wages, clearer working hours, and basic labour protections, which are particularly relevant for improving women's job security and income stability.

In addition, women already play a visible role in several plantation-based commodities that are targeted for downstream development, particularly cacao. Women's existing involvement in cacao cultivation suggests a level of familiarity with the production process that can facilitate their integration into higher value-added activities along the supply chain. These include post-harvest handling, fermentation, processing, and small-scale manufacturing, where skills can be upgraded through targeted training.

“Sectors that tend to absorb more women include agriculture and plantations, like cacao, for instance. Tasks such as weeding, cleaning, and fertilizing on plantations are usually carried out by women. Harvesting, however, is generally considered too physically demanding and is therefore undertaken by men.”

(Interview with a business association representative, male, 13 September 2025)

This potential is reflected in the RPJMD, which emphasizes agricultural downstreaming through the expansion of modern farming areas and increased value addition in plantation commodities. Cacao has been identified as a high-potential industrial input in Kutai Kartanegara, Kutai Barat, and Berau, alongside rubber, coffee, and aren in selected districts. A notable milestone is the export of fermented cacao from Merasa Village in Berau to Germany, supplying Urwald Schokolade (Masdiansyah, 2025). Although export volumes remain limited, this achievement demonstrates the feasibility of integrating local commodities into international value chains. With deliberate efforts to include women in these downstream activities, agricultural industrialization could become an important pathway for expanding women's economic participation beyond informal work

## V. Barriers to Women's Economic Participation in East Kalimantan

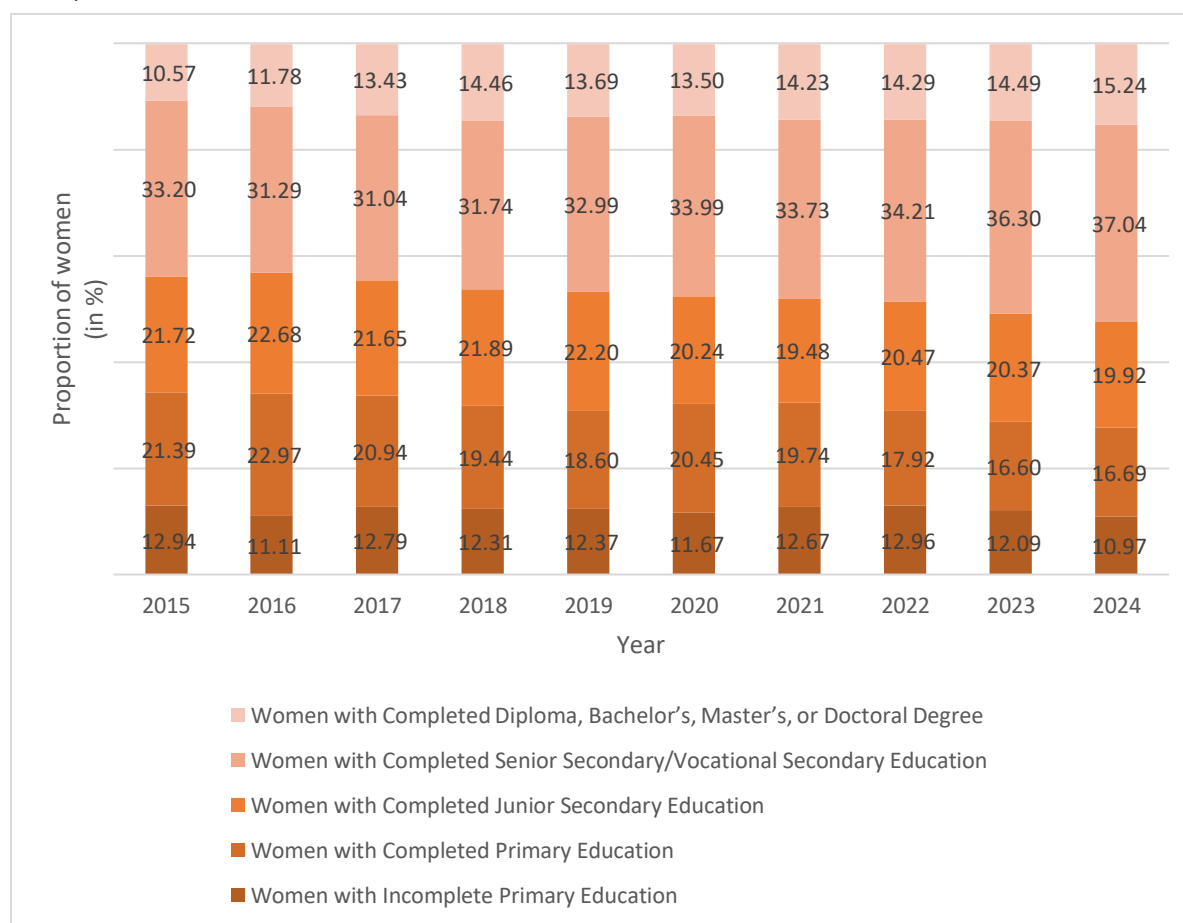
### 5.1. Gendered constraints in economic participation

East Kalimantan's economic landscape reveals a persistent gender paradox, where gains in women's education have not translated into commensurate levels of economic participation. Over the period of 2016–2024, the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) in East Kalimantan fluctuated but consistently remained below the national female average. In contrast, the Male Labour Force Participation Rate in East Kalimantan remained above 80 per cent throughout the same period and was more than double the female rate, which hovered at around 40 per cent (see Figure 4).

Within this constrained context, women's engagement in entrepreneurship exhibited relatively dynamic changes, yet declined in proportional terms compared to wage employment. Notably, the composition of female entrepreneurship remained dominated by own-account workers. Most women entrepreneurs operate on a small scale, assume economic risks individually, and do not employ paid or unpaid labour. This concentration in low-capital and informal activities suggests that entrepreneurship often functions as a coping strategy in the absence of accessible formal employment, rather than as a pathway to business growth or economic mobility.

These patterns stand in contrast to the steady improvement in women's educational attainment over the same period. The educational profile of women in East Kalimantan has shifted noticeably toward upper-secondary and tertiary levels. Senior secondary graduates consistently represented the largest group, increasing from 33.20 per cent in 2015 to 37.04 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 10). At the same time, the share of women with tertiary education rose from 10.57 per cent to 15.24 per cent (see Figure 10). These trends point to significant gains in women's human capital, which would typically be expected to support higher and more stable economic participation.

**Figure 10. Proportion of women by highest level of education attained (in per cent), 2015–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

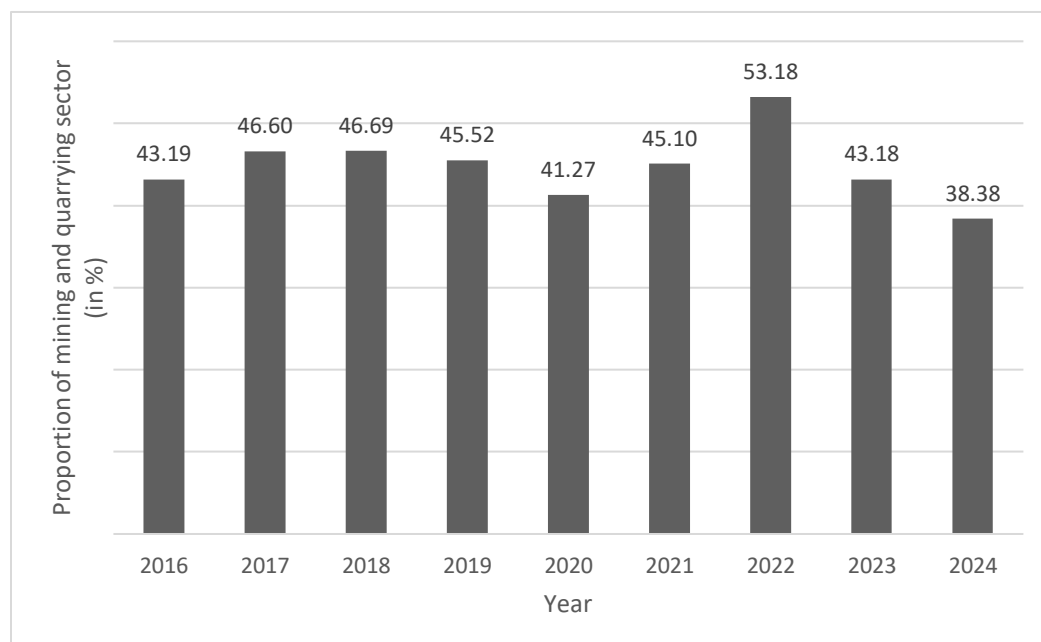
In aggregate, these dynamics reveal a clear mismatch between women’s rising educational qualifications and their limited participation and positioning in the labour market. This disconnect suggests that barriers beyond human capital continue to shape women’s economic participation in East Kalimantan.

## 5.2 Structural context shaping women’s economic opportunities

The economic structure of East Kalimantan remains heavily anchored in the extractive sector, particularly mining. Data from Statistics Indonesia show that the sector’s share in the GRDP fluctuated between 38.38 per cent and 53.18 per cent during 2016–2024 (see Figure 11). The contribution remained above 45 per cent in most pre-pandemic years and peaked sharply at

53.18 per cent in 2022. Although the share declined to 38.38 per cent in 2024, it continues to represent a dominant pillar of the regional economy. While this structure has generated significant revenues, it has also shaped the distribution of economic opportunities in ways that are unequitable across gender groups. The dominance of mining has therefore created a development pathway that is less conducive to inclusive employment.

**Figure 11. Proportion of East Kalimantan's GRDP from the mining and quarrying sector (in per cent), 2016–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

Firstly, the mining industry is predominantly male-dominated in both labour demand and workplace culture. Employment in mining typically requires physical labour, long shifts, and remote work locations, which tend to favour male workers. Supporting industries linked to mining, such as transportation, heavy equipment services, and logistics, similarly tend to employ men. As a result, women are largely excluded from direct participation in the sectors and remain concentrated in peripheral or informal activities. Consequently, women face persistent barriers to enter stable and higher-value employment pathways.

Furthermore, women’s engagement in productive work is often framed as supplementary, aimed primarily at meeting household financial needs rather than pursuing long-term careers. In households where men are employed in mining companies and earn relatively high wages, women are frequently expected to prioritize domestic and caregiving responsibilities.

“These ‘social barriers’ relate primarily to prevailing community mindsets. When a husband is employed in the mining sector and earns a relatively high income, it is often

assumed that the wife does not need to work. The dominance of a male-dominated and high-wage mining sector has reinforced the perception that men should act as the main breadwinners, while women are expected to focus on household and caregiving responsibilities.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, male, 12 September 2025)

“Rather than encouraging their children to work in mining, parents often prefer their daughters to marry someone employed in the mining sector. This way of thinking is still common here.”

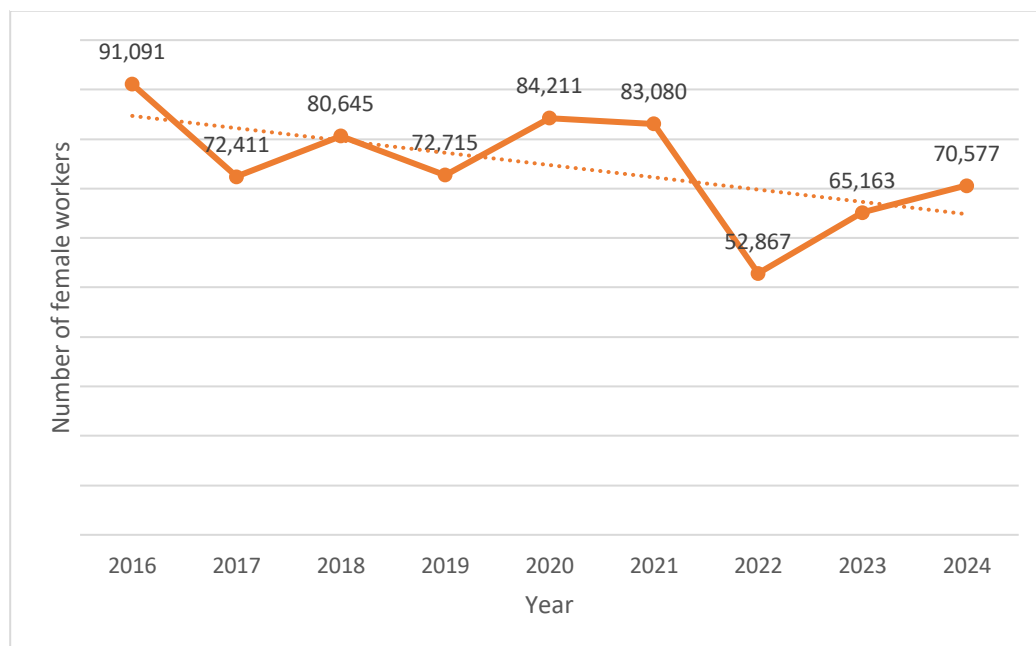
(Interview with a business association representative, male, 13 September 2025)

Such dynamic is reinforced by social norms commonly observed in resource-dependent contexts. Research suggests that high reliance on natural resources is associated with more conservative attitudes toward women’s economic roles (Baum & Benschaul-Tolonen, 2021). In such settings, respondents are more likely to agree that men should be prioritized when jobs are scarce, that men are better suited for leadership roles, and that men make superior business executives. These perceptions further constrain women’s access to advanced employment pathways and limit the social acceptance of women’s participation beyond the household sphere.

Additionally, the expansion of mining has driven large-scale land conversion across East Kalimantan. Research suggests that, as of January 2025, the province hosted 310 coal mining concessions covering approximately 1.52 million hectares (AEER, 2025). Such process has significantly reduced access to land traditionally used for agriculture, forestry, and small-scale livelihoods. This trend is reflected in the declining proportion of women employed in the agricultural sector, which aligns with existing study showing that the presence of large-scale mining is often associated with reduced agricultural activity among women (Kotsadam & Tolonen, 2016).

Data from Statistics Indonesia indicate that the number of women employed in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries declined from 91,091 in 2016 to 70,577 in 2024 (see Figure 12). Although the figures fluctuate across years, the overall trajectory points to a substantial contraction, with a sharp drop to 52,867 in 2022. The partial recovery observed in 2023 and 2024 has not restored employment to pre-2017 levels. This pattern suggests increasing instability and reduced absorption capacity in sectors that have traditionally provided accessible employment for women. For many women, the loss of these spaces undermines both income generation and food security. When formal employment opportunities are scarce and subsistence-based activities disappear, women face increasingly narrow choices for economic participation.

**Figure 12. Number of women employed in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector, 2016–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

### 5.3 Labour market barriers within the mining sector

Limited access to quality employment represents one of the earliest challenges faced by local communities in mining-dominated areas, with disproportionate implications for women. While large-scale mining projects often generate a short-term increase in employment during the construction phase, these opportunities tend to be temporary. In addition, local residents are frequently perceived as lacking the technical skills required for those roles. As a result, they are more commonly absorbed into low-skilled and physically demanding jobs, which are less accessible to women. This employment structure systematically narrows women’s entry points into the formal labour market in the mining sector.

“Local residents are often perceived as lacking many of the skills required by the mining sector. In practice, they are mostly recruited as contractors for positions that do not require high-level skills. As a result, they are more likely to work outside permanent employment arrangements, for example in support roles such as office assistants.”

(Interview with a labour union representative, male, 12 September 2025)

“The shift from forestry to coal mining in East Kalimantan has involved local communities, particularly through labour absorption. However, most community members are considered to lack the skills needed for higher-level positions. Consequently, they are mainly employed at the lowest levels, as unskilled or manual labourers.”

(Interview with an indigenous community council representative, male, 13 September 2025)

Employment arrangements around mining operations further reinforce this exclusion. Local residents are often hired as contract workers rather than permanent staff. These arrangements offer limited job security, fewer benefits, and weaker labour protections. For women, this precarity is especially consequential. The absence of stable work arrangement also reduces access to reproductive health protection and career progression.

Employer practices and workplace norms also contribute to gendered exclusion. Some employers are reluctant to hire women due to statutory obligations related to menstrual and maternity leave, as stipulated in Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower and Law No. 4/2024 on Maternal and Child Welfare. This is particularly evident in positions that require long working hours or shift-based arrangements with limited staffing. Rather than adjusting work arrangements or expanding staffing, firms may prefer to exclude women altogether. Such practices effectively recognize women for reproductive roles and reinforce the perception that they are less suitable for mining-related work. Over time, these hiring patterns institutionalize gender bias within local labour markets.

“The requirement for workers to live in company-provided dormitories at mining sites is often seen as a factor that discourages families from allowing women to work there. Concerns about women’s safety and social stigma also tend to arise, especially when women work in male-dominated sectors or at remote mining sites.”

(Interview with a local CSO representative, female, 12 September 2025)

“In the mining sector, one of the main challenges faced by women workers relates to maternity leave or menstruation leave. When women take leave, operations may have to stop, especially when the ratio of operators to equipment is one-to-one. This situation is often perceived by companies as a ‘problem’.”

(Interview with a labour union representative, male, 12 September 2025)

Finally, broader social considerations further constrain women’s employment pathways in the mining sector. Requirements for workers to reside in company-provided dormitories, combined with concerns over risks of sexual harassment, discourage families from allowing women to pursue mining-related employment. These concerns are rarely addressed through adequate safeguards or gender-responsive workplace policies. At the same time, deeply embedded gender

norms continue to frame mining as “men’s work,” while women’s labour is seen as supplementary or inappropriate for physically demanding industries.

## 5.4. Labour market barriers within the palm oil plantation sector

Beyond coal mining, palm oil has emerged as the second-largest contributor to East Kalimantan’s GRDP and accounts for around 12 per cent of total employment (Dinas Perkebunan Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2025). Despite its economic significance, women continue to face substantial barriers to achieving optimal economic productivity in this sector. Employment opportunities for women are often limited to low-skilled and low-paid roles, with few pathways for advancement. As a result, the sector has yet to function as an inclusive source of quality employment for women.

Similar to mining, palm oil plantations tend to reject local communities in higher-paying positions, as local workers are frequently perceived as lacking the technical or managerial skills required. Consequently, local residents, including women, are concentrated in labour-intensive jobs. These positions are commonly governed by informal labour arrangements, which disproportionately disadvantage women. In volume-based work systems, wages are typically paid to male workers, even when women and children contribute significantly to production. This practice renders women’s labour invisible and reinforces gendered inequalities in income and recognition.

Within such arrangements, women are largely excluded from employment protections. Volume-based and casual work offers little job security and rarely provides access to social protection schemes. Women who are formally recognized as daily casual workers often do not receive maternity benefits, menstrual leave, or other forms of reproductive health protection. This absence of labour safeguards increases women’s economic vulnerability and limits their ability to sustain long-term participation in the workforce.

Structural incompatibility between plantation labour regimes and traditional livelihoods further constrain women’s participation. Indigenous Dayak women, in particular, face difficulties adapting to palm oil plantation systems. Their customary farming practices follow flexible daily patterns that respond to environmental conditions and household responsibilities. In contrast, plantation work imposes rigid schedules, limited rest periods, and strict productivity targets. These conditions reduce the feasibility of women’s participation and contribute to their exclusion from one of the province’s major non-mining economic sectors.

“The farming patterns of Dayak women differ from those imposed by plantation work. They typically begin to work at the field at 7 a.m., take some rest in the huts at 11 a.m., resume work at 3 p.m., and return home around 6 p.m. In contrast, palm oil plantations

operate regardless of rain or heat, and even short rest periods are often prohibited. These traditional work rhythms are not compatible with plantation labour systems, and there has been no meaningful effort to adapt plantation practices to better understand or accommodate how Indigenous women work.”

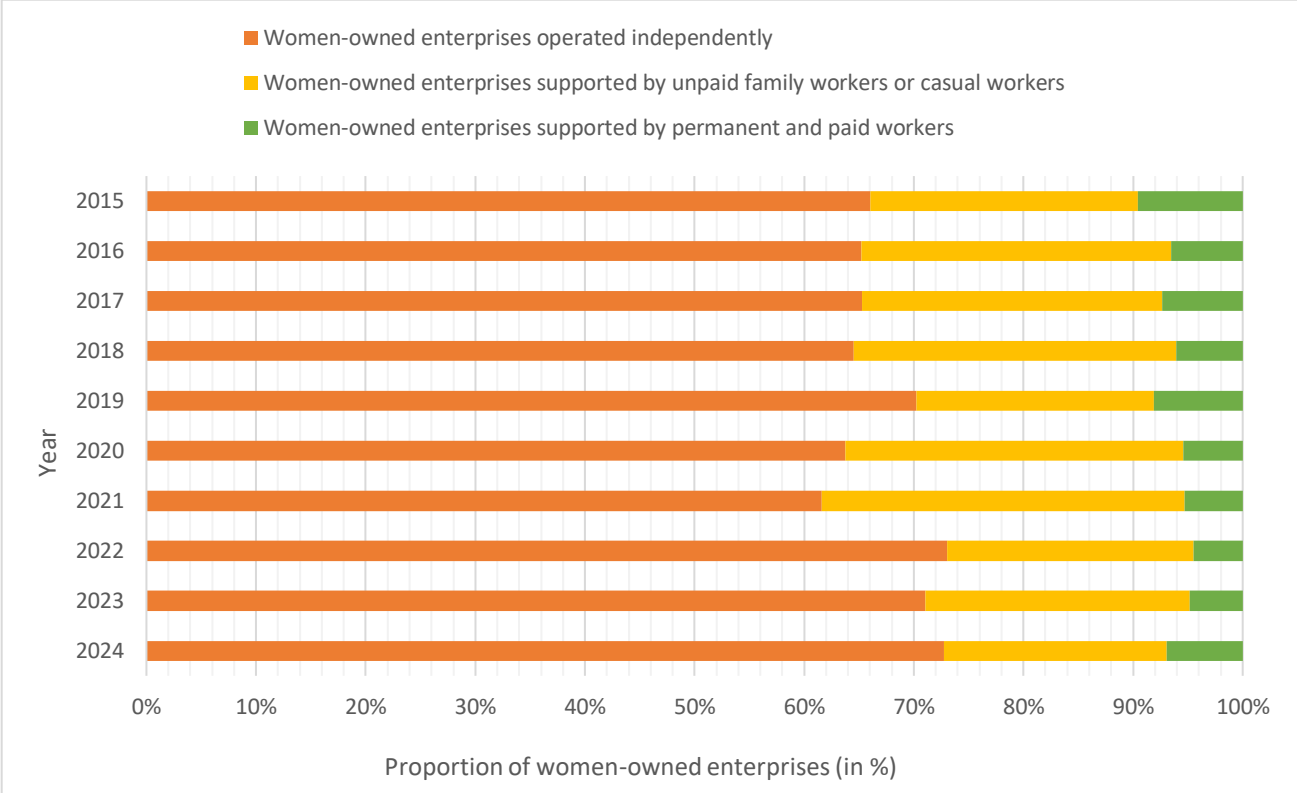
(Interview with a local CSO representative, female, 11 September 2025)

## 5.5. Constraints in entrepreneurship

Facing persistent barriers in employment, particularly within mining-and plantation-dominated sectors, many women in East Kalimantan increasingly turn to informal economic activities. These activities commonly include domestic services, such as laundry, catering, or small home-based enterprises. While such work provides a degree of income and flexibility, it is typically characterized by limited returns and minimal protection. Therefore, informal employment does not serve as a pathway to sustainable economic advancement for women.

The composition of women-owned businesses further illustrates this pattern. Most female entrepreneurs in East Kalimantan operate subsistence-oriented enterprises, as reflected in the dominance of own-account workers and women assisted by unpaid family members or casual labour (see Figure 13). Data from Statistics Indonesia show that women-owned enterprises operated independently increased from 75,092 in 2015 to 177,030 in 2024. Meanwhile, enterprises supported by unpaid family or casual workers also remained substantial, reaching 49,567 in 2024. In contrast, women-owned enterprises supported by permanent and paid workers remained consistently low, fluctuating between 9,705 and 18,200 over the same period, and standing at 16,826 in 2024. The relatively small proportion of businesses with permanent employees indicates that the women-owned businesses in East Kalimantan are generally small in scale, highly vulnerable to shocks, and oriented toward meeting daily household needs rather than generating surplus for reinvestment.

**Figure 13. Proportion of women-owned enterprises by business category (in per cent), 2015–2024**



Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2025

Although entrepreneurship creates space for women’s economic participation, the limited scale of most enterprises is shaped by both intention and constraint. Some women might not seek to expand their businesses, as their primary objective is to supplement household income. Others, however, face significant barriers to growth.

Access to relevant and sustained training remains a key challenge. In East Kalimantan, more than 80 per cent of women working in the informal sector have never participated in business-related training (see Figure 7). Data from Statistics Indonesia indicate that participation rates remained below 10 per cent between 2016 and 2021, with only 5.99 per cent in 2016 and 8.98 per cent in 2021. Although participation increased to around 18 per cent in 2022–2024, more than four out of five women in the informal sector still reported never having attended any

training. This slight improvement has therefore not translated into broad capacity strengthening.

Existing training programmes designed for women is mainly provided through the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. However, these programmes largely focus on female-headed households rather than supporting women who seek to scale up existing enterprises, thereby limiting their potential impact on long-term productivity.

“We have programmes that specifically support female-headed households. These include training on obtaining a Business Identification Number and free halal certification. We also encourage their participation by facilitating product display at the MSME Gallery. Our focus on female-headed households aims to strengthen household economic resilience, particularly by encouraging those who have not yet started a business to do so.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, female, 16 September 2025)

Beyond skills development, women entrepreneurs continue to face social and economic constraints that undermine business growth. Even after receiving training, women's motivation to expand their businesses often weakens due to the absence of support within the household, particularly from their husbands. Prevailing norms frequently position women as primary caregivers, particularly when husbands are employed in mining jobs perceived as high-paying. These dynamics can reduce women's confidence to advocate for their own economic aspirations. In addition, limited asset ownership under women's names constrains their access to formal credit, further restricting opportunities for investment and growth.

Market access also remains a persistent challenge. Many women entrepreneurs struggle to produce attractive packaging and to access wider marketing networks beyond the area. Although the Office of Industry, Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs has introduced programmes aimed at product upgrading and export-oriented business matching, these initiatives do not provide specialized quota for women entrepreneurs. These dynamics suggest that while various forms of support for women entrepreneurs exist, they remain fragmented and insufficiently coordinated.

“There has been plenty of support from the government, such as integrated entrepreneurship initiatives, which include mentoring, training, and equipment assistance. These cover training related to sales and marketing, packaging, and product design, as well as technology support, such as fibre-smoothing tools for Ulap Doyo-based fashion products. We also facilitate access to an Export Centre that provides training, coaching, and business matching for entrepreneurs who wish to export their products. These programmes are open to the general public, so anyone can participate. We do not have specific data or dedicated mapping that distinguishes the challenges or opportunities faced by women-owned MSMEs compared to those owned by men.

However, many women are indeed involved in MSMEs as a supplementary activity to support household income. There is usually a need for additional income opportunities.”

(Interview with a provincial government official, female, 17 September 2025)

## VI. Gender Equality Policies and Programmes Supporting Economic Transformation in East Kalimantan

Over the longer term, expanding women's economic participation in East Kalimantan requires addressing the structural constraints that shape unequal access to labour markets, productive resources, and decision-making spaces. Such challenges cannot be resolved through short-term programmatic interventions alone but instead require institutionalised approaches that integrate gender considerations into economic planning and sectoral policy. In this context, policy support is critical to ensure that gender-transformative measures are embedded systematically in development strategies, regulatory frameworks, and implementation mechanisms. The following section therefore examines whether such policy support is currently in place in East Kalimantan.

### 6.1 Gender policies and leadership changes

The current Governor of East Kalimantan was elected through Indonesia's simultaneous local elections, held on 27 November 2024, and inaugurated on 20 February 2025. Although the previous governor's term ended in October 2023, the election was postponed as a consequence of amendments to the Election Law requiring national and subnational elections to be conducted simultaneously. During the intervening period, from 2023 to 2025, provincial governance was administered by a caretaker government. This institutional sequence is important because it shaped the policy environment inherited by the new administration and complicates any straightforward attribution of policy direction in its first year in office.

In the Indonesian planning system, changes in political leadership are typically followed by a reorientation of policy priorities, most clearly expressed through the *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah* (RPJMD), or Regional Medium-Term Development Plan. Each administration is required to formulate its own five-year RPJMD as the principal instrument for translating political vision into development priorities, programmes, and budgetary direction. Because the elected provincial leadership had not yet taken office when the previous RPJMD cycle ended, the caretaker administration prepared a transitional development framework for 2024–2025, including the corresponding annual development plans. As a result, the policy landscape of 2025 was shaped less by the newly elected governor's agenda than by the institutional necessity of policy continuity during a transitional period.

This transitional setting has important analytical implications. Although the governor formally took office in early 2025, the administration's room to redefine policy direction remained

limited until its own RPJMD could be finalized and aligned with the national planning framework. East Kalimantan's RPJMD for 2025–2029 was approved by the local parliament in July 2025, but it had not become fully operational by the end of the year because further adjustments were still required for consistency with the national development plan. Consequently, policies implemented in 2025 should not be interpreted simply as a direct reflection of the new administration's ideological orientation. Rather, they represent a hybrid policy output in which inherited transitional arrangements continued to structure government action. The new administration's substantive policy direction is therefore likely to become more visible from 2026 onward, when its planning framework is more fully institutionalized and implementation begins to reflect its own strategic priorities.

At the same time, the transitional period should not be understood merely as administrative delay or policy stasis. Evidence from the analysis of development planning documents and interviews with multiple informants indicates that the provincial government introduced several important policy measures during this period. Most notably, the transitional administration issued a strategic regional regulation revising Regional Regulation No. 2/2016 on gender mainstreaming in regional development. The revised regulation is particularly important insofar as it strengthens the legal and procedural basis for integrating gender considerations into local governance processes. This development is significant because it suggests that, even before the new administration's planning framework was fully in place, gender governance had already become part of the evolving institutional architecture of provincial development.

This context underscores the need for careful reading of the new administration's record on gender equality. The key issue is not only whether gender-related policies exist, but also how they are positioned within a broader transition in political leadership, planning authority, and institutional reform. The following section therefore examines the extent to which the East Kalimantan government, under the newly elected governor, has advanced gender equality through its emerging policy agenda.

## 6.2 Gender policies of the new administration

A review of East Kalimantan's current planning documents indicates that gender equality has not been positioned as a strategic priority of the new administration. In Indonesia, the most direct way to identify the policy orientation of elected leaders is through “the vision and mission statements” set out in the *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah* (RPJMD), as these statements typically reflect the administration's core commitments and campaign promises. In East Kalimantan's 2025–2029 RPJMD, however, no explicit vision or mission addresses gender equality. Instead, the administration's agenda is centred on economic transformation, particularly the ambition to position East Kalimantan as a new centre of Indonesia's economy in connection with the relocation of the national capital. The mission of

the new administration focuses on six agendas, within which gender equality does not emerge as a distinct policy objective:

1. Human resource development,
2. inclusive economic growth through industrialisation,
3. infrastructure expansion,
4. governance reform,
5. religious and cultural development,
6. and environmentally sustainable development

Where gender-related concerns do appear, they are framed narrowly and subordinated to broader human capital goals. References relevant to women, youth, and persons with disabilities are found mainly under the mission on “human resource development”. Yet, these references are directed more toward improving participation and competitiveness than toward addressing the structural causes of gender inequality. This framing is significant because it treats gender less as a question of justice, power, or institutional bias than as a matter of labour quality and social inclusion within an economic development agenda.

This limited commitment is reinforced by the province’s performance monitoring and evaluation framework. Because gender equality is absent from the governor’s stated core priorities, it is also absent from the *indikator kinerja utama* (IKU), or main performance indicators. This omission matters because the IKU captures the strategic outcomes against which elected leaders are judged. Gender-related concerns do appear in the *indikator kinerja daerah* (IKD), or regional performance indicators, but these indicators serve a different function. They are primarily used to monitor the implementation of decentralised government responsibilities rather than to signal the administration’s central political priorities. Analytically, this distinction is important: inclusion in the IKD may indicate administrative compliance, but exclusion from the IKU suggests that gender equality is not among the goals the governor considers politically defining.

The same pattern is reproduced in the 2026 *Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Daerah* (RKPD), indicating that the absence of gender priority is not confined to broad planning rhetoric but continues into annual programming. The RKPD is particularly important because it translates the RPJMD into implementable priorities, programmes, and budgets. Yet, the 2026 RKPD gives only limited attention to gender equality. The administration’s flagship initiatives remain concentrated on service delivery and economic growth. *Gratispol*, which comprises seven activities, focuses mainly on basic services such as free health care and education. *Jospol*, which comprises nine activities, is oriented toward economic expansion through measures such as investment incentives and downstream industrial development. Neither flagship programme

contains a gender-related component. This suggests that gender equality has not been embedded in the administration's most visible and politically salient policy instruments.

The few gender-related provisions that do appear in the RKPD are too limited and underdeveloped to suggest a substantive policy shift. One strategy under the seventh development goal—improving human resource productivity and capacity—refers to “increasing women’s competitiveness.” However, the document does not define what “competitiveness” means, how it relates to existing gender inequalities, or what policy pathway is expected to achieve it. At the programme level, only one of the 75 priority programmes is explicitly related to gender: “gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment.” This programme has two targets—raising the proportion of women in leadership and management, and increasing women’s labour force participation—but it constitutes only 1.3 per cent of all priority programmes. This limited programmatic presence suggests that gender equality is treated as a specialized policy niche rather than as a cross-cutting development concern.

Budgetary allocation further confirms the marginal status of gender within the province’s development agenda. The budget ceiling for the gender mainstreaming programme is only Rp1.07 billion out of a total provincial budget of Rp15.15 trillion for 2026, or approximately 0.05 per cent of total spending. Such a small allocation indicates that gender equality is not being supported with resources commensurate with its stated importance in formal policy language. Moreover, the programme is assigned solely to the Provincial Office for Women’s Empowerment, even though its two main targets fall within the functional remit of more influential institutions. Women’s representation in leadership is also a matter for the Provincial Secretariat, while women’s labour force participation is directly relevant to the Provincial Labor Office. The fact that these targets are not incorporated into the mandates or performance frameworks of those offices points to a deeper institutional problem: gender remains administratively compartmentalized rather than integrated across the machinery of government.

This pattern of marginalization also extends to other major areas of provincial policy. East Kalimantan provides various forms of support to national strategic programmes (*program strategis nasional* or PSN) located in the province, many of which are highly consequential in the context of capital relocation and economic restructuring. Yet none of these provincial support measures appears to incorporate gender equality considerations. Given the scale of these programmes and their likely social and economic impacts, this omission suggests that gender analysis has not been mainstreamed into the province’s broader development strategy.

The absence of commitment is also evident on the legislative side. Through the *pokok pikiran* (Pokir) mechanism, local parliament members can channel constituents’ aspirations into the provincial planning and budgeting process. Although this mechanism has historically been associated with patronage and pork-barrel politics, reforms have increasingly integrated Pokir into the formal development planning framework to improve accountability. In principle, this

mechanism could create space for gender-responsive proposals to emerge from political representation. In practice, however, none of the Pokir programmes identified in East Kalimantan addresses gender equality. This suggests that the weak prioritisation of gender is not limited to the executive branch but is shared more broadly across provincial political institutions.

Overall, the evidence indicates that the new administration has not demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing gender inequality. Gender-related provisions are present in planning documents, but they remain sparse, weakly prioritised, poorly integrated, and marginal in budgetary terms. More importantly, they appear to function primarily as normative or compliance-based inclusions rather than as components of a coherent strategy to address structural gender disparities. Much of the gender-related content resembles standard administrative obligations, particularly those derived from the annex to Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Government, rather than policy commitments rooted in the administration's own strategic agenda. On this basis, East Kalimantan's current policy approach appears directed more toward fulfilling formal requirements than toward advancing meaningful gender-transformative change.

### **6.3 Limitations of East Kalimantan Gender Equality Policies**

The analysis in previous sections indicates that East Kalimantan's gender policy framework remains fragmented, institutionally isolated, and weak in strategic orientation. Gender-related policies are concentrated largely within the Provincial Office for Population, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection, the only provincial office with an explicit mandate on gender equality. This concentration suggests that gender equality is still treated as a specialised issue rather than as a cross-cutting development concern. Moreover, the existing policies are oriented mainly toward practical and short-term programmes, with some functioning more as administrative compliance measures than as substantive efforts to address structural inequality. This limitation is especially evident in the absence of gender perspectives from sectoral offices such as agriculture, forestry, plantations, industry, trade, micro and small enterprises, and labour, even though these sectors are central to shaping women's economic participation. Under these conditions, East Kalimantan's broader strategy of economic transformation is unlikely to alter unequal gender relations in any meaningful way. The following section therefore examines the substantive limitations of the province's current gender policy framework in greater detail.

### 6.3.1 Limited Awareness of Gender Equality Issues within the Administration

The analysis in previous sections points to a clear decline in the policy salience of gender equality between East Kalimantan’s previous and current administrations. In the previous development plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Daerah* or RPD 2024–2026), social inclusion and gender equality were given relatively prominent attention. This was reflected in the first development mission, which explicitly prioritised the development of “virtuous and competitive human resources, especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities,” as well as in the explicit inclusion of women’s empowerment as a regional development objective. More detailed planning documents also contained a wider range of gender-related policies and programmes. Although this does not necessarily imply strong implementation, it does suggest that the previous administration recognised gender equality as an issue of strategic importance.

By contrast, the current administration has not demonstrated a similar level of recognition. Gender equality is absent from the governor’s core missions and flagship programmes, indicating that it is not viewed as part of the province’s central development agenda. While some gender-related programmes remain, they appear to function largely as residual or compliance-driven measures rather than as expressions of substantive political commitment. This weak positioning is difficult to justify given East Kalimantan’s continuing gender-related development challenges. As shown in Table 7, the province continues to perform poorly on a number of gender indicators, ranking below national averages and, in some cases, below many other provinces. The marginal place of gender equality in the current policy agenda therefore reflects not the absence of a problem, but the limited priority accorded to an issue that remains structurally significant.

Table 7. Various Gender-related Indicators of East Kalimantan, 2025

Indicators	Indonesia	East Kalimantan	National ranking (out of 34 provinces)
Global Gender Gap Index Ranking*	87 (out of 146)	-	-
Gender Disparity Index	0.447	0.441	8
Gender Development Index	91.85	87.13	32
Gender Empowerment Index	76.90	68.96	23
Women in Parliament	21.9	12.73	31

Source: Gender Statistic Data, Indonesian Statistic, 2025

What explains the weakened commitment of the current administration? One possible explanation lies in a broader international tendency to roll back gender equality and inclusion policies when they are no longer perceived to align with dominant political or economic interests. As noted by UNRISD and UN Women (2025) and Harper (2026), this trend has emerged in a number of settings, including the United States, where gender equality and inclusion agendas have increasingly been challenged or deprioritised. A similar dynamic appears to be visible in East Kalimantan, where the new administration does not seem to regard gender equality as a strategic component of the province's development agenda. This orientation was already evident during the pre-election period, when none of the candidates—including the eventual winners—gave meaningful attention to issues of gender equality or intersectionality in their campaign platforms (Mediakaltim, 2024).

This limited commitment is also reflected in the perceptions of government insiders. Several high-level bureaucratic informants pointed to weak awareness and low commitment to gender equality among provincial elites. One official from the Provincial Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection explained that, despite continuous efforts to support sectoral offices in implementing gender-responsive budgeting, progress remains constrained by weak leadership commitment and limited understanding among heads of provincial offices:

“... so we always provide various forms of assistance [to different provincial offices so they can implement gender-responsive budgeting], but commitment among the heads of provincial offices remains weak, and their understanding of the issue is also limited.”  
(Interview with a female government official, 16 September 2025)

This pattern is consistent with broader findings from the literature on extractive economies. Research shows that in societies dominated by extractive industries, gender bias tends to be embedded across a range of institutions, including workplaces, labour-market arrangements, and governance structures (Eftimie et al., 2009; Jayasinghe & Ezpeleta, 2020; Lahiri-Dutt et al., 2022). Eftimie et al. (2009, pp. 9–11), for example, show that the benefits of extractive activities—particularly employment and income opportunities—are disproportionately captured by men, while many of the social and environmental risks are shifted onto women, who are expected to absorb and manage these burdens within households and communities. The same literature also points to male dominance in decision-making processes, from the community level to higher levels of governance, thereby limiting women's influence over resource allocation and policy priorities (Eftimie et al., 2009, pp. 19–22).

This broader pattern resonates strongly with the East Kalimantan context. As discussed in the preceding chapters, gender bias is evident not only in mining, but also in agriculture and small and medium enterprises. This suggests that gender inequality in East Kalimantan is not confined to a single sector, but is embedded more broadly in the province's political economy. From this perspective, the current administration's weak commitment to gender equality is not simply a matter of individual preference or short-term political calculation; it also reflects

deeper structural conditions in which gender bias has long been normalised across economic and governance institutions.

### 6.3.2 Weak Enforcement by the National Government

What is striking about East Kalimantan's weak commitment to gender equality is that it seemingly stands in tension with the national policy agenda, which formally identifies gender equality as a development priority. In the 2025–2029 *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional* (RPJMN), gender equality is explicitly included among the national development missions and is further reflected in a priority programme focused on strengthening gender equality and protecting the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities. This raises an important question: if gender equality has been formally established as a national priority, why does it remain weakly reflected in provincial policy commitment?

In practice, however, the East Kalimantan case does not appear to be an exception. Rather, weak commitment at the subnational level seems to mirror a broader tendency at the national level. A growing body of scholarship points to this pattern (Angraini et al., 2025; Hidayatulloh & Primandari, 2025; Prajuli, 2026). Although gender-related programmes are included in national strategic planning documents, implementation appears to be uneven and often weak. Konde (2025), a media platform specialising in gender and minority issues, has compiled various indicators suggesting that the condition of gender equality under the current administration has stagnated and, in some respects, deteriorated. This interpretation is further supported by the analysis in Chapter 2, which shows that many national laws and policies remain gender-insensitive, while only a limited number can be classified as gender-sensitive, and very few as gender-responsive or gender-transformative.

If this is the broader national pattern, then the weak commitment of East Kalimantan's administration becomes more understandable, but also more concerning. This is especially so given that the current national leadership has been widely characterised as centralistic, and by some observers even authoritarian, in its approach to governance (Jeffrey & Warburton, 2024; Aqshadigrama, 2025; Fathana, 2025; Gammon, 2025; Muslim & Muhtadi, 2025). In such a governance model, the national government plays an active role not only in setting broad policy direction but also in steering the technical implementation of policy at the subnational level. In the area of gender equality, for instance, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued Regulation No. 67/2011 on general guidelines for gender mainstreaming in regional development. The Ministry also evaluates regional planning and implementation through instruments such as the *Laporan Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Daerah* (LPPD). Historically, the central government has relied on the Ministry of Home Affairs to ensure regional compliance with presidential priorities, including through monitoring, evaluation, and sanctions.

Seen from the very centralistic governance perspective, it is unlikely that regional governments could simply disregard gender equality obligations if the national government were strongly

committed to enforcing them. Previous experience under the Jokowi administration suggests as much. The administration, which has also been described by many scholars as centralistic (Warburton, 2016, 2018; Power, 2018; Hadiz, 2017), was able to compel regional governments to align with national priorities in areas such as extreme poverty reduction and stunting prevention (Merdikawati et al., 2025). In those cases, compliance was promoted through a combination of incentives and sanctions. The fact that under current administration the regional governments appear able to treat gender equality as a secondary issue suggests that, despite its formal inclusion in national planning documents, the national commitment to gender equality has not been backed by equally strong political and institutional enforcement. In that sense, East Kalimantan's weak commitment should be read not simply as a provincial anomaly, but as part of a wider pattern of limited policy seriousness toward gender equality.

### 6.3.3 The limitation of the policy strategy

Another reason East Kalimantan's existing gender equality policies are unlikely to make the province's economic transformation more gender-responsive—let alone gender-transformative—lies in the limitations of the strategy itself. As shown in the previous section, the province's main policy approach is framed as gender mainstreaming. Yet, a closer reading of the policy documents suggests that the substance of this approach falls short of what gender mainstreaming actually requires. Rather than integrating gender perspectives across the full architecture of development policy, the current approach relies heavily on a narrow set of women-targeted programmes. This raises questions about whether “gender mainstreaming” is being used as a substantive strategy or merely as a formal policy label.

As commonly defined, gender mainstreaming entails much more than the creation of programmes for women. Drawing on the United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997, p. 28), Moser (2005) describes gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action—including legislation, policies, and programmes—across all sectors and at all levels, with the aim of ensuring that both benefit equally and that inequality is not reproduced. Although Moser acknowledges variation in how gender mainstreaming is operationalised, one of the most influential formulations is DFID's “two-track” strategy: first, integrating women's and men's concerns into all policies and programmes; and second, undertaking targeted interventions to empower women. The East Kalimantan case appears heavily skewed toward the second track, while the first remains weakly institutionalised.

This imbalance is evident in the character of the province's programmes. The main interventions identified in policy documents—and confirmed through interviews—consist largely of targeted efforts to empower or protect women, such as increasing women's representation in leadership and management, raising women's labour force participation, and expanding women's participation in development processes. In practice, these programmes are

mostly delivered through capacity-building activities, facilitation, and administrative support, and are implemented primarily by the Provincial Office for Women's Empowerment with only a very small budget allocation. While such interventions may have value, they are not equivalent to mainstreaming gender across the provincial development agenda. On their own, they are unlikely to alter the institutional and sectoral dynamics through which economic transformation reproduces inequality.

The institutional location of responsibility further exposes the weakness of the strategy. It is difficult to expect meaningful progress in gender equality when responsibility for achieving it rests almost entirely with a single provincial office among more than thirty. Sectorally relevant offices—such as those responsible for labour, small and medium enterprises, industry, agriculture, and trade—show little evidence of specific gender-related commitments, despite their central role in shaping women's access to employment, productive assets, and economic opportunity. This institutional fragmentation is particularly problematic because the province's own indicators of gender equality, such as the Gender Empowerment Index and Gender Development Index, depend on outcomes across multiple sectors, including politics, employment, decision-making, education, and health. Achieving improvement in such indicators necessarily requires coordinated action across a range of government institutions. The absence of such coordination suggests that gender equality remains administratively siloed rather than mainstreamed.

This institutional silo is symptomatic of a deeper failure in the first track of gender mainstreaming: the integration of gender concerns into general policy processes. Effective mainstreaming requires, at minimum, the availability of gender-disaggregated data, the use of gender impact assessment, and the application of gender-responsive budgeting (Daly, 2005). Yet, interviews with officials from the Provincial Development Planning Agency (*Bappeda*) and the Provincial Office for Women's Empowerment indicate that these foundations remain weak. Sex-disaggregated data are used primarily at the macro level—especially demographic data—while sector-specific data in areas such as education, health, labour, and enterprise remain underutilised in planning. This significantly limits the government's ability to identify differentiated impacts and integrate women's and men's concerns into sectoral programmes. Gender impact assessment appears to be rarely conducted, further weakening the analytical basis for mainstreaming. Although informants reported substantial progress in gender-responsive budgeting—from only 1 per cent of the provincial budget in 2021 to 30.49 per cent in 2025—this figure should be interpreted cautiously. The reported increase may reflect the use of loose tagging methods and database limitations that overstate the extent to which the budget is genuinely gender-responsive. Taken together, these constraints suggest that the province's gender mainstreaming strategy is weak in both design and implementation. Under such conditions, it is difficult to imagine how existing gender policies could meaningfully reshape the course of East Kalimantan's economic transformation.

## VII. Recommendations

The analysis presented in this report shows that the integration of gender equality measures across sectors in East Kalimantan remains limited and uneven. Addressing this gap requires a more deliberate set of policy interventions, particularly from the provincial government, to strengthen institutional commitment, cross-sectoral coordination, and implementation capacity. The recommendations outlined below are intended to support the development of a more coherent and effective gender equality policy framework in the province. While some of these recommendations may be implemented progressively in accordance with policy priorities and institutional capacity, strengthening gender mainstreaming across local governance should be regarded as a foundational priority for advancing gender-responsive regional development.

### **1. Strengthen the implementation of gender mainstreaming across local governance**

The government should strengthen the implementation of gender mainstreaming across local governance structures by moving beyond a narrow compliance-based approach toward substantive institutional integration. At present, gender mainstreaming appears to function more as an administrative obligation than as an organising principle of policy design. This limits its capacity to shape development outcomes in any meaningful way. To address this gap, gender considerations need to be embedded systematically in planning, budgeting, programme formulation, implementation, and evaluation across all provincial offices, rather than being confined to the women's empowerment portfolio. Such integration is particularly important because gender inequality in East Kalimantan is not a sector-specific issue, but one that cuts across labour, enterprise development, education, health, infrastructure, and governance. Effective gender mainstreaming would therefore require clear mandates, stronger accountability mechanisms, improved inter-agency coordination, and regular monitoring of how sectoral policies affect women and men differently. Without such institutionalisation, gender mainstreaming is unlikely to influence the wider trajectory of economic transformation.

### **2. Develop a Gender-Responsive Economic Transformation Roadmap**

The Regional Development Planning Agency (*Bappeda*) should formulate a Gender-Responsive Economic Transformation Roadmap as a strategic instrument for translating broad policy ambition into coordinated implementation. One of the central weaknesses identified in the analysis is the gap between the province's general commitment to economic transformation and the absence of a clear operational framework for ensuring that this transformation is inclusive. A roadmap would help address this problem by specifying how sectoral priorities—such as downstreaming, MSME development, and labour market expansion—can be designed and implemented in ways that do not reproduce existing gender inequalities. It should identify priority sectors, target groups, implementation stages, institutional roles, measurable outcomes,

and coordination mechanisms across provincial offices. Equally important, it should clarify the policy logic linking economic transformation to gender equality outcomes, so that gender inclusion is treated not as an add-on, but as a core dimension of development strategy. By establishing such a framework, the roadmap would help reduce fragmentation, strengthen institutional coherence, and improve the accountability of sectoral agencies in delivering inclusive transformation.

### **3. Introduce gender-responsive affirmative action in priority economic sectors**

The government should consider introducing a gender-responsive affirmative action policy to increase women's representation in priority economic sectors. This recommendation is justified by the fact that labour market exclusion is not simply the result of individual deficits in skills or motivation, but is also shaped by structural barriers in recruitment, job allocation, workplace norms, and employer expectations. In sectors linked to economic transformation—particularly downstream industries and higher-value employment segments—women are often underrepresented not because they lack potential, but because institutional and cultural biases continue to favour male workers. A well-designed affirmative action framework could help correct these entrenched imbalances by setting indicative targets or quotas for women's employment in strategically important occupations. However, such a policy should not be reduced to numerical compliance alone. It must be accompanied by complementary measures to strengthen the supply side, including targeted education, skills training, certification, mentoring, and career guidance. This means that responsibility must be shared: employers need to reform recruitment and promotion practices, while government must invest in expanding women's access to the qualifications and support systems needed to enter and remain in these sectors. In this sense, affirmative action should be understood not as preferential treatment, but as a corrective mechanism for historically unequal access.

### **4. Adopt a differentiated policy response to labour-market barriers**

Given the multiple and overlapping constraints shaping women's participation in the labour market, the government should adopt a differentiated rather than uniform policy response. The analysis suggests that barriers to women's employment operate at several levels simultaneously: some relate to skills and credentials, others to employer bias, workplace culture, mobility constraints, care responsibilities, or limited access to information and professional networks. A one-size-fits-all intervention is therefore unlikely to be effective. Instead, policy responses should be tailored to the specific constraints operating in particular sectors, occupations, and local contexts. For example, where exclusion is driven by limited qualifications, targeted vocational training and certification may be most relevant. Where exclusion stems from stereotypes about women's capabilities, interventions should focus on employer engagement, work-readiness assessment, and evidence-based strategies that demonstrate women's competence and productivity. This differentiated approach is important not only for improving effectiveness, but also for ensuring that policy interventions address the actual mechanisms

through which exclusion is reproduced. More precise targeting would also help public resources to be used more efficiently and reduce the tendency to rely on generic empowerment programmes that are only weakly connected to labour market demand.

### **5. Promote more inclusive employment arrangements**

The government and the private sector should undertake a comprehensive review of existing employment arrangements from a gender and intersectional perspective and use the findings to develop more inclusive workplace practices. This recommendation reflects the fact that exclusion often persists not only at the point of recruitment, but also through the design of work itself. Employment arrangements may contain implicit assumptions about the ideal worker—typically one who is fully mobile, free of care responsibilities, and able to conform to masculine workplace norms—which can disadvantage women and other marginalised groups. In East Kalimantan, this problem appears especially relevant in sectors characterised by project-based work, long stays on site, rigid working hours, and limited workplace support infrastructure. A gender and intersectional review would help identify how such arrangements systematically constrain participation. Based on this assessment, employers should be encouraged or required to adopt more inclusive practices, including flexible work arrangements, adequate occupational safety measures, protections against harassment, and facilities that support workers with care responsibilities. The broader significance of this recommendation is that it shifts the focus from “fixing women” to changing workplace structures that have historically been designed around exclusionary norms.

### **6. Strengthen support for women entrepreneurs through an integrated approach**

The government should strengthen support for women entrepreneurs, particularly in MSMEs, through a more integrated and growth-oriented policy approach. The analysis suggests that women’s entrepreneurship in East Kalimantan remains constrained not only by limited capital, but also by fragmented support systems, weak business development services, restricted market access, and gendered household dynamics that affect the sustainability of women’s enterprises. Existing interventions often focus on isolated components—such as training or credit—without addressing the wider chain of constraints that shape business performance over time. A more effective approach would treat women’s entrepreneurship as an ecosystem issue rather than as a problem of individual capacity alone. This means designing programmes that combine entrepreneurial mindset development, technical and managerial training, access to finance, support for formalisation, market linkage facilitation, and measures to improve the bankability of women-owned enterprises. It also requires continuity. Sporadic or project-based interventions are unlikely to produce meaningful upgrading if women entrepreneurs remain disconnected from long-term institutional support. An end-to-end framework would therefore not only reduce programme fragmentation, but also improve the likelihood that women-owned businesses can move beyond subsistence activities into more productive and sustainable forms of enterprise.

## **7. Combine normative change with supportive infrastructure**

Promoting women's economic participation should be approached not only as a technical policy issue, but also as a normative and structural one. Public awareness campaigns are important because women's exclusion from economic opportunities is often sustained by deeply embedded gender norms that define productive work as male and care work as female. Such norms shape household decision-making, employer preferences, and even women's own sense of what is socially acceptable or achievable. Campaigns that emphasise the economic and social value of women's participation can therefore play an important role in shifting attitudes and legitimising a more equitable division of roles within households and communities. However, normative change alone is insufficient if material conditions continue to make participation difficult. For this reason, awareness-raising efforts must be complemented by supportive infrastructure, including quality childcare services, lactation rooms, and child-friendly sanitation facilities in workplaces and public spaces. These investments are analytically important because they recognise that women's labour market participation is constrained not only by attitudes, but also by the unequal distribution of unpaid care work and the absence of enabling public services. Combining normative change with practical infrastructure is therefore essential for creating the conditions under which women's economic participation can be both socially accepted and materially feasible.

## VIII. Conclusion

East Kalimantan's economy has historically been shaped by its abundance of natural resources. As a result, the province has developed a strong dependence on extractive industries, particularly coal, oil and gas, and, more recently, palm oil. As global attention to climate change has intensified, East Kalimantan faces a growing need to transition beyond extractive, fossil-fuel-based growth toward a more sustainable development path supported by downstream industries and a more diversified economy.

This transition is particularly important from a gender perspective, given the marginal position of women in the province's existing economic structure. The province also continues to face challenges in relation to gender equality indicators relative to many other provinces in Indonesia. In the mining and palm oil sectors, women have more limited access to quality employment, and when they are employed, they are often concentrated in lower-level positions with limited benefits, protection, and job security. Women are also disadvantaged by work arrangements that require residence at project sites for extended periods. Women entrepreneurs likewise face persistent constraints, including limited access to training, formal credit, and markets, as well as domestic power relations that may restrict their sustained participation.

Economic diversification and downstreaming nevertheless offer important opportunities to improve women's integration into the labour market. MSME activities have long been an important source of employment for women, and making this sector more gender-responsive could significantly improve women's economic participation. Downstream industries may offer similar potential, as they are generally more labour-intensive, require a broader range of skills, and are often less physically demanding, thereby creating greater scope for women's participation. However, the emerging policy direction of the new administration, as reflected in the 2025–2029 RPJMD and 2026 programming framework, suggests only limited cross-sectoral commitment to gender equality, although the transitional arrangements of 2025 appear to have been relatively more supportive of gender equality. Gender equality programmes have been assigned primarily to the office responsible for women's empowerment. Other provincial offices that could provide strategic support for women's participation in MSMEs and downstream industries—such as the labour office, the office for micro and small enterprises, the industry and trade office, and the tourism office—have not integrated gender considerations into their strategic plans. Given the potential of these sectors to support a more equitable economic transformation, the limited integration of gender-responsive policies within them may constrain the inclusiveness of the province's transformation agenda.

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