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# REDESIGNING THE TRADE SYSTEM AND INTEGRATED LOGISTICS: TRADE POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE INTER-REGIONAL DEFICITS IN ACEH PROVINCE

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***ABSTRACT***

*Aceh Province faces an economic paradox characterized by a high export surplus of raw commodities, yet simultaneously suffers from a chronic domestic trade deficit due to its reliance on goods supplied from outside the region. This study aims to formulate policy interventions to address logistical inefficiencies and trade distortions that undermine the competitiveness of local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and contribute to a high-cost economy. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, primary and secondary data were analyzed using the Fishbone method, the IFE-EFE matrix, the TOWS matrix, and William Dunn's policy evaluation framework. The diagnostic results indicate that Aceh's business ecosystem falls into Quadrant III, which requires a turnaround strategy. Of the three policy alternatives evaluated the development of a physical logistics consolidation center, institutional intervention by regionally-owned enterprises (BUMD), and affirmative regulations the analysis demonstrates that regulatory intervention is the most efficient instrument with the greatest structural impact. Therefore, this study recommends the issuance of a Governor's Regulation on Domestic Trade that mandates the procurement of at least 30% of local SME products within modern retail networks. This policy is a concrete step toward curbing the oligopolistic dominance of external distributors, providing market certainty for grassroots producers, preventing capital flight, and realizing equitable regional economic sovereignty.*

***Keywords:*** *Trade System, Trade Deficit, Integrated Logistics, High-Cost Economy, Affirmative Policy, Aceh SMEs.*

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Problem

Current macroeconomic trade dynamics at both the global and national levels position logistics resilience as a vital instrument in maintaining a region's socioeconomic stability. In the post-crisis economic landscape, *supply chain disruptions* have proven to leave massive structural vulnerabilities, particularly for regions with high external consumption dependency ratios. According to the technical guidelines on trade and commerce issued by the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas (2025), the integration of the domestic trade and commerce system is key for local governments to mitigate external economic shocks. Without a robust upstream-to-downstream distribution and logistics system, a region will be highly vulnerable to price disparities that lead to systemic economic exploitation. Reliance on supplies from outside the region that is not balanced by protection of the internal market will ultimately significantly erode the economic resilience of communities at the grassroots level.

Aceh Province is, in fact, blessed with an abundance of natural resources, supported by its geostrategic position at the western tip of the Indonesian archipelago. According to

the Regional Gross Domestic Product (GRDP) Report released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Aceh Province (2026), macroeconomic growth trends do show positive figures, largely driven by the primary sector. However, the real value added from this growth has not yet been optimally distributed. A macroeconomic study by Bank Indonesia (2025) confirms that Aceh's economic cycle is currently still absolutely dominated by household consumption expenditure, rather than being driven by the productive sector of industrial downstreaming. This empirical reality reveals a sharp, paradoxical anomaly: the province's massive natural resource wealth has failed to translate into regional economic self-reliance. The potential of these natural resources flows out of the region in raw form without generating *a multiplier effect* for job creation and the well-being of the local community.

Behind the statistical pride in the export surplus of raw commodities to international markets, Aceh Province is actually facing the irony of a stark inter-regional trade deficit. According to data outlined in the Final Draft of the Strategic Plan (Renstra) of the Aceh Department of Industry and Trade for 2025–2029, the level of dependence on neighboring provinces primarily North Sumatra for the supply of daily necessities remains at an extremely alarming level. Aceh's current position has been reduced to that of a mere passive consumer market for manufactured goods from outside the region. This highly lopsided flow of goods indicates a fundamental weakness in the local trade architecture. If this structural condition is allowed to persist without radical policy intervention, this phenomenon will exacerbate the permanent *outflow of capital* from Aceh's economy to other provinces.

Empirically, this weakness in the trade system's design directly triggers a surge in logistics costs, leading to high regional inflation and an erosion of the public's real purchasing power. According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by the Aceh Central Statistics Agency (BPS Aceh) in 2025, price fluctuations for essential food commodities in Aceh are more often driven by supply chain disruptions originating outside the region than by local crop failures. Information asymmetry in the market and excessively long distribution chains force consumers in Aceh to pay higher prices for goods than they should. The economic burden resulting from this *"high-cost economy"* is ultimately always borne by the lower-middle class and below. The local government's inability to curb this logistics-driven inflation is not merely a matter of fluctuating statistical figures; rather, it has evolved into a form of social injustice that urgently requires intervention.

The vulnerability of people's purchasing power due to this logistics-driven inflation has a very strong causal correlation with the slow progress of poverty alleviation efforts in Aceh. According to the Aceh BPS Poverty Profile (2025), the poverty rate and inequality figures are highly sensitive to any fluctuations in the prices of basic necessities. Food price shocks account for the largest proportion of factors driving vulnerable communities below the extreme poverty line. Upstream, this anomaly also places significant pressure on farmers and local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Aceh, who are unable to benefit from fair price incentives despite soaring consumer prices. Based on fluctuations in the Farmer's Price Index (NTP) from the Aceh Central Statistics Agency (BPS Aceh) (2025), the real welfare of primary producers appears stagnant and is even eroded by rising production costs, while the profit margins on major commodities are absorbed by networks of middlemen and distributors operating across provincial borders.

The root cause of the strong dominance of out-of-region product supplies is closely linked to the inefficiencies of strategic distribution infrastructure and the lack of available logistics facilities in Aceh. The Aceh Industry and Trade Agency's Performance Report (2024) shows that the operation of regional distribution centers has not yet been able to fully integrate upstream and downstream nodes. The absence of a cargo consolidation system *(collecting center)* means that logistics trucks carrying goods into Aceh are often forced to return to North Sumatra empty *(empty backhaul)*. This situation automatically doubles the transportation costs borne by consumers in Aceh. On the other hand, the abundant potential of flagship agricultural and handicraft commodities in villages as documented in the Aceh BPS's Village Potential Statistics (2025) is, ironically, isolated from market access due to the absence of a logistics ecosystem connecting villages as production centers with cities as consumption hubs.

To ensure the formulation of comprehensive policies, this study employs a qualitative methodological design using a *case study* approach. This design was chosen because the characteristics of trade issues in Aceh are deeply rooted in the spatial, cultural, and structural contexts of local bureaucracy. To ensure empirical validity, data collection was conducted through source triangulation, combining macroeconomic secondary data with primary data. Primary data was collected through qualitative survey techniques based on open-ended structured questionnaires and *Focus Group Discussions* (FGDs) involving 50 respondents. Respondents were selected using *purposive sampling* to represent all actors in the supply chain, including representatives of farmers' groups, government-supported processed SME operators, local distributors, and land transportation service providers. Through the involvement of these 50 practitioner respondents, the phenomena of price asymmetry and losses resulting from double logistics costs could be directly validated based on the empirical experiences of market participants. All of this data was then analyzed using the SWOT and TOWS matrices.

Based on the accumulation of empirical gaps, the paralysis of logistics infrastructure, and market exploitation as described above, the main problem statement *(problem statement)* in this policy study is the occurrence of a chronic inter-regional trade deficit in Aceh Province due to the dysfunction of the logistics ecosystem integration and the absence of regulations protecting the domestic market, which systematically undermine the competitiveness of local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and trigger inflationary vulnerabilities resulting from *a high-cost economy*. This problem statement serves as the foundation for the overall structural diagnosis and the formulation of policy alternatives in the following chapters.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Framework and Gaps in Trade Policy

Analyzing the pathology of inter-regional trade deficits and logistical inefficiencies in Aceh Province cannot be done without a robust analytical framework. This study is based on the conceptual framework *of Integrated Supply Chain Management*. Within this paradigm, the efficiency of a regional trade system heavily depends on the synchronization of the physical flow of commodities, market information flows, and capital flows from the upstream production stage to the end consumer. In the reality of trade in Aceh, the

disruption of goods flows between rural SME production centers and urban market hubs has crystallized a high-cost economic climate. In parallel, this analysis is also supported by *a Value Chain Analysis* approach, which dissects every internal activity from upstream to downstream to identify where economic value is lost *(value loss)*. Referring to the stagnation of the Farmers' Price Index, it is evident that the greatest creation of added value is actually lost in secondary logistics activities namely, transportation waste resulting from the absence of return cargo and accumulates as profit margins for interprovincial trade intermediaries.

In reviewing existing regulations and policies, the government has, in fact, established a legal framework for logistics through Law No. 7 of 2014 on Trade, which requires local governments to ensure the stable availability of staple goods. At the system management level, Presidential Regulation No. 26 of 2012 on the National Logistics System Blueprint (Sislognas) has mandated the establishment of integrated regional logistics hubs. However, a critical analysis of derivative regulations at the Aceh provincial level reveals a very significant *policy gap*. Trade policies implemented to date have remained purely macro-facilitative in nature, focusing primarily on the provision of basic physical infrastructure such as the revitalization of market buildings while failing to address the governance of market behavior. To date, Aceh Province has not established any affirmative legal instruments whether in the form of a Governor's Regulation or a Qanun that specifically mandate the procurement of local products *(local content requirements)* within modern retail networks. This absence of protective regulations creates a loophole that legitimizes the unimpeded dominance of distributors from North Sumatra, thereby displacing local SMEs from their own market.

**Supply Chain Vulnerabilities and Hydrometeorological Disaster Risks**

This dysfunction in the trade system which stems from structural dependence on supplies from neighboring provinces poses a new existential threat when analyzed through the lens of regional resilience. Aceh's logistics supply chain is highly sensitive to *disaster* risk variables. Topographically, Aceh is a region highly prone to hydrometeorological disasters, particularly landslides and flash floods that frequently cut off key logistics routes across the eastern, central, and western regions. Disaster data indicate that logistics distribution hubs, such as the Aceh Tamiang and Southeast Aceh areas, are classified as highly vulnerable.

When extreme weather events occur that cut off the national highway connecting Aceh to North Sumatra, the supply chain for the basic necessities of the Acehnese people will immediately grind to a halt *(supply chain disruption)*. This absolute dependence on supplies from outside the region serves as empirical evidence that Aceh lacks logistical resilience. A disruption of land routes for just a few days is capable of triggering massive shortages of goods, a sudden spike in inflation, and market hysteria in the form of *panic buying*. These conditions confirm that the absence of local distribution centers to serve as *buffer stocks* and the weak self-sufficiency of local SME production are not merely issues of fiscal deficits, but rather direct threats to the social resilience of the community when facing natural disasters.

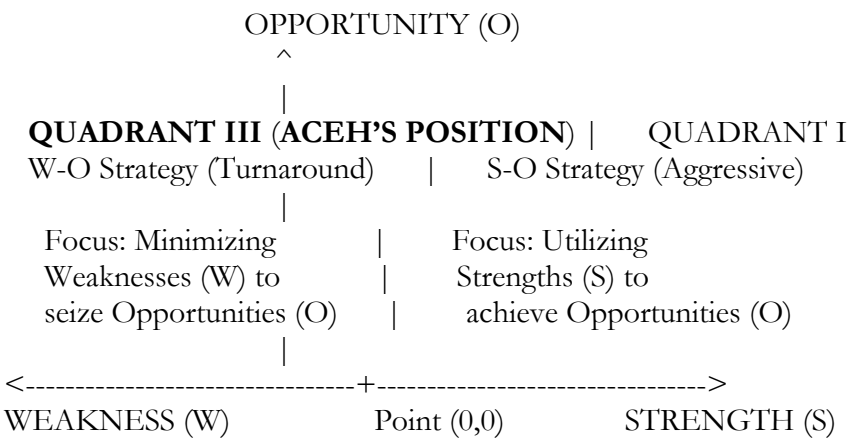
### 2.3. SWOT Matrix Analysis and TOWS Strategy Breakdown

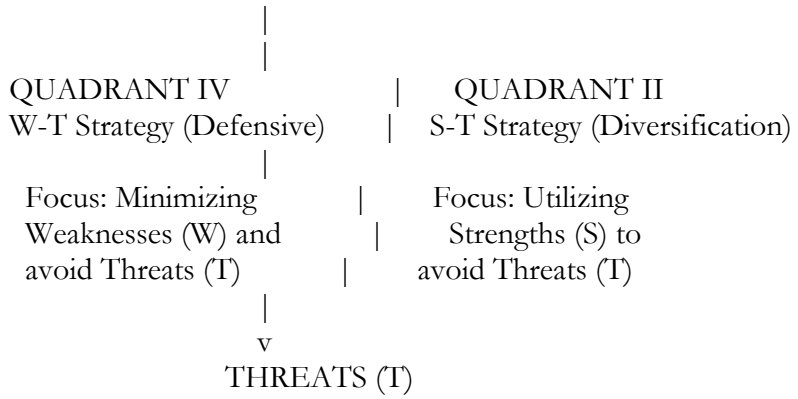
To break down the complexity of these issues into measurable intervention steps, this study maps the state of commerce in Aceh using a comprehensive SWOT analysis framework. In the analysis of the internal environment, Aceh Province possesses *Strengths* rooted in the abundant availability of raw materials for primary commodities at the village level, the existence of basic commercial infrastructure built by the government, and the active role of the Regional Inflation Control Team (TPID) in monitoring price fluctuations. However, these strengths are undermined by deeply entrenched structural *Weaknesses*, namely the absence of an integrated cargo consolidation center which leads to waste due to empty return trips an asymmetrical and excessively long distribution chain, low standards for packaging local SME products, and persistent sectoral fragmentation among technical agencies.

In an analysis of the external environment, Aceh Province actually has extensive *opportunities*, characterized by high local domestic demand *(captive demand)*, national policies that encourage the substitution of domestic products, and the construction of the Trans-Sumatra Toll Road network. Unfortunately, these opportunities are overshadowed by real *threats* in the form of the capital superiority of interprovincial distributor oligopolies, the high risk of supply disruptions due to hydrometeorological disasters along the border, and the threat of permanent capital flight resulting from a trade deficit. Based on a quantitative and qualitative weighting of the interplay between internal factors which are predominantly weaknesses and external factors that still present strong opportunities, the strategic position of Aceh Province's trade architecture precisely falls within **Quadrant III**.

Mathematically and conceptually, this difference in coordinates results in a negative X-value (W > S) and a positive Y-value (O > T). These strategic coordinates precisely place Aceh Province's trade and logistics architecture in **Quadrant III (W-O Strategic Focus / *Turnaround*)**.

**Figure 2.1. Visualization of the Strategic Quadrant Diagram for the Trade and Logistics Architecture of Trade and Logistics Architecture of Aceh Province**






This position in Quadrant III provides a technocratic justification that Aceh's business strategy can no longer be carried out using an expansive-aggressive approach (business as usual), but must absolutely be redirected through the implementation of a *Turnaround* strategy (Focus on W-O). Aceh must prioritize addressing its internal weaknesses in order to seize the market opportunities that lie ahead.

To operationalize this quadrant position, the formulation of operational strategies is derived using TOWS matrix analysis. The primary focus is on **the W-O Strategy (Minimizing Weaknesses to Seize Opportunities)**. The first strategy in this quadrant is the construction and operation of an Integrated Cargo Consolidation Center. The absence of this facility is the root cause of double logistics costs; with a consolidation center in place, logistics trucks from outside the region would be required to carry return loads consisting of local SME commodities, thereby drastically reducing transportation costs. The second, equally crucial W-O strategy is the issuance of local regulations such as a Governor's Regulation mandating the inclusion of local SME products in modern retail markets. This affirmative measure is designed to address the competitive weaknesses of local products by creating legal protections for the domestic market share, enabling Aceh's SMEs to become the dominant players in their own region and gradually reduce the dominance of imported products from neighboring provinces. In addition, the formulation of an S-T *(Strengths-Threats)* Strategy has also been prepared as a defensive measure, namely by optimizing local food commodities as *buffer stocks* in border warehouses to mitigate the risk of shortages resulting from the threat of disrupted logistics routes during natural disasters.

## III. FORMULATION AND SELECTION OF POLICY ALTERNATIVES

To implement the *turnaround* strategy recommended in the previous quadrant matrix analysis, this study proposes three alternative policy designs that are complementary but have different intervention focuses. The first alternative focuses on redesigning physical infrastructure through the construction and operation of an integrated cargo consolidation center or *"collecting center*." This intervention relies on improving logistics infrastructure by requiring all freight fleets from outside the region to load and unload at border hubs, thereby enabling trucks to carry return loads of local products to reduce double transportation costs.

The second alternative emphasizes the redesign of affirmative regulations through the issuance of a Governor's Regulation on trade practices and the obligation to procure

local small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) products. This policy serves as a binding regulatory instrument that compels modern retail networks, supermarkets, and local government procurement agencies to allocate a minimum of thirty percent of *display* space to standardized local products. Meanwhile, the third alternative adopts an institutional redesign approach through the intervention of regionally-owned food enterprises (BUMD) as standby buyers or *off-takers,* as well as managers *of* logistical *buffer stocks*. This third policy is designed to directly purchase harvests at the upstream level at fair prices to mitigate the risk of supply disruptions caused by hydrometeorological disasters.

To determine which intervention is the most rational for policymakers to implement, the three options were evaluated comparatively and quantitatively using William Dunn's (2018) public policy analysis method. This assessment cross-referenced the objective conditions of Aceh's trade system with six main criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. Under the effectiveness criterion which measures the alternatives' capacity to halt the growth of the domestic trade deficit the affirmative regulatory alternative (the second alternative) ranked highest by a very wide margin. This regulation possesses immediate legal enforceability to directly reshape market structures, creating domestic market certainty that halts monopolistic penetration from outside the region. This is considered far more effective than the first alternative whose implementation remains heavily dependent on the compliance of private interprovincial transportation companies or the third alternative, whose intervention is limited to specific food commodities and is prone to failing to address downstream manufactured goods.

The advantages of the affirmative regulatory alternative become increasingly indisputable when tested against efficiency criteria, which measure the ratio of policy benefits to the utilization of local budget resources. Amid the fiscal constraints of the Aceh Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBA) which is currently focused on post-crisis recovery trade regulation policies place virtually no burden on the local treasury. This option is purely an exercise of the government's administrative authority, prioritizing oversight mechanisms. This stands in stark contrast to the shortcomings of the first alternative, which requires trillions of rupiah in physical investment for the construction of inland port facilities, as well as the fatal flaw in the third alternative, which demands massive injections of local government capital (PMD). Empirical evidence shows that injecting local capital into BUMD corporations without prior internal management reform carries a high risk of triggering budget leaks and bureaucratic inefficiency; consequently, the third alternative received the lowest score in terms of efficiency.

The assessment continued with the criteria of adequacy and equity, where affirmative regulatory instruments have proven capable of distributing welfare benefits holistically. Creating market certainty in modern retail not only protects local small-scale businesses from bankruptcy but also ensures that the capital flow from consumer spending remains within Aceh's economic ecosystem. This directly creates *a multiplier effect* for job creation and strengthens the bargaining position of primary producer farmers in rural areas, who had previously always been the most disadvantaged party in the commercial value chain.

When tested against criteria of responsiveness and appropriateness, the issuance of the Governor's Regulation is viewed as a crucial emergency measure that is highly relevant to contemporary dynamics. As the acceleration of national infrastructure connectivity projects such as the Trans-Sumatra Toll Road becomes increasingly massive, Aceh faces a

real threat of becoming merely a target market for products from giant industries in the western regions. In this context, the existence *of* affirmative legal safeguards serves as the most logical and rapidly implementable *(quick wins)* protection for the regional economy by executive authorities, without having to wait for the construction of physical logistics infrastructure a process that takes years. A comprehensive assessment of all of William Dunn's criteria ultimately provides absolute technocratic legitimacy that the second alternative affirmative regulations mandating the procurement of local products is the best, fairest, and most viable policy option to recommend.

## IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

As a manifestation of the results of the policy rationality evaluation, this study formally recommends to the Governor of Aceh Province initiated by the Head of the Industry and Trade Office to immediately issue a Governor's Regulation on Domestic Trade and Market Protection through Mandatory Procurement of Local Small and Medium-Sized Industrial Products. To ensure this regulation does not become merely a passive legal document, the execution of this policy must be guided by *an* operational *roadmap* that engages all stakeholders over the next five years. Restructuring the trade architecture to dismantle oligopolistic market dominance requires cross-sectoral coordination, broken down into five phases of implementation that are gradual, measurable, and sustainable.

In the first year of implementation, bureaucratic efforts will be fully focused on the legalization and legal harmonization phase. The Industry and Trade Office will take the lead, collaborating closely with the Legal Bureau of the Aceh Regional Secretariat, the Aceh People's Representative Council, and a team of independent experts from universities. The concrete objectives of this phase include drafting a robust academic paper, conducting public consultations involving retail business associations, and enacting the Governor's Regulation into the regional gazette. The success indicator for this pioneering phase is the availability of legal instruments that explicitly require modern retail networks, supermarkets, and government procurement units to purchase local products without violating overarching national trade principles.

Entering the second year, policy interventions are directed toward the capacity-building phase through quality standardization and the implementation of limited pilot programs. Recognizing that local products are often rejected due to subpar packaging quality, the local government acts as an incubation facilitator. In collaboration with the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM), the Ulama Consultative Council (MPU) for halal certification, and the Cooperative Agency, the government facilitates free curation and certification of market eligibility for flagship products from every village and regency. Products that successfully meet these curation standards are then pilot-tested for release through a number of pilot retail networks in the provincial capital. This phase aims to gauge consumer market acceptance while giving local producers time to adapt to modern retail standards.

The third year marked the start of the *law enforcement* phase and a massive scaling-up of the policy. During this phase, local governments began fully enforcing the requirement to allocate thirty percent of display space to local products in all modern retail outlets both

national and local operating within Aceh. This policy is accompanied by a requirement for all Aceh Government Agencies (SKPA) to use local food products and handicrafts for all meeting catering and operational procurement. To ensure compliance, the Civil Service Police Unit, together with the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Service Agency, conducts periodic surprise inspections. The success indicator for this phase is achieving a retail compliance rate above eighty-five percent, which is directly linked to the sanction of revoking business licenses for business entities that intentionally boycott or disregard this procurement obligation.

In the fourth year, this stable affirmative policy began to be integrated with reforms to the upstream logistics system and supply chain management. The primary focus shifted to cutting out the middlemen who had long exploited primary producer farmers. The Department of Industry and Trade, together with the Aceh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), facilitated the signing of direct, sustainable cooperation agreements *(Memorandums of Understanding)* between farmer groups or small-scale industrial cooperatives and modern retail management. This guaranteed increase in domestic transaction volume is then synchronized with the utilization of logistics consolidation hubs and cross-subsidies for pioneer transportation services. This upstream-downstream integration will effectively eliminate the double burden of transportation costs, curb food inflation, and ensure that prices paid by consumers reflect a fair distribution of margins among business operators in Aceh.

At its peak in the fifth year, the local government conducts a comprehensive evaluation of macroeconomic impacts, marked by a transition toward a market-oriented approach. Once the local SME ecosystem has successfully secured production stability and gained a competitive edge in the domestic market, the government will encourage the aggregation of these products to upgrade them for export market penetration. Logistics support will be focused on accelerating the shipment of processed goods through the Port of Belawan and the export port in Lhokseumawe. The comprehensive indicators of this roadmap include a measurable reduction in the inter-regional trade deficit, the maintenance of stable purchasing power reflected in reasonable inflation rates and a rapid improvement in the real well-being of rural communities. This systematic roadmap demonstrates that affirmative regulations do not merely serve as a protective shield, but rather as an essential instrument that fosters the economic independence of local market players until they are ready to compete on the global stage.

## CONCLUSION

The existence of a macroeconomic paradox characterized by high food inflation and vulnerable purchasing power amid an abundance of primary commodity surpluses in Aceh Province is, in essence, a manifestation of the failure of the institutional design of the trade system. Empirical evidence shows that the lack of infrastructure for consolidating return cargo logistics and the tolerance of interprovincial distributors' dominance of the retail market have reduced Aceh's position to *that of a* mere *captive market*. This chronic supply dependency systematically not only erodes farmers' real terms of trade and impoverishes local industry players but also creates a critically fatal vulnerability to the threat of logistical paralysis whenever hydrometeorological disasters sever the lifeline at the border.

The strategic position of Aceh's trade architecture trapped in the third quadrant of the internal-external cross-matrix analysis provides a technocratic justification that the local government can no longer maintain the outdated *laissez-faire* (free-market) economic development policy. *A* radical strategic *turnaround* is absolutely necessary, focusing the deployment of resources on addressing weaknesses in the governance of the internal market, in order to stem the threat of mono l of commodities from neighboring provinces. In response to this logistical emergency, a policy evaluation based on resource allocation efficiency has determined that the issuance of affirmative local regulations requiring the procurement of local products across all modern retail networks represents the most rational, immediately effective, and fiscally efficient solution. Through the implementation of a fair and measurable policy roadmap, this trade intervention is expected to restore Aceh's economic sovereignty, cut high-cost economic chains, and sustainably elevate the standard of living and well-being of the community from upstream to downstream.

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