

## OPTIMIZING MSE PARTNERSHIPS: ASSESSING PARTNERSHIP INTENSITY BY PARTNERSHIP TYPES

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### ABSTRACT

*Partnership practices in Indonesia are highly diverse, encompassing various forms of support for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), including capital, capital goods, marketing, and raw materials. This diversity reflects the Intensity of partnerships, a key determinant of collaboration effectiveness. High partnership intensity is expected to strengthen competitiveness, broaden market access, and accelerate business growth. Despite these potential benefits, participation of MSEs in partnerships remains relatively limited, highlighting the need for further investigation into their dynamics. This study aims to assess the Intensity of MSE partnerships in Indonesia by examining variations in both the number of partnership types adopted and their relevance to business needs. The analysis is based on secondary data from Statistics Indonesia's 2021 Micro and Small Industry Survey, covering 6,951 business units in the food and non-food sectors. Descriptive statistical methods were applied to map the distribution of partnership intensity across industries and business scales. The results show that small enterprises, particularly in the non-food sector, tend to have higher partnership intensity. In contrast, microenterprises in the food sector demonstrate limited involvement in multidimensional cooperation. These differences are influenced by managerial capacity, network access, and sector-specific needs. The findings underscore the importance of designing partnership strategies that are diversified and aligned with MSE needs to enhance effectiveness. This research contributes to understanding partnership intensity and provides policymakers with practical insights for supporting sustainable MSE development.*

**Keywords:** *collaboration strategies, partnerships intensity, MSEs*

### ABSTRAK

Praktik kemitraan di Indonesia sangat beragam, mencakup berbagai aspek, termasuk jenis bantuan yang diadopsi oleh Usaha Mikro dan Kecil (UMK), seperti permodalan, barang modal, pemasaran, dan penyediaan bahan baku. Keberagaman ini mencerminkan adanya intensitas dalam hubungan kemitraan yang dapat menjadi faktor kunci keberhasilan kerja sama. Intensitas kemitraan yang tinggi berpotensi meningkatkan daya saing UMK, memperluas akses pasar, serta mempercepat pertumbuhan usaha. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi intensitas kemitraan yang dijalankan oleh Usaha Mikro dan Kecil (UMK) berdasarkan variasi jenis bantuan yang diadopsi. Data yang digunakan merupakan data sekunder dari survei Usaha Mikro dan Kecil (UMK) tahun 2021 yang dilakukan oleh Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), mencakup 6.951 juta unit UMK pada sektor pangan dan non-pangan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis statistik deskriptif untuk memetakan distribusi intensitas kemitraan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa intensitas kemitraan dapat diidentifikasi berdasarkan jumlah kemitraan yang diadopsi dan relevansi dengan kebutuhan UMK, dimana Usaha kecil, khususnya di sektor non-pangan, cenderung memiliki intensitas kemitraan yang lebih tinggi, sementara kelompok usaha sektor pangan, terutama pada skala mikro, menunjukkan keterlibatan yang terbatas dalam kerja sama multiaspek. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan suatu usaha dalam menjalin kemitraan pada tingkat intensitas tertentu dapat dipengaruhi oleh kapasitas manajerial, akses terhadap jaringan kemitraan, dan tingkat kebutuhan masing-masing sektor dan skala usaha. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya diversifikasi kemitraan serta kesesuaiannya dengan kebutuhan UMK untuk meningkatkan efektivitas kerja sama dan mendorong pertumbuhan usaha secara berkelanjutan.

**Kata kunci:** intensitas kemitraan, UMK, strategi kolaborasi

## INTRODUCTION

Partnerships are a central strategy in economic development, particularly for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). According to Law No. 20/2008 on Small Businesses, partnerships are defined as cooperative arrangements between small enterprises and larger businesses, grounded in the principles of mutual need, mutual reinforcement, and mutual benefit. Through partnerships, MSEs can access financial resources, workforce training, improved access to raw materials, production machinery, and equipment to enhance capacity and quality, as well as marketing support (Sucipto *et al.* 2015; Idris 2016; Pauw and Chan 2018; Vicario and Badra Nawang-lupi 2020; Meirobie *et al.* 2022). Despite these strategic benefits, the participation rate of MSEs in partnerships in Indonesia remains very low. Statistics Indonesia (BPS 2023) reports that only 8.07% of MSEs are engaged in partnerships. This figure reveals a significant gap between the potential benefits of partnerships and their limited implementation, highlighting the need for deeper analysis of the factors underlying this disparity.

The low participation of MSEs in partnerships can be attributed to multiple barriers, as shown in Image 1. BPS (2023) reports that 32% of MSEs lack information about partnership opportunities, 24% have difficulty understanding procedures, 19% express no interest in

cooperation, and 3% have limited bargaining power. Other challenges include bureaucratic obstacles, unsuitable partnership models, and insufficient internal resources. These barriers highlight the structural and institutional constraints that hinder MSEs from optimizing collaborative opportunities.

Moreover, partnership practices are not uniform but vary according to the type of support, the institutional model, and the characteristics of participating enterprises. Partnerships may take the form of capital, marketing, raw materials, or capital goods support (BPS 2023). Image 2 shows that MSEs tend to prioritize marketing (38%) and raw materials (37%) over capital (18%) and capital goods (6%), reflecting their immediate needs to increase sales and maintain production continuity. Such preferences indicate that sectoral conditions and business scale strongly shape partnership patterns.

Each type of partnership entails distinct benefits and risks depending on its characteristics and alignment with business conditions. Partnerships are therefore not uniform but contextual, shaped by the specific needs and capacity of each MSE. Matching partnership models with enterprise capacity and sector-specific characteristics remains a persistent challenge. This complexity becomes even more apparent when considering differences between food and non-food sectors, as well as between micro and small enterprises, each of

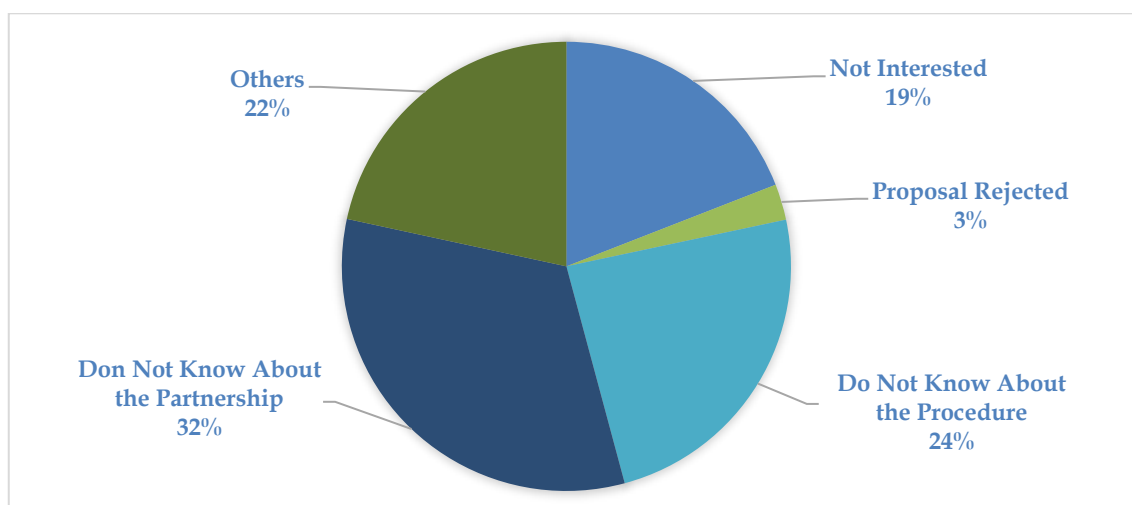
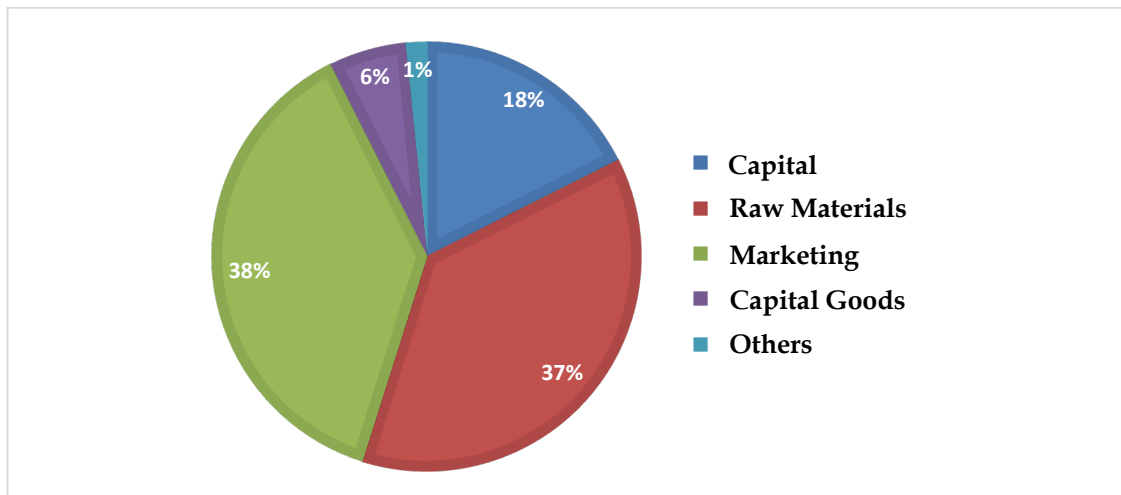


Image 1. Obstacles to MSE's Partnering 2021

Source: BPS 2023



**Image 2. Partnerships Entered into by MSEs in 2021**

Source: BPS 2023

which faces unique structural challenges. Consequently, evaluating partnership practices in light of these distinctions is critical to ensure that collaborations are both relevant and practical.

Previous studies have emphasized the benefits of partnerships for MSEs. Panulu and Gunarto (2022) found that partnerships positively influence innovation and performance in culinary enterprises. Other studies indicate that alliances can enhance sales, improve access to resources, increase production efficiency, and strengthen competitiveness (Prastiwi and Rohimat 2020; Vicario and Badra Nawangpalupi 2020; Aulia et al. 2023). Additionally, partnerships help small firms overcome structural constraints, build adaptive capacity, and support long-term business sustainability, especially when collaborations are tailored to specific needs (Fachrysa Halik *et al.* 2020; Junaidi *et al.* 2023; Salsabila and Baga 2025). However, most research treats partnerships homogeneously, focusing only on whether MSEs engage in cooperation, without analyzing variations in partnership practices.

Limited attention has been given to identifying which groups of MSEs – by sector (food vs. non-food) and scale (micro vs. small) – benefit the most. This gap risks producing policies that are insufficiently targeted and less effective.

Therefore, identifying and analyzing partnership variations is an essential step in formulating a more targeted, evidence-based MSE empowerment strategy. In this study, these variations will be referred to as partnership intensity, indicating the different levels of benefits that can be obtained by MSEs depending on the partnerships they adopt. The term "intensity" itself refers to the depth or extent of a relationship between parties (Harianto et al. 2019). In this case, the intensity of the partnership is a key factor in determining the success of the established cooperation (Irianto et al. 2019; Lukman et al. 2022).

In this study, partnership intensity will be analyzed based on variations in the number of partnership types and their suitability to business needs. With a focus on partnership intensity, this research is expected to provide new insights into the extent to which variations in the types of assistance supplied by Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Indonesia can reflect partnership intensity. The results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for formulating more effective policies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of partnerships as a development strategy for MSEs in Indonesia. Thus, this research not only contributes to academic understanding but also provides practical recommendations for stakeholders in supporting the growth and sustainability of MSEs.

## METHODS

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design, using secondary data collected at a single point in time to provide an overview of partnership intensity among Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Indonesia. The dataset comes from the 2021 Survey of Micro and Small Industries (IMK) conducted by Statistics Indonesia (BPS), covering 6.951 MSE units – 5.015 in the food sector and 1.936 in the non-food sector – that were recorded as having active partnerships. The MSEs included in this study were selected based on the following criteria: (1) classified as micro or small enterprises according to the BPS definition, (2) actively engaged in at least one form of partnership, including financial capital, marketing, raw materials, or capital goods, and (3) having complete information regarding the type of partnership adopted. Enterprises that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

Partnership intensity was measured using a scoring and weighting system based on two dimensions:

1. Number of partnership types adopted.

Each MSE actor may have a different combination of partnerships, depending on business needs and access to partners. Thus, the number of partnerships is not homogeneous across actors. Each type of partnership owned by an MSE actor is given a score of 1, and if not owned, a score of 0. The maximum total score is 4, indicating that the business has partnerships across all four aspects. The total score is calculated by summing up all forms of partnership received, according to the following formula:

$$Li = \sum_{j=1}^n Sij \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Description:

$Li$  = partnership intensity score for the  $i$ -th enterprise

$Sij$  = score for the  $j$ -th partnership type (for example: 1 = partnership (capital,

capital goods, raw materials, capital goods, 0 = none)

$wj$  = weight of the  $j$ -th partnership type (assumed equal)

$n$  = number of types of partnership assistance (e.g., 4: capital, raw materials, capital goods, marketing)

Based on the total score, MSE actors are classified into five levels of partnership intensity as follows:

- a. Low intensity (score 1): Has a single partnership
- b. Medium intensity (score 2): 2 partnerships
- c. Medium intensity (score 3): 3 partnerships
- d. High intensity (score 4): 4 partnerships

An equal-weighting approach was used, assuming that each type of partnership contributes equally to strengthening business capacity. This method falls under the simple additive scoring approach, which is commonly used in program participation evaluation and support mapping (Keller 2001). While the effectiveness of each type of partnership may differ in practice, this approach was chosen to maintain the initial objectivity of measuring engagement based on the number and combinations of support types, rather than their relative effectiveness.

2. Relevance of partnerships to business needs. The significance of each partnership type was weighted based on the urgency of the business constraints identified in the IMK survey conducted by Statistics Indonesia (BPS). The level of urgency of the problems faced by Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) actors reflects the level of business needs. The higher the problem's urgency, the more relevant the partnership is to addressing these needs. Table 1 presents the difficulty weights for the issues faced by MSE actors in Indonesia.

**Table 1. Level of Difficulty Faced by MSEs and Weight of Problems**

Types of Difficulties	Number of MSEs Experiencing Difficulties	Difficulty Level (Number of MSEs / Total MSEs)	Weight
Capital	1.802.227	0.59	3
Marketing	1.054.021	0.34	2
Raw Materials	1.024.199	0.33	1

The urgency of the problems faced by Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) actors reflects the level of business needs. The higher the problem's urgency, the more relevant the partnership is to addressing these needs. Mathematically, the assessment of the intensity of partnership relevance to business needs is formulated as follows:

$$I_i = \sum w_j \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Description:

$I_i$  = Partnership intensity score for the  $i$ -th business actor

$w_j$  = relevance weight of the  $j$ -th partnership type adopted.

Based on the scoring and weighting results above, the partnership intensity can be categorized as follows:

- Low intensity (score 1): Has a raw material partnership
- Medium intensity (score 2): Undergoing Marketing Partnership
- High intensity (score 3): Capital and Capital Goods Partnerships

The scoring and weighting methods were chosen to align with the research objective of systematically capturing patterns of partnership involvement, without seeking causal inference (Sugiyono 1967). By separating measurements like this, the research can compare the influence of the quantity of partnerships with their quality (relevance) on MSE performance. It is intended that the impact of each intensity dimension be evaluated in a more focused and in-depth manner, and that this evaluation provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of partnerships as a strategy

for micro and small enterprise development.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Partnerships play a crucial role in enhancing the sustainability and growth of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). They not only provide access to external resources but also help address key operational constraints such as limited capital, restricted market access, and unstable raw material supplies. Strategic partnerships further enable MSEs to adopt new technologies, improve competitiveness, and strengthen resilience against market fluctuations. However, partnerships can only be effective if they align with enterprises' actual needs (Slowinski et al. 1993). In this context, the types of partnerships offered to MSEs play a critical role in explaining the patterns and relevance of their participation in different partnership arrangements. Therefore, this section will explore the intensity of partnerships, which is measured not only by the number of types adopted but also the relevance of these partnerships to business needs.

### PARTNERSHIP INTENSITY

The concept of Intensity has varying meanings depending on the research context and its application. In general, Intensity, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), is a level or degree of intention. In research, Shimer (2004) describes Intensity as the level of involvement of an entity, which can affect performance effectiveness. Meanwhile, Larsen and Diener (1987) define Intensity as the level of depth and strength that varies with the characteristics of the object. In the context of this research, Intensity is influenced by external and internal factors. This

understanding of Intensity is widely recognized in disciplines including economics, psychology, and management, where it serves as a foundation for evaluating the impact of engagement on performance.

In the context of this study, partnership intensity refers to the number of partnerships entered into by MSE actors and the degree of compatibility between these partnerships and the problems faced by MSEs. The diversity of partnerships undertaken indicates the capacity of MSE actors to utilize different facilities and access channels that enhance their business development. The higher relevance of partnerships to existing challenges, combined with greater diversity in the assistance received by MSE actors, leads to higher partnership intensity. It is assumed that partnerships aligned with existing challenges serve as effective mechanisms for overcoming the problems faced by MSEs. Thus, partnership intensity reflects not only the diversity of relationships owned by MSEs, but also the effectiveness of cooperation in improving competitiveness and business sustainability.

#### PARTNERSHIP INTENSITY BASED ON THE NUMBER OF ASSISTANCE TYPES

Partnership intensity can be measured by the number of assistance types provided to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), including capital, raw materials, marketing, and capital goods. The more types of partnerships that are followed, the higher the partnership intensity. This measurement is not only quantitative but also reflects the depth and breadth of relationships between MSEs and partners. Therefore, examining the number of assis-

tance types received is essential to assess the degree of partner involvement in business development and its implications for MSE performance. The following Table shows the distribution of partnership intensity by the number of assistance types used by MSE actors in Indonesia.

Table 2 shows that most MSEs fall into the low-intensity category and engage in only one type of partnership. This finding suggests that most MSEs in Indonesia have not yet developed multidimensional partnership networks. The limited intensity reflects restricted access to potential partners, lack of information on opportunities, and limited managerial and institutional capacity. These results are consistent with earlier studies emphasizing structural and institutional barriers as significant obstacles to expanding partnerships for MSEs (Purwanto *et al.* 2021; Junaidi *et al.* 2023; Nabaga *et al.* 2024). The distribution of MSEs' involvement in partnerships also shows a sharp decline, along with an increase in the number of partnership types undertaken, underscoring that comprehensive collaborations remain rare. Yet the literature emphasizes that multidimensional partnerships can strengthen resilience to market fluctuations and supply chain disruptions (Witt and Lewin 2007; Risnawati 2018).

Further examination by sector and scale reveals distinct patterns in partnership intensity. Small enterprises in the non-food industry exhibit relatively higher levels of partnership engagement. Specifically, 31.2% of this group fall into the medium category (two types of partnerships), 9.1% into the high category, and 4.2% into the very high category.

**Table 2. Distribution of Partnership Intensity by Number of Partnership Types 2021**

Type of MSEs	Partnership Intensity (%)				Total
	Low (1 Type)	Medium (2 Types)	High (3 Types)	Very high (4 Types)	
<b>Non-Food</b>					
Small	55,5	31,2	9,1	4,2	100
Micro	65,8	24,5	6,7	3,0	100
<b>Food</b>					
Small	79,5	15,6	4,9	0,0	100
Micro	84,3	12,8	2,5	0,4	100

(four types of partnerships simultaneously). In total, 55.5% of non-food sector small enterprises have developed partnerships beyond a single type of support. By contrast, small enterprises in the food sector remain concentrated mainly in the low-intensity category (79.5%), with only 15.6% in the medium category and 4.9% in the high category. At the same time, none have reached the very high category. At the micro-enterprise scale, the divergence between food and non-food sectors is also notable. Among non-food micro enterprises, 24.5% fall into the medium category, 6.7% into the high category, and 3.0% into the very high category, totaling 34.2% above the low-intensity level. In contrast, micro enterprises in the food sector remain predominantly engaged in single partnerships, with 84.3% in the low category and the remainder distributed modestly across the medium (12.8%), high (2.5%), and very high (0.4%) categories.

This finding confirms the hypothesis that non-food sector small business groups tend to have higher partnership intensity than other groups. This tendency can be understood through the resource-based view (Barney 1991), which emphasizes the importance of strategic control over resources in maintaining competitive advantage. Small enterprises have greater institutional capacity than micro enterprises, including legal compliance, accounting systems, and business planning, which are prerequisites for accessing capital from financial institutions and business partners. In addition, the more dynamic and diverse characteristics of the non-food sector, as well as greater market pressure to innovate and keep up with technological developments, encourage businesses to establish multifaceted partnerships that are relevant to expansion needs and operational efficiency (Anjaningrum and Sidi 2018; Ratna et al. 2024). This reinforces the justification that the high intensity of partnerships in this group is not only a reflection of need, but also institutional readiness and progressive adaptation strategies to changes in the business environment (Witt and Lewin 2007).

In contrast, the food sector, especially at the micro scale, shows limited involvement in multifaceted cooperation. This is likely due to the sector's tendency to focus on supply chain stability and fundamental operational sustainability. The fixed, capital-intensive, and stable characteristics of the food sector also limit the need to build varied partnerships. In addition, food sector microenterprises face limitations in information, institutional access, and managerial capacity, which make them less able to adapt to the development of partnership networks (Martens et al. 2022; Rahman et al. 2025).

Thus, the results of this analysis confirm that the partnership intensity of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Indonesia is influenced not only by their operational scale but also by the sectors in which they operate. Sectoral dynamics such as supply chain stability, market orientation, and capital intensity play a crucial role in shaping how and to what extent MSEs engage in partnerships. Therefore, the policy implication is the importance of developing a segmented, needs-based partnership strategy. Rather than applying a uniform approach, interventions should be tailored to the specific conditions and capacities of MSEs across sectors and scales. By taking into account both external sector dynamics and internal business capacities such as managerial skills, information access, and institutional readiness, partnership programs can be designed to more effectively strengthen business networks, improve access to resources, and promote sustainable, inclusive growth for MSEs across Indonesia.

## PARTNERSHIP INTENSITY BASED ON RELEVANCE TO PROBLEMS

In addition to the number of partnership types, intensity can also be evaluated by the extent to which partnerships align with the actual challenges faced by MSEs. Partnerships that directly address pressing problems are more likely to yield significant improvements in competitiveness and performance (Slo-winski *et al.*, 1993). Table 3 presents the distri-

**Table 3. Distribution of Partnership Intensity Based on Relevance to MSEs Business Needs in 2021**

Type of MSEs	Partnership Intensity (%)			Total	
	High (Capital)		Marketing (Medium)		
	Money	Goods			
Raw Materials (Low)					
Non-Food					
Small	19.8	6.4	44.6	29.2	100
Micro	18.4	7.1	36.1	38.4	100
Food					
Small	21.6	0.7	54.7	23.0	100
Micro	19.4	2.8	53.9	23.9	100

bution of partnership intensity according to the alignment between partnership type and enterprise needs in 2021.

Based on Table 3, the distribution of partnerships entered into by micro and small enterprises (MSEs) shows three main categories of partnership intensity: high (requests for assistance in the form of money and goods), medium (marketing), and low (raw materials). Most MSEs participate in medium- or low-intensity partnerships, with 36–54% engaging in marketing-related cooperation and 23–38% focusing on raw material supply. This suggests that enterprises prioritize partnerships that are relatively easier to establish and directly support day-to-day operations, such as ensuring stable input supply and expanding market access. Marketing partnerships typically involve collaboration with distributors, digital platforms, or modern retailers (Ernanto and Hermawan 2022). In contrast, raw material partnerships entail a firm reliance on affordable, consistent inputs to maintain production continuity (Muna *et al.* 2024).

By contrast, high-intensity partnerships in the form of financial capital or capital goods assistance remain relatively rare. Only 18–21% of MSEs accessed partnerships involving financial capital, while capital goods support was even lower, ranging from 0.7% to 7.1%. This limited engagement is noteworthy because capital-related support is considered the most strategic for enhancing productivity and competitiveness. The mismatch between urgent needs and realized partnerships indicates persistent structural barriers to MSEs' access

to capital. Previous studies identify administrative requirements, collateral demands, and limited financial literacy as major obstacles (Chairi *et al.* 2020; Tambunan *et al.* 2022). Many micro-enterprises lack legal registration, proper financial records, or formal business proposals, preventing them from meeting partner or institutional criteria (Awoyemi and Makanju 2020). Moreover, financing information is unevenly distributed, and available schemes often feature high interest rates, rigid terms, and short repayment periods (Wiid and Cant 2021). On the supply side, lenders' risk perception of MSEs further restricts access to intensive partnerships (Liakos 2003; Ganesan *et al.* 2024).

Sectoral and scale-specific patterns provide additional insights. Non-food small enterprises show the highest participation in high-intensity partnerships, with 26.2% engaged in capital-related arrangements (19.8% financial, 6.4% capital goods). This group appears better able to meet administrative requirements and respond to competitive pressures in dynamic markets. In contrast, micro food enterprises report the lowest involvement in high-intensity partnerships, relying predominantly on medium-intensity (53.9%) and low-intensity (23.9%) arrangements. Similar patterns are seen in food-sector small enterprises, which remain dominated by marketing partnerships (54.7%).

These findings underscore the role of sectoral competitiveness, institutional readiness, and managerial capacity in shaping access to more strategic forms of collaboration. The non-food sector is marked by greater dyna-



mism and competitive pressure, compelling firms to innovate, respond to market shifts, and adopt new technologies (Witt and Lewin 2007). At the same Time, the larger scale of small enterprises provides greater flexibility in fulfilling administrative requirements, such as preparing proposals and maintaining financial records (Belgraver and Verwaal 2018). By contrast, food-sector microenterprises face limited institutional and managerial capacity, as well as weak ecosystem support, which restricts their ability to engage in more complex partnerships (Martens *et al.* 2022; Rahman *et al.* 2025).

The results provide empirical support for the research hypothesis that partnership intensity varies significantly across sectors and scales. Small non-food enterprises tend to exhibit higher intensity due to stronger institutional readiness, broader access to information, and wider business networks. Conversely, food-sector firms, particularly at the micro scale, are constrained by administrative barriers, weaker managerial skills, and lower adaptive capacity. Partnership effectiveness, therefore, depends not only on the type of support provided but also on how well it aligns with enterprise capacity and sectoral characteristics.

From a policy perspective, partnership interventions should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach but instead be tailored to the diverse needs and conditions of different MSE groups. A differentiated strategy allows for more precise targeting, ensuring that partnerships are both accessible and relevant. Key measures include enhancing financial literacy, simplifying administrative procedures, and developing flexible financing schemes. Establishing centralized information hubs and regional facilitators helps bridge information gaps and connect enterprises with potential partners.

A critical gap also emerges: capital-related partnerships, while most urgently needed to boost productivity and competitiveness, remain the least accessible—particularly for micro food enterprises. Addressing this issue requires regulatory reforms, targeted support,

and continuous monitoring to ensure that partnership programs remain adaptive to evolving business challenges. Aligning partnership initiatives with sectoral dynamics and enterprise capacities can ultimately enhance both the inclusiveness and effectiveness of MSE development strategies.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

The intensity of MSE partnerships in Indonesia can be measured along two main dimensions: the number of partnership types and their suitability to business needs. Small enterprises, especially in the non-food sector, tend to have higher partnership intensity, both in terms of the number of partner types and the relevance of assistance to business needs. This difference is influenced by managerial capacity, access to partnership networks, and the level of needs of each sector and business scale. In contrast, food sector business groups, especially at the micro scale, show limited involvement in multi-faceted cooperation. This is most likely due to the sector's tendency to focus on supply chain stability and fundamental operational sustainability. The fixed, capital-intensive, and stable characteristics of the food sector also limit the need to build varied partnerships. In addition, food sector microenterprises face limitations in information, institutional access, and managerial capacity, which make them less adaptable to the development of partnership networks.

### SUGGESTIONS

For the results of this study to be practically implemented, several operational steps are suggested. Firstly, capacity building for micro MSEs in the food sector should be encouraged through managerial training, information literacy, and institutional assistance to enhance their adaptability in forming partnerships. Secondly, sector- and scale-specific partnership models should be developed, tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of each

sector and business scale, such as supply-chain-based partnerships for the micro-food sector. Thirdly, an integrated partnership platform, either digital or institutional, should be built to map MSE needs and connect them with potential partners from public and private sectors. Fourthly, incentives for inclusive partnerships should be provided to large businesses, particularly to engage with micro-scale MSEs in the food sector, via subsidies, co-financing facilitation, or shared-risk schemes. Fifthly, a business needs-based evaluation system should be established for monitoring and evaluating partnerships, focusing on the suitability of assistance to MSEs' actual needs rather than merely the quantity of partnerships. Lastly, access to information and partnership networks should be improved for MSEs by offering centralized information resources, conducting local workshops, and deploying regional-level MSE facilitators.

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