Journal of Governance and Local Politics (JGLP)
Vol. 7, No. 2, November 2025, pp. 287-303
Received Oct 02, 2025 Revised Oct 20, 2025 Accepted Nov 05, 2025

Evaluation of Bontang City Government Policies to Improve the Regional Investment Climate

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Keyword:
Investment Policy;
Adaptive Governance;
Economic Diversification.

Abstract: This study evaluates the effectiveness, competitiveness, and responsiveness of the Bontang City Government's policies in improving the regional investment climate within the framework of economic diversification. The research employs a qualitative descriptive-evaluative method, which combines policy evaluation and interpretive analysis to assess how investment-related programs are implemented and how stakeholders perceive their outcomes. Data were collected through documentation, observation, and interviews with government officials, business actors, and community representatives, then analyzed using the six evaluation criteria proposed by William N. Dunn—effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. Findings indicate that although Bontang has made significant progress through the implementation of the Online Single Submission (OSS) system, the establishment of the Public Service Mall, and the enactment of Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2017 on Investment, various structural barriers remain. Bureaucratic inefficiency, weak inter-agency coordination, limited investment promotion, and insufficient human resource capacity hinder policy outcomes and reduce investor confidence. Moreover, policy responsiveness is still concentrated on the oil and gas sector, with less attention given to emerging industries such as tourism, creative economy, and renewable energy. The study concludes that an adaptive and integrated governance model is essential to ensure that investment policy effectively supports sustainable and inclusive regional economic transformation.

INTRODUCTION

Balanced regional development is a priority agenda for every country, as national economic progress fundamentally stems from the strength and independence of its regions. One of the most important instruments driving development at the regional level is investment. Capital flows, whether from domestic or foreign sources, make a tangible contribution to job creation, increased community income, the transfer of technology and knowledge, as well as the acceleration of both physical and social infrastructure development (Sitakar et al., 2024; Wahyudi & Zapita, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2024). Therefore, a region's ability to attract and sustain investment is a key indicator of successful regional development. Insufficient investment flows may hinder development, widen interregional disparities, and reduce the region's competitiveness within both the national and global economy (Simanjuntak & Widodo, 2025).

In this context, the role of local government becomes highly strategic. Local governments are required to create a conducive ecosystem and provide legal certainty, clear regulations, and a business climate that supports the growth of investment (Anis Retno Triana et al., 2024; Hidayat, 2025; Irawan & Mokodompit, 2024). This role concerns not only the quantity of incoming capital but also the quality of the investment secured. Quality investment is defined as investment that aligns with the specific potential of a region and is consistent with its long-term development trajectory (Primadhana & Wahed, 2020). Such investment does not merely bring in capital but also generates significant multiplier effects for the local economy, while ensuring that development does not harm the environment or undermine social well-being. Accordingly, investment policy should focus on attracting strategic capital—not merely pursuing statistical targets, but rather emphasizing tangible contributions to the sustainability of regional development.

The Government of Indonesia places the improvement of the investment climate as one of the main agendas in national development (Lam, 2025; Leontinus, 2022). These efforts are manifested through the simplification of licensing procedures, the provision of various fiscal incentives, and the strengthening of legal certainty for investors (Abisono, 2024). This dynamic has created increasingly intense competition among regions in attracting investment (Dona, 2017; Naila et al., 2024). Each local government at the provincial and district/municipal levels is required to be proactive, innovative, and responsive to the factors that influence investor decisions, ranging from the availability of infrastructure, the quality of human resources, and political and security stability, to the efficiency of government bureaucracy. This indicates that the implementation of central government policies cannot be viewed merely as technical instructions, but rather depends heavily on the readiness and capacity of local governments to translate them into concrete actions. In other words, local governments are the key actors determining the success of investment policies on the ground (Mozin et al., 2025; Sandy, 2020; Satibi, 2020).

The City of Bontang in East Kalimantan Province is historically known as an industrial city, dominated by the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors. For decades, these industries have served as the backbone of the regional economy. However, the depletion of natural resource reserves and the volatility of global commodity prices pose serious challenges to Bontang's economic sustainability. This situation underscores the urgent need for economic diversification so that the city is no longer entirely dependent on the extractive sector. Other potentials, such as downstream processing industries, nature- and culture-based tourism, the creative economy, and the service sector, represent strategic opportunities that must be further developed (Andira Kirana et al., 2025; Gede Agung, 2016; Rahmah et al., 2023).

In this context of transition, investment plays a vital role in facilitating the shift from a resource-based economy toward one that is more diversified, resilient, and sustainable (Irham et al., 2024). Diversification is no longer an option but a necessity. New investment flows into non-oil and gas sectors have the potential to open up new sources of growth, create alternative employment opportunities, and enhance the city's economic resilience against external shocks (Alisa Qotrunada1, Lucky Firmansyah2, Rama Rama3, Muhammad Rizky Al Asqolani4, 2025). However, this effort requires well-crafted policy strategies, including the provision of targeted incentives, more aggressive investment promotion, and the adjustment of workforce skills to meet the demands of emerging industries (Alisa Qotrunada1, Lucky Firmansyah2, Rama Rama3, Muhammad Rizky Al Asqolani4, 2025).

Field evidence shows that investment realization in the City of Bontang remains fluctuating and unstable. This instability indicates the presence of serious challenges in attracting and retaining investor interest (Dela Wahyu Putri Awanda et al., 2024). The contributing factors may stem from global economic uncertainty as well as internal barriers such as the effectiveness of local policies, regional competitiveness, and investor perceptions of the local business climate. The failure to achieve annual investment targets reflects a gap between the expectations set in planning and the realities of implementation on the ground (Siladjaja & Siladjaja, 2025). "The volatility of foreign direct investment, for instance, may indicate vulnerabilities to shifts in market sentiment, regulatory uncertainty, or the quality of bureaucratic services.

The Bontang City Government already possesses a legal framework in the form of a Regional Regulation on Investment, which aims to simplify licensing procedures and provide legal certainty. However, various complaints from business actors—such as slow licensing processes, weak inter-agency coordination, limited accessibility of investment information, and complex incentive schemes—reveal a gap between regulatory design and practical implementation. This condition highlights the need for an in-depth evaluation to understand why existing policies have not produced the expected outcomes. Policy evaluation thus becomes an essential instrument to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and alignment of policies with their intended objectives (Putri & Purnamasari, 2025; Sulman et al., 2025).

A public policy evaluation framework can help address this issue. The evaluation is conducted not only to examine the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved, but also to assess whether the policy is efficient in its use of resources, adequate in solving problems, and equitable in distributing benefits to society (Annisa Darma Yanti et al., 2024; Srinandini et al., 2024). Evaluation is also crucial to identify whether the policy is responsive to the needs of stakeholders and whether the stated objectives are truly feasible and relevant to pursue. Through this framework, it becomes possible to understand whether the policy strategies implemented in Bontang City are well-targeted in improving the investment climate and accelerating economic diversification.

An analysis of the fundamental factors influencing investment decisions is also essential. Investors take into account a wide range of aspects, from macroeconomic stability, interest rates, and inflation, to micro-level factors such as profit expectations and ease of doing business. In the local context, regional competitiveness becomes a crucial aspect. Competitiveness is not only determined by the abundance of natural resources but also by the quality of institutions, bureaucratic efficiency, innovation, and the skills of the workforce (Zahwa et al., 2025). By understanding these factors, it becomes possible to assess the extent to which local government policies have effectively addressed the needs of investors.

A review of the literature and empirical studies shows that the success of regional investment is determined not only by the availability of incentives or simplified licensing procedures, but also by institutional readiness, policy synchronization across levels of government, governance quality, and stakeholder involvement. However, specific research on investment policy in Bontang City, as an industrial city with a historical dependence on oil and gas, remains very limited. Much of the existing research has focused on general infrastructure, tourism development, or environmental issues, but has not directly evaluated Bontang's investment policies within the context of its economic transition.

There remains a significant research gap that needs to be addressed. A study that explores the implementation of investment policies in Bontang through a comprehensive qualitative approach can provide meaningful contributions both to the academic literature and to the formulation of local policies. Such research can highlight the extent to which existing policies align with investor needs, how key actors perceive their implementation, and how these policies support the strategic agenda of economic diversification.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-evaluative design that not only portrays phenomena in a systematic, factual, and accurate manner, but also assesses policy performance against specific criteria to provide recommendations for improvement. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective of gaining an in-depth understanding of how investment climate improvement policies in Bontang City are implemented, as well as how stakeholders perceive and experience these policies. This approach makes it possible to explore meanings, perspectives, and social dynamics that accompany policy implementation, thereby explaining why the policies may not have produced optimal outcomes. The descriptive aspect of the study is reflected in the effort to depict investment policies implemented by the Bontang City Government, including derivative programs such as the Online Single Submission (OSS), Public Service Mall, and investment promotion strategies, while also identifying supporting and inhibiting factors affecting policy effectiveness in terms of institutional capacity, infrastructure, inter-agency coordination, and business actors' perceptions. Meanwhile, the evaluative aspect is evident in the assessment of policy effectiveness based on William N. Dunn's six criteria of policy evaluation: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. The research was conducted in Bontang City, East Kalimantan Province, which was selected due to its relevance as an industrial city historically dependent on the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors, but currently facing the challenge of economic diversification as extractive resource reserves decline. Moreover, investment realization data show significant fluctuations with targets often unmet, signaling problems in policy effectiveness. Bontang also possesses a formal policy framework through Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2017 on Investment, which serves as the legal basis for enhancing the investment climate, thus presenting a combination of strategic challenges and a concrete policy framework that makes it highly relevant as a research locus to evaluate the effectiveness of investment policy and identify factors that support or hinder its implementation (Nathan, 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study provide a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of the Bontang City Government's policy implementation in an effort to improve the investment climate and strengthen regional competitiveness amidst the challenges of local economic transformation. The research focuses on how the formulated and implemented policies address the fundamental issues facing industrial regions seeking to shift from dependence on the oil and gas sector to more sustainable economic diversification. In this context, local government policies are viewed not merely as administrative instruments but also as a representation of institutional capacity and strategic vision in building an inclusive, competitive, and adaptive economic foundation to changes in the global and national economic environment (Lowndes, 2005).

The socio-economic context of Bontang demonstrates that investment policies have broad implications for the direction of regional development (Rofik et al., 2024; Stefano, 2024). Policy effectiveness is determined not only by the availability of regulations but also by the extent to which they are consistently implemented and accepted by stakeholders, including bureaucracy, the business community, and the community (Brinkerhoff, 1999; Turnbull, 1994; Wallner, 2008). Evaluation of this policy implementation is crucial to understanding the extent to which local government efforts have created a conducive investment climate, strengthened regional competitiveness, and encouraged sustainable economic growth. Understanding the policy implementation process also serves to identify aspects that still require improvement, particularly in terms of inter-agency coordination, procedural clarity, and improving the quality of public services for investors.

An in-depth analysis of policy effectiveness, supporting and inhibiting factors, and responsiveness to the economic diversification agenda forms the primary basis for discussing the findings of this study. These three aspects are interrelated and form a comprehensive framework for assessing the extent to which investment policy in Bontang has achieved its intended objectives. Implementation effectiveness reflects the level of success of policy implementation on the ground; supporting and inhibiting factors explain the structural and institutional context influencing the process; while policy responsiveness demonstrates the local government's ability to adapt policy direction to new economic dynamics outside the extractive sector. By mapping these three aspects, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the quality of investment policy governance in Bontang and its implications for the sustainability of regional development (Afkarina et al., 2019; Ekowati et al., 2023; Isdahartati et al., 2024).

Effectiveness Of Implementation of Bontang City Government Policies in Improving the Investment Climate

The effectiveness of the Bontang City Government's policy implementation to improve the investment climate is a key determinant of the region's success in attracting investors while maintaining the sustainability of local economic development. Policy implementation is fundamentally oriented not only toward the existence of regulations or planning documents, but also toward the extent to which these policies are consistently implemented, on target, and generate a tangible impact on investment conditions on the ground. In the context of Bontang City, efforts to create a conducive investment climate have been realized through various policy instruments, such as the implementation of the Online Single Submission (OSS), the establishment of a Public Service Mall, and the enactment of Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2017 concerning Investment. These three instruments are conceptually designed to simplify licensing procedures, provide legal certainty, and expedite administrative processes for businesses. However, the effectiveness of these policies still faces serious challenges stemming from bureaucratic capacity, inter-agency coordination, and business actors' perceptions of the quality of public services (Connolly et al., 2020; Qvist, 2016).

The implementation of the OSS system as a form of digitalization of public services is a progressive step in promoting bureaucratic efficiency and reducing cumbersome administrative practices (Latupeirissa et al., 2024; Zhao, 2023). The implementation of the OSS (Online Shopping Center) is expected to accelerate the business licensing process, increase transparency, and reduce economic transaction costs, which have been major obstacles to the regional investment climate. However, findings in the field indicate that the effectiveness of OSS implementation is less than optimal. Some local government officials lack sufficient technical capacity to operate the system efficiently, while some business actors still experience difficulties accessing services due to limited information and technical assistance. This situation indicates a gap between normative policy design and operational implementation. The effectiveness of service digitization policies can only be achieved if supported by improved human resource competency, adequate technological infrastructure, and ongoing evaluation mechanisms to ensure each process is carried out in accordance with established service standards.

Beyond digitalization, the effectiveness of investment policies in Bontang also depends heavily on the quality of coordination between local government agencies. Investment is a cross-sectoral sector involving various agencies, from licensing and spatial planning to the environment and labor. In practice, inter-agency coordination still faces communication barriers, overlapping authority, and the lack of a unified decision-making mechanism. This institutional fragmentation has implications for slow licensing services and inconsistent policy implementation on the ground (SEPPALA, 2002). The Bontang City Government has actually made efforts to harmonize regulations through coordination forums and cross-sector meetings, but their effectiveness remains limited due to the lack of a robust data integration system and information flow between relevant agencies. As a result, business actors often have to go through repetitive processes or face differing interpretations of regulations across government agencies. This situation demonstrates that the success of investment policies is determined not only by the substance of the regulations, but also by the governance of their implementation, which emphasizes the principles of cross-sectoral coordination, consistency, and efficiency (Christopoulos et al., 2012; Rasul & Neupane, 2021).

Policy effectiveness can also be measured by the level of business satisfaction with public services provided by the local government. Investors' positive perceptions of the performance of the regional bureaucracy are an important indicator reflecting trust in the stability and credibility of government policies (Beeri et al., 2019; Koeswayo et al., 2024). In the Bontang context, most business actors acknowledge progress in service transparency and ease of access to information, but still complain about delays in the licensing process, a lack of procedural clarity, and inconsistencies in the application of service standards. These issues demonstrate that the effectiveness of policy implementation has not been accompanied by improvements in overall service quality. The local government needs to strengthen its internal monitoring and evaluation system so that each public service unit operates based on measurable performance indicators (Dewi et al., 2019; Moullin, 2017). Furthermore, involving business actors in public consultation forums can be a crucial strategy to ensure that implemented policies align with the needs and expectations of the business community, thereby increasing investor trust and commitment to sustainable investment in Bontang.

The link between policy effectiveness and the achievement of regional development goals also requires careful examination. The primary goal of improving the investment climate is not merely to attract capital but also to create jobs, expand the economic base, and encourage diversification of production sectors. In this regard, effective policy implementation must be able to generate structural changes in the regional economy. Observations show that despite improvements in several investment indicators, the non-oil and gas sector's contribution to Bontang's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) remains relatively low. This indicates that the implementation of investment policies has not been fully successful in directing investment to productive sectors outside the extractive industry. The government needs to strengthen investment promotion strategies that focus on the region's leading potential, such as downstream industries, tourism, and the creative economy, so that the policies implemented are not only administratively effective but also strategic in building long-term economic resilience (Meyer et al., 2022; Pigato, 2019; Qiao et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of investment policy implementation in Bontang is also significantly influenced by political support and the leadership of the regional head. Strong political commitment from regional leaders plays a crucial role in maintaining policy consistency and accelerating the bureaucratic reform process. Responsive, visionary, and collaborative leadership will create a results-oriented work culture and quality public services. In the Bontang context, the regional government leadership has demonstrated initiative in strengthening public service reforms and encouraging integration between agencies, but policy sustainability still needs to be improved to avoid dependence on changes in political leadership. Policy stability is a crucial prerequisite for building investor confidence, as certainty of policy direction is a key factor in long-term investment decision-making (Ahiadu et al., 2024; Jackson & Orr, 2019).

The effectiveness of the Bontang City Government's policy implementation in improving the investment climate can be said to still be in the transitional stage towards a mature governance system. Normative efforts in the form of regulatory development and public service innovation have provided an important foundation, but their success still depends on consistent implementation, increased institutional capacity, and adaptation to evolving economic dynamics. Improving policy effectiveness going forward requires a more integrated, data-driven approach, involving all stakeholders in the planning and evaluation process. Thus, Bontang's investment policy will not only serve as an administrative tool to attract capital, but also as a strategic instrument in building a competitive, equitable, and sustainable regional economy.

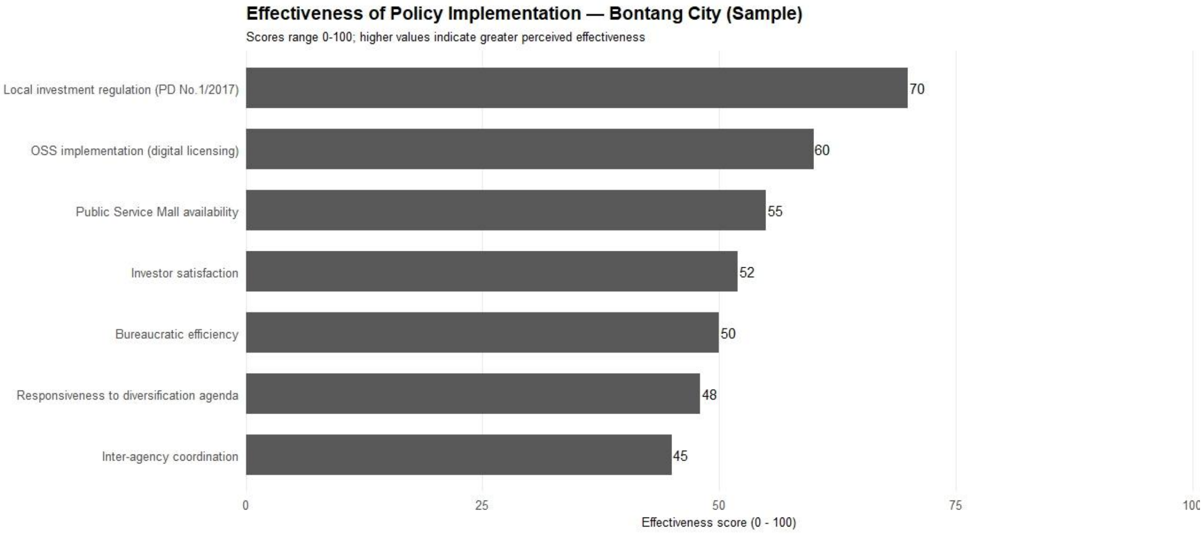

Figure 1. Effectiveness of Policy Implementation Bontang city
source by author procces

Figure 1 shows the effectiveness of the Bontang City Government's policy implementation in improving the regional investment climate, based on a series of strategic indicators reflecting the institutional, administrative, and substantive aspects of regional investment governance. Visually, this graph presents seven key indicators that collectively represent the multidimensional nature of policy implementation at the regional level. These indicators include the implementation of the Integrated Licensing System (PTSP), the availability of Public Service Malls, the establishment of Regional Investment Regulations (Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2017), bureaucratic efficiency, inter-agency coordination, investor satisfaction, and policy responsiveness to the regional economic diversification agenda.

From the visualization, it is evident that the level of effectiveness varies significantly across indicators. The highest score appears under the indicator Local Investment Regulation (PD No.1/2017) with a score of approximately 70, suggesting that the regulatory aspect of investment governance is relatively strong. The existence of a clear legal framework provides certainty for investors and strengthens the government's authority in facilitating investment. This indicates that Bontang City has successfully established a legal foundation that supports ease of doing business and inter-sectoral policy coherence. However, the relatively high regulatory performance has not been fully matched by equally effective operational implementation, revealing a gap between normative design and empirical execution (Bondarouk & Mastenbroek, 2018).

The indicators OSS implementation (digital licensing) and Public Service Mall availability score moderately at 60 and 55, respectively. These values suggest that Bontang has taken significant steps toward digitalization and service integration. The OSS system and the Public Service Mall are designed to streamline administrative processes, promote transparency, and enhance accessibility for business actors. Nevertheless, technical challenges remain, such as limited digital infrastructure, uneven staff capacity, and inadequate socialization among entrepreneurs. Conceptually, these initiatives reflect the government's commitment to bureaucratic modernization, yet in practice, their implementation is hindered by internal resistance and adaptation issues among end users (Boon & Verhoest, 2018).

Lower scores are recorded in the indicators Bureaucratic efficiency, Inter-agency coordination, Investor satisfaction, and Responsiveness to diversification agenda, ranging from 45 to 52. These results reveal that the effectiveness of policy implementation in the practical and collaborative domains remains limited. Low bureaucratic efficiency and weak coordination reflect institutional fragmentation that hinders administrative effectiveness. Lengthy procedures and overlapping institutional authority are common obstacles that reduce the efficiency of public service delivery. Although coordination forums have been established, they often lack data integration and consistent communication mechanisms across agencies. Therefore, the success of investment policy implementation depends not only on regulatory quality but also on the coherence and efficiency of cross-sectoral governance structures (Raymond et al., 2017).

The relatively low Investor satisfaction score indicates that business actors remain unconvinced about the overall quality of public services in Bontang. While there have been improvements in transparency and access to information, investors continue to face delays, ambiguous procedures, and limited technical assistance. These issues suggest that the government's efforts have not yet fully aligned with the principles of good governance, especially regarding accountability, consistency, and responsiveness. Low investor satisfaction can also undermine regional competitiveness, as investor confidence and perceptions of administrative reliability are critical factors in long-term investment decisions.

The lowest-performing indicator, Responsiveness to diversification agenda (scoring around 48), reflects the limited adaptability of Bontang's investment policies to the changing structure of the regional economy. This implies that policy orientation remains heavily tied to extractive industries—mainly oil and gas—while emerging sectors such as tourism, creative industries, and green economy initiatives have not received sufficient policy attention. Failure to effectively support diversification efforts may slow structural transformation and perpetuate economic dependency on volatile global commodity markets. Over time, such a situation could threaten the sustainability of regional growth and weaken economic resilience.

Overall, the bar chart underscores that the effectiveness of Bontang City's policy implementation remains partial and uneven. The regulatory domain demonstrates relative strength, while operational, institutional, and adaptive aspects require substantial improvement. The observed discrepancies among indicators highlight variations in institutional capacity and the quality of human resources within the local government apparatus. To improve policy effectiveness, the government must strengthen data-driven monitoring and evaluation systems, enhance stakeholder engagement, and foster cross-sectoral policy integration to ensure coherence and synergy in regional development efforts.

From an academic perspective, this visualization serves as an empirical representation of public policy implementation theory, emphasizing the interdependence between policy substance, bureaucratic structure, and socio-economic context. Policy effectiveness cannot be measured solely by the existence of formal regulations but must also consider the government's ability to manage implementation dynamics, respond to contextual changes, and harmonize stakeholder interests. Accordingly, this chart functions not merely as a descriptive tool but as an analytical instrument that highlights priority areas for reform within Bontang's investment governance framework. Strengthening these aspects will be essential for enhancing regional competitiveness and supporting the city's transition toward a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic structure (Mendizabal et al., 2018).

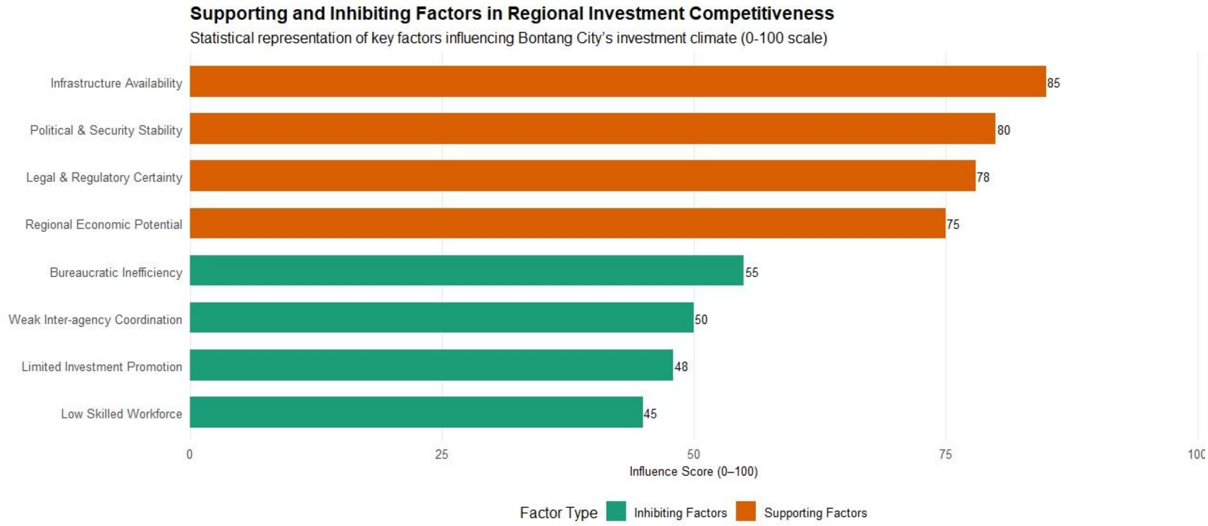

Figure 2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Regional Investment Competitiveness
Source by author procces

Figure 2 is a bar chart that provides a comprehensive statistical representation of the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing regional investment competitiveness in Bontang City. This visualization is particularly relevant for understanding the structural dynamics that determine a region's ability to attract, retain, and expand investment in a competitive economic environment. By presenting both supporting and inhibiting factors, the diagram offers a balanced analytical view of the strengths and weaknesses that characterize the local investment climate, allowing for more nuanced and empirically grounded policy interpretations.

From the statistical visualization, it is evident that the supporting factors dominate the upper section of the chart, with relatively high scores across most indicators. The factor Infrastructure Availability records the highest score of 85, indicating that Bontang's physical and logistical infrastructure remains a key driver of investment competitiveness. This encompasses the city's well-developed industrial zones, proximity to export-oriented ports, and access to transportation and energy facilities. Such infrastructure advantages reduce logistical costs for investors, enhance connectivity, and contribute to efficient business operations. These findings align with classical investment theories which emphasize infrastructure as a primary determinant of capital allocation decisions and as an enabler of regional economic growth (Andrejevic Panic & Cvetanovic, 2025).

The second highest supporting factor is Political and Security Stability, with a score of 80. This score reflects the perception that Bontang enjoys a relatively stable sociopolitical environment that is conducive to business certainty and investor confidence. Political stability is an essential prerequisite for long-term investments, as it minimizes the risk of policy fluctuations and ensures predictability in regulatory enforcement. The stability of the local government, coupled with a cooperative relationship between political institutions and the private sector, strengthens Bontang's image as a secure investment destination. Stability also fosters trust between stakeholders, allowing investors to focus on production and innovation rather than risk management (Barrane et al., 2021).

The factor Legal and Regulatory Certainty, scoring 78, represents another strong component of Bontang's competitive advantage. The existence of clear legal frameworks, including Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2017 on Investment, demonstrates that the city has institutionalized rules and procedures that guide investment processes. This contributes to administrative transparency, provides protection for property rights, and facilitates compliance with regulatory standards. From an academic standpoint, such legal certainty reflects a critical institutional factor within the framework of new institutional economics, where well-defined rules reduce transaction costs and promote trust in governance systems.

Following this, Regional Economic Potential obtains a score of 75, underscoring the city's capacity to diversify beyond its traditional oil and gas base. Bontang possesses considerable potential in downstream processing industries, tourism, and creative economy sectors, all of which can stimulate inclusive and sustainable growth. This economic diversity, when supported by adequate policy instruments, can cushion the region from external shocks such as global commodity price fluctuations. Hence, the relatively high score in this category reflects an acknowledgment of Bontang's latent comparative advantages that can be mobilized through strategic investment planning and effective promotion.

In contrast, the inhibiting factors are represented by noticeably lower scores, revealing the core structural and administrative barriers that constrain the city's investment performance. Bureaucratic Inefficiency, with a score of 55, emerges as one of the primary obstacles. This finding indicates that procedural complexity and administrative delays continue to challenge the business environment. Lengthy approval processes, inconsistent interpretations of regulations, and overlapping mandates between agencies create uncertainty for investors (Rodriguez Lopez et al., 2017). The persistence of bureaucratic inefficiency not only affects transaction costs but also signals weaknesses in institutional coordination and accountability mechanisms within local governance.

The factor Weak Inter-agency Coordination, scoring 50, further reinforces the observation that institutional fragmentation undermines the effectiveness of policy implementation. Coordination gaps among agencies responsible for investment licensing, environmental regulation, and spatial planning lead to policy inconsistencies and inefficiencies in service delivery. In academic terms, such conditions illustrate a lack of policy coherence and highlight the importance of governance integration in achieving effective investment outcomes. Enhancing inter-agency collaboration requires not only regulatory reform but also the establishment of communication platforms, data integration systems, and collective accountability mechanisms.

The third inhibiting factor, Limited Investment Promotion, receives a score of 48, suggesting that Bontang's promotional strategies remain insufficient to effectively market the region's investment potential. Despite its industrial strengths, the city appears to lack a proactive, data-driven promotion strategy that targets specific investor groups or sectors. The absence of promotional visibility in national and international forums limits the inflow of new investors. From a policy perspective, this highlights the need for an investment promotion agency or dedicated unit that can strategically manage regional branding, conduct investor outreach, and develop incentive schemes aligned with local comparative advantages.

The lowest-scoring factor, Low Skilled Workforce, with a score of 45, signifies a structural challenge that directly affects the sustainability of investment in the long run. A shortage of adequately skilled human resources constrains industrial diversification and innovation capacity. In Bontang, this issue is particularly relevant in the context of transitioning from extractive industries to more knowledge-based and service-oriented sectors. The lack of alignment between educational institutions and market demands exacerbates this gap. Consequently, human capital development must be prioritized as an integral part of investment policy to ensure that workforce competencies match industrial needs. This finding resonates with the human capital theory, which posits that the productivity and adaptability of a workforce are crucial determinants of regional competitiveness.

Overall, the statistical representation underscores a duality in Bontang's investment competitiveness—strong physical and institutional foundations coexist with significant administrative and human resource challenges. The gap between supporting and inhibiting factors suggests that while the city has built essential structural advantages, it must now focus on institutional reforms and capacity-building measures to sustain and amplify these gains. From a governance perspective, improving bureaucratic efficiency, enhancing coordination, and investing in human resource development should be prioritized to bridge the disparity between potential and performance.

From an analytical standpoint, the grouped bar chart functions not merely as a descriptive tool but as a diagnostic framework that identifies the leverage points for policy intervention. The higher scores in supporting factors indicate that Bontang already possesses the fundamental prerequisites for investment growth, while the lower scores among inhibiting factors provide clear policy entry points for reform. In this sense, the visualization serves both a practical and theoretical purpose: it operationalizes the concept of competitiveness within an empirical structure and illustrates how local governance, institutional capacity, and socioeconomic dynamics interact to shape investment performance.

Therefore, the diagram conveys a crucial academic insight—that competitiveness is not a static attribute but a product of governance quality, institutional learning, and adaptive policy capacity. Strengthening these dimensions will determine whether Bontang can transform its current advantages into long-term economic resilience and achieve a balanced, sustainable investment climate aligned with regional development goals.

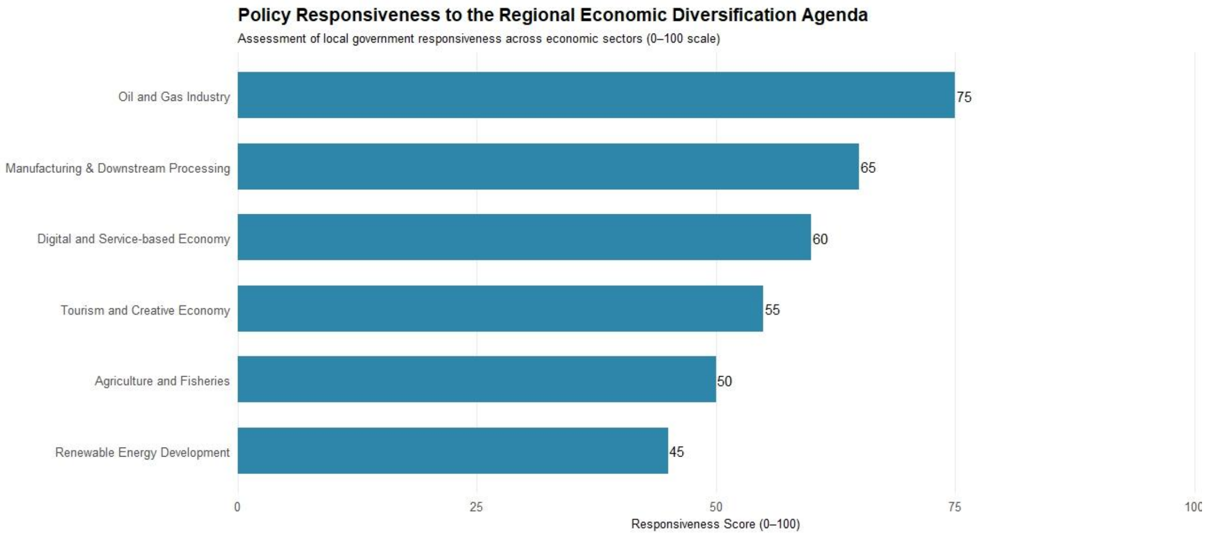

Figure 3. Policy Responsiveness to the Regional Economic Diversification Agenda
Source by Authors Processes

Figure 3 represents the responsiveness of the Bontang City Government's policies to the regional economic diversification agenda. This visualization serves as an analytical tool to assess how well regional public policies adapt to changes in the regional economic structure and respond to the demands of sectors outside the traditionally dominant oil and gas industry. In the context of Bontang—which has historically relied on extractive industries—the level of policy responsiveness is crucial in determining the city's capacity to transition to a more diversified, resilient, and sustainable economic structure.

The chart presents six major economic sectors that are relevant to Bontang's developmental trajectory: the oil and gas industry, manufacturing and downstream processing, tourism and creative economy, agriculture and fisheries, renewable energy development, and the digital and service-based economy. Each sector is assigned a Responsiveness Score ranging from 0 to 100, reflecting the perceived level of governmental adaptability and proactive policy engagement in supporting the sector's growth. The visual hierarchy of the bars demonstrates significant variation across these sectors, indicating that while certain policy domains exhibit a moderate degree of responsiveness, others remain underdeveloped and insufficiently prioritized within the city's policy framework.

The oil and gas industry, which records the highest responsiveness score of 75, continues to occupy the central position in Bontang's economic policy. This score suggests that government institutions remain most responsive to policy needs related to this traditional sector. High responsiveness in this domain can be attributed to the sector's long-standing integration into the city's fiscal structure, labor market, and spatial planning. The oil and gas sector has historically shaped the city's economic identity, thus explaining why policy instruments, bureaucratic routines, and investment incentives remain heavily aligned with it. However, from an academic perspective, this persistent prioritization also reflects the structural inertia of a resource-dependent economy, where policy responsiveness tends to favor established industries rather than emerging sectors. This dynamic reveals the challenge of path dependency—a situation where existing institutional and policy frameworks limit the government's ability to reorient its focus toward diversification.

The manufacturing and downstream processing sector follows with a score of 65, indicating moderate policy responsiveness. This result demonstrates a gradual yet important policy shift from primary resource extraction toward value-added industrial activities. The local government's responsiveness in this domain is evident in its efforts to promote downstream processing of raw materials, encourage industrial clustering, and attract manufacturing-related investments. However, the score also implies that institutional readiness, infrastructure development, and workforce skills are still evolving. The moderate responsiveness suggests that while the government recognizes the sector's strategic role in economic diversification, the supporting regulatory and financial mechanisms have not yet fully matured. From a governance standpoint, this reflects an ongoing process of policy adaptation, where institutional learning and cross-sectoral collaboration remain essential for sustaining industrial transformation.

The tourism and creative economy sector, with a score of 55, represents the emerging potential of Bontang's economic diversification strategy. This moderate-to-low score indicates that although policy attention toward tourism and creative industries has increased, it has yet to translate into comprehensive strategic planning or concrete programmatic action. Limited promotional activities, insufficient tourism infrastructure, and weak coordination between cultural institutions and local enterprises constrain the sector's growth. The relatively lower responsiveness may also reflect a lack of alignment between local policy instruments and national-level tourism development agendas. Nonetheless, the increasing recognition of this sector in public discourse marks a positive development toward economic pluralization. As seen in global experiences, creative economies often require not only regulatory flexibility but also social innovation and community-based entrepreneurship, which demand a higher level of local policy engagement and support.

The agriculture and fisheries sector, with a score of 50, shows limited responsiveness, revealing the marginal position of this sector in Bontang's urban-industrial economy. Despite its relevance for food security and local livelihoods, agricultural and fisheries development has not been a major focus of local policy. The relatively low responsiveness score implies that resource allocation, institutional capacity, and market linkages remain inadequate to support rural-based economic activities. In many urban-industrial regions, such as Bontang, sectors like agriculture are often overshadowed by high-revenue industrial sectors, leading to imbalances in policy attention. This finding underscores the need for a more inclusive approach to economic diversification that recognizes the contribution of primary sectors to sustainable local development and social equity.

The renewable energy development sector, which records the lowest responsiveness score of 45, highlights a significant gap in policy adaptation to global sustainability trends. Despite the growing importance of renewable energy in national and international policy agendas, Bontang's local policy responsiveness remains low. The lack of targeted incentives, technical capacity, and regulatory frameworks to support renewable projects suggests a slow transition toward green economic practices. This limited responsiveness may stem from the city's continued dependence on fossil fuels and the absence of institutional mechanisms for integrating environmental sustainability into local economic policy. From an academic lens, this represents a missed opportunity for aligning local economic strategies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Strengthening responsiveness in this area would not only enhance energy security but also position Bontang as a model for sustainable industrial transformation.

The digital and service-based economy, with a score of 60, occupies a middle position in the chart, suggesting a growing but still incomplete adaptation to the digital transformation agenda. The government has begun promoting e-governance initiatives and supporting digital entrepreneurship, yet the pace of adaptation remains modest. The moderate score reflects both potential and limitation: while there is awareness of the need for digital transformation, challenges persist in infrastructure readiness, digital literacy, and integration between private and public digital ecosystems. Enhancing responsiveness in this sector requires more strategic investment in ICT infrastructure, partnerships with educational institutions, and support for startups that can drive innovation and employment in non-traditional sectors.

Collectively, the bar chart illustrates a pattern of uneven policy responsiveness, where traditional sectors continue to dominate policy attention, while newer and more sustainable sectors receive limited institutional support. This unevenness highlights the structural and cognitive barriers that often accompany economic transitions in resource-dependent regions. From a governance perspective, it points to the necessity of adopting a more holistic and anticipatory policy approach—one that not only maintains existing industrial stability but also encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability.

Academically, the visualization supports theories of adaptive governance and policy responsiveness, which emphasize that effective diversification requires governments to be dynamic, learning-oriented, and capable of responding to changing socio-economic contexts. The data imply that while Bontang's local government demonstrates moderate responsiveness, it still operates within a conventional industrial policy framework. The transition toward a diversified economy thus depends on institutional learning, stakeholder participation, and strategic policy integration across sectors.

The diagram reveals that the Bontang City Government has made notable progress in certain policy areas but remains constrained by structural dependence on traditional industries. Increasing responsiveness toward emerging sectors such as renewable energy, tourism, and the digital economy is essential for achieving long-term economic sustainability. The visualization thus not only depicts quantitative differences among sectors but also serves as a diagnostic tool for identifying policy gaps and formulating more inclusive, forward-looking strategies for economic transformation in Bontang

The implementation of investment policies in Bontang City demonstrates that policy effectiveness depends not only on the existence of formal regulations but also on the government's ability to translate these frameworks into consistent, measurable, and impactful actions. The local government has attempted to enhance the investment climate through initiatives such as the Online Single Submission (OSS) system, the establishment of the Public Service Mall, and the enactment of Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2017 on Investment. These measures were designed to create legal certainty and administrative efficiency, yet their implementation has revealed a gap between normative design and practical outcomes. Licensing processes remain slow, bureaucratic coordination is fragmented, and the digital transformation of services is constrained by limited human resource capacity. Consequently, while the institutional foundation for investment has been established, its operational effectiveness remains below expectations. Enhancing digital literacy among civil servants, strengthening inter-agency communication, and establishing an integrated data system are crucial steps to improve overall policy effectiveness and ensure tangible impacts on regional investment growth (Ishengoma & Shao, 2025).

The competitiveness of Bontang's investment environment is shaped by a combination of supporting and inhibiting factors that reflect both structural advantages and institutional weaknesses. On the positive side, the city benefits from well-developed infrastructure, political stability, legal certainty, and a favorable geographic position that supports trade and industrial activity. These strengths contribute to investor confidence and ease of doing business. However, several barriers hinder the full realization of Bontang's investment potential. Bureaucratic inefficiency, weak coordination among local agencies, limited investment promotion, and a shortage of skilled labor continue to constrain competitiveness. Lengthy licensing procedures and overlapping authorities create administrative uncertainty, while the lack of proactive promotion strategies limits the city's visibility among potential investors. Addressing these challenges requires institutional reform focused on bureaucratic simplification, coordination improvement, and human capital development, ensuring that the local workforce can meet the evolving demands of a diversifying regional economy (Meléndez et al., 2015).

Policy responsiveness toward economic diversification remains a critical dimension of Bontang's development strategy. Historically dependent on oil and gas, the city now faces the challenge of adapting its policies to support emerging sectors such as downstream manufacturing, tourism, creative industries, and renewable energy. The findings suggest that government responsiveness toward these new sectors is still relatively low compared to traditional industries, indicating a structural bias in policy orientation. This limited responsiveness is rooted in institutional rigidity, insufficient policy innovation, and weak integration between economic and educational strategies (Rapini et al., 2017). To promote diversification effectively, policies must become more adaptive and evidence-based, aligning with long-term development priorities and the global sustainability agenda. Strengthening collaboration among local government, private sector, and academia will be essential to ensure that diversification policies are inclusive, context-sensitive, and capable of generating new growth drivers beyond extractive industries.

Overall, the effectiveness, competitiveness, and responsiveness of Bontang's investment policies are deeply interconnected dimensions that collectively determine the city's economic transformation capacity. The government's current efforts reveal a transition from administrative reform toward strategic governance; however, uneven policy performance across sectors demonstrates that further institutional learning and coordination are necessary. Sustainable economic development in Bontang will require an integrated policy framework that links investment facilitation, workforce readiness, and innovation promotion under a single vision of economic resilience. In this regard, the local government must move beyond short-term regulatory efficiency and embrace a holistic approach centered on adaptive governance, cross-sectoral collaboration, and continuous policy evaluation to achieve a truly diversified and competitive regional economy.

CONCLUSSION

The analysis of investment policy implementation in Bontang City reveals that while significant progress has been made in establishing regulatory frameworks and administrative reforms, the overall effectiveness, competitiveness, and responsiveness of these policies remain uneven across sectors. The government's efforts through digitalization initiatives, infrastructure improvement, and legal certainty have laid an important foundation for creating a more conducive investment climate; however, persistent challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency, weak institutional coordination, limited investment promotion, and inadequate human resource capacity continue to hinder optimal outcomes. The findings underscore the need for a more integrated and adaptive governance approach that links investment policy with economic diversification, human capital development, and innovation. For Bontang to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic transformation, local policy must evolve beyond procedural compliance toward proactive and collaborative strategies that anticipate global economic shifts while empowering local industries and communities to participate in long-term regional competitiveness.

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