

The Role of Utilizing Zakat in Maintaining Environmental Sustainability

Sudaryanto¹, Sujianto², Muchid³ and Febri Yuliani⁴

Abstract

The National Zakat Amil Agency of Riau Province is one of the agencies that can be involved in preserving the environment. The phenomenon, in this case, is that Baznas Riau Province has the Riau Makmur and Riau Cares Program. The rate of environmental damage in Riau Province was still high, and the poverty rate in Riau Province was still high. In order for the program that has been formulated to be implemented well, it must meet the standard components and objectives, resources, characteristics of the implementing agencies, inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities, disposition of implementors, economic social and political conditions. The research was conducted at the National Zakat Agency of Riau Province (Baznas Prov Riau). The informants in this research were the Chair of the Riau Provincial Baznas, Deputy Chair of the Riau Provincial Baznas, the Riau Province Indonesian Mosque Prosperity Idaroh Management, the Pekanbaru City Indonesian Da'wah Council Management, the Zakat Collection Unit PT Indah Kiat Pulp & Paper, Muzakki and Mustahik. The data used in this research were primary data and secondary data. Observation, interviews and documentation carried out data collection techniques. Data analysis uses the Miles & Huberman model, which includes the flow of reduction, presentation and conclusions. Based on research conducted, the National Amil Zakat Agency of Riau Province had programs related to environmental sustainability. This program was in accordance with the National Zakat Amil Agency Regulation Number 3 of 2018 concerning the Distribution and Utilization of Zakat.

Keywords: Utilization, Zakat, Sustainability and Nature

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Environmental sustainability is the responsibility of all parties, not only agencies in the environmental sector such as the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia (KLHK RI), the Environmental Service or others. Other agencies can also support environmental sustainability so that concerns about increasing global warming can be overcome. The National *Zakat* Amil Agency of Riau Province (*Baznas*) is one of the agencies that can be involved in preserving the environment. This is done through programs that utilize *Zakat* or productive funds, for example, in the agricultural, plantation, livestock, and fisheries sectors. *Baznas* Riau Province is an institution that manages *Zakat* at the provincial level.

Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2021 shows that the increase in greenhouse gas effects arises from human behaviour, including forest destruction, which reduces CO₂ absorption capacity, and oil-fueled vehicle engines. The occurrence of climate change that is less conducive starts from high greenhouse gas emissions, causing the greenhouse effect, namely global warming. Data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry for 2021, throughout 2009-2019, the trend of disasters occurring in Indonesia is floods, landslides, tornadoes, droughts, forest and land fires, tidal waves/abrasion, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis. In Riau Province itself in 2023-2024, flooding will also occur in Pekanbaru City, Pelalawan Regency, Indragiri Hulu, Kuantan Singingi, Kampar, Rokan Hulu, Rokan Hilir. The effects of floods and landslides cut off transportation flows across the east right in Pelalawan Regency and across the west in Kampar Regency. Thus, the impact of environmental damage is felt not only locally, such as frequent flooding in Rumbai District, Pekanbaru City, but has also reached regional/provincial, regional, and national international levels. At the international/global level, we have also encouraged every country to

¹ Doctoral Student, Riau University, Indonesia, E-mail: Sudaryanto7548@grad.unri.ac.id, (Corresponding Author)

² Lecturer of Doctor, Riau University, Indonesia

³ Lecturer of Doctor, Riau University, Indonesia

⁴ Lecturer of Doctor, Riau University, Indonesia

strive to reduce the effects of greenhouse gases by implementing various programs that support environmental sustainability.

The National *Zakat Amil* Agency Regulation Number 3 of 2018 Article 14 states that the utilization of *Zakat* is carried out in the economic, health and education sectors. Utilization is a form of optimal use of *Zakat* without reducing its value and usefulness in the form of productive business so that it is effective for the public interest/to benefit the people. The use of *Zakat* in the economic sector can be provided as assistance to alleviate poverty, increase productive capacity and entrepreneurship, improve the welfare of *Mustahik*, and empower *Mustahik* communities on a regional basis and local economic potential. *Mustahik* are people who have the right to receive *Zakat*. In supporting environmental sustainability, the *Mustahik* who can play a role are the poor, poor, amil, converts and origin. They have the potential to be directed to utilize *Zakat* funds in the agricultural, plantation, livestock and fisheries sectors.

So far, *Baznas* Riau Province has distributed the utilization of *Zakat* funds to the economic sector. In 2022, *Baznas* Riau Province will distribute *Zakat* funds through the Riau Prosperous Program amounting to IDR 11,366,238,300 to 1,578 people and institutions. The activity program carried out includes:

Z Mart Program

MSME capital assistance

Regency/City Productive Assistance Program

Group business capital assistance

Distribution through UPZ/*Zakat* Collection Unit.

Nature conservation must be realized for the survival of humans on earth, especially in Riau Province, but up to now, there has been environmental damage in various regions. *Baznas* Riau Province has a role in environmental sustainability through a program that utilizes *Zakat* funds. Therefore, the phenomenon in this case is:

Baznas Riau Province has the Riau Prosperous and Riau Cares Program. 2023, the Riau Care Program will be distributed to 18,346 people/beneficiaries. The Riau Prosperous Program reached 1,092 people/beneficiaries. In 2022, Riau Cares will reach 7,251 people/beneficiaries. The Riau Prosperous program has been distributed to 1,578 beneficiaries/people. (*Baznas* Riau Province, 2024).

The rate of environmental damage in Riau Province is still high, as in 2023, forest and land fires reached 2,623, an increase compared to 2022 1,219 hectares, www.detik.com (2024).

The poverty figures in Riau Province are still high, reaching 485,030 people in 2022 and increasing to 485,660 people in 2023 (BPS, 2024).

The Riau Prosperous Program is a Riau Province *Baznas* program that utilizes *zakat* funds to improve community welfare. This is implemented, among other things, in agriculture, plantations, and fisheries. The Riau Cares Program is a program to overcome/help communities, including those affected by floods, landslides and other disasters. These two programs can be improved in the context of environmental sustainability for *Mustahik*/beneficiaries.

To help minimize the impact of forest and land fires so that environmental sustainability is maintained, *Baznas* Riau Province can participate by implementing a *Zakat* utilization program in this sector. With this involvement, not only Riau Province will benefit, but also national and international benefits.

Luas Terbakar dan Laju Kebakaran Pada KHG Pulau Rangsang 2001-2020

- ☐ Lahan gambut yang kering, selain mudah terbakar, juga sangat cepat laju kebakarannya, bisa hingga ribuan ha/hari.

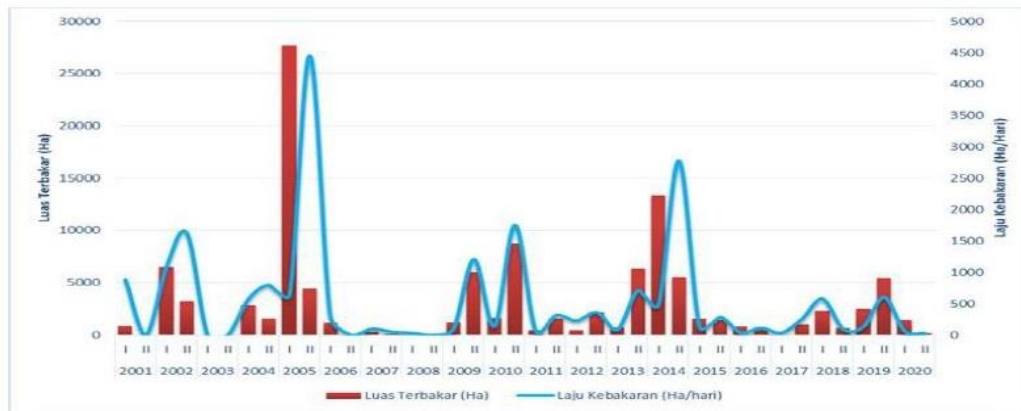


Figure 1. Area and rate of fires in Rangsang Island KHG 2001-2020

Source: Sutikno, 2022.

From this picture, forest and land fires are still occurring, especially in peatlands. Even though it experiences fluctuations, you still have to be careful so that it doesn't hurt society. So far, several parties have been involved, but it still needs to be improved by involving other parties according to their potential.

According to the Riau Provincial *Baznas* program, one of the people most entitled to receive *Zakat* is poor, so they can be directed to carry out businesses in the field of environmental sustainability, such as agriculture, plantations and fisheries. This field has great potential to support and maintain environmental sustainability.

LITERATURE REIEW

Poverty is something that must be overcome collectively, both individually and institutionally. Institutionally, *Baznas* Riau Province has a big role in overcoming poverty. The program for utilizing *Zakat* funds intended for low-income people can be maintained and implemented sustainably. According to Rahmah (2019), the obstacle in distributing *Zakat* is limited human resources, so people who are experts in their field or volunteers are needed. Another thing is policies that are made outside of previously prepared planning.

According to Romdhoni (2017), Utilising *Zakat* impacts *Mustabik's* income; this can be seen from the net income and living needs. Therefore, fund utilization programs, especially in Riau Province, must be managed well to improve the community's welfare and reduce poverty rates. Moreover, the number of poor people in Riau Province is currently increasing. In 2022, there will be 485,030 people, rising to 485,660 people in 2023.

According to Ridlo (2014), *Zakat* is an alternative solution for community welfare and a source of foreign exchange for the country. So, *Zakat* has not only religious value but also economic value. Therefore, it is necessary to utilize and increase the role of *Zakat* in preserving the environment and climate change control/climate village program.

In this way, *Mustabik* can be empowered for the welfare of individuals and society. Empowerment of *Mustabik* can influence the welfare of individuals and society (Pailis et al., 2016). However, motivation/encouragement and budget support must still be given.

Therefore, it needs strengthening through policy support, regulations and other supporting instruments. According to Van Matter & Van Horn (Aslinda, 2023), so that the program that has been formulated can be implemented well, it must meet the standard components and objectives, resources, characteristics of the implementing agencies, inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities, disposition of implementors, economic social and political conditions. If this is fulfilled, it will fulfil the objectives of the program that has been carried out to achieve what is desired.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted at the National *Amil Zakat* Agency of Riau Province (*Baznas* Prov Riau) in Pekanbaru City. This research uses an exploratory qualitative approach. The informants in this research were the Chair of the Riau Provincial *Baznas*, Deputy Chair of the Riau Provincial *Baznas*, the Riau Province Indonesian Mosque Prosperity Idaroh Management, the Pekanbaru City Indonesian Da'wah Council Management, the *Zakat* Collection Unit PT Indah Kiat Pulp & Paper, Muzakki and *Mustabik*. The primary and secondary data used in this research are primary and secondary data. Observation, interviews, and documentation were carried out using data collection techniques. Data analysis uses the Miles & Huberman model, which includes reduction, presentation and conclusion flow (Yusuf, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted, the National *Amil Zakat* Agency of Riau Province (*Baznas* Prov Riau) has programs related to environmental sustainability. This program is governed by the National *Amil Zakat* Agency Regulation Number 3 of 2018 concerning the distribution and utilization of *Zakat*. In these regulations, especially Article 2, distribution is given to *Mustabik*. *Mustabik* consists of the fakir, poor, *Amil* (manager), convert (new convert to Islam), *niqab* (enslaved person), chairman (in debt), *sabadilla* (person who struggles in the way of Allah) and *ibn Nabil* (person who is on a journey).

Then, in Article 14, *Zakat* is used in the economic, educational and health sectors. To preserve the environment, the use of *Zakat* in the financial industry must be prioritized and improved. This is because it is supported by the existence of human resources (*musahik*) that need to be empowered and the existence of capital resources (funds) that will be distributed (aid).

Standards And Objectives

In distributing *Zakat*, *Baznas* Riau Province has followed the applicable provisions by the regulations set by the central government, as well as the *Mustabik* (recipients), namely the National *Amil Zakat* Agency Regulation Number 3 of 2018 concerning the Distribution and Utilization of *Zakat*. Over the last 6 years, in general, there has been an increase, but in 2021 there will be a decline.

Table 1. List of *Zakat* Infaq and Alms Distribution

No	Year	Distribution Amount (Rp)
1	2018	4,754,765,015
2	2019	9,132,129,518
3	2020	15,764,439,132
4	2021	13,320,636,387
5	2022	34,552,607,854
6	2023	54.153.711.272
	Amount	131.678.289.178

Source: *Baznas* Riau Province, 2024.

This amount, for example, in 2023, for the Riau Prosperous Program will reach IDR 12,179,343,373. The Riau Prosperous Program is related to economic independence, capital, and entrepreneurial assistance. One form is for business capital to grow corn. Another program that has been carried out is group business capital assistance (such as assistance with the coffee bean processing program in Kedabu Rapat Village, Rangsang Pesisir District, which is the result of collaboration between *Baznas* Riau Province and Banzas, Meranti Islands District.

According to the Chair of the Riau Province *Baznas*, *Masriada Hasan*, the enormous potential for empowering the community, especially low-income people, takes work to do because some still prefer to be beggars rather than receive assistance for productive businesses. "I have tried to invite the community, individuals, every person I meet. Do you want it or not? We provide assistance; then we will also buy the results. Their answer was that they didn't want to. They prefer to be beggars," it said.

From this condition, it is very clear that *Baznas* Riau Province can play a role in preserving the environment and the community's welfare. These communities are not only urban but also those in coastal, border and outermost areas. However, it still requires policies and assistance to be successful because getting to the goals you want to achieve is sometimes challenging; it requires stages and a long process.

For example, poverty reduction in Gorontalo City was successful because it was supported by high government response, community support and acceptance, Aneta (2010). This program is like capital assistance or revolving funds for productive economic business groups in the community. This also needs to be done in Riau Province, especially the *Amil Zakat* Agency, to improve the results that have been achieved so far.

Resources

To be involved in preserving nature, apart from focusing on helping the needy and poor/bringing prosperity to the people (society), *Baznas* Riau Province has a source of funds that can be distributed. Every year, the funds disbursed tend to increase, and so do the recipients. Applicable regulations allocate these funds, and based on the results of audits that have been carried out, everything runs well and can be accounted for. Therefore, the budget realization has no deviations and is right on target.

Besides financial resources (capital), this institution also has human resources, *Muzak*, managers, and *Mustabik*, who can play a role in preserving nature. *Muzaki*, as a fund distributor, has the potential to increase yearly. The manager (*amil*) is the party who can plan the program targets and focus on being achieved. One of them is the Riau Prosperous program, which supports preserving the environment because agriculture, plantations, fisheries, and animal husbandry are among the forms of activity. If these four activities are successful, they can reduce global warming and the greenhouse effect.

With the potential of *Baznas* Ptov Riau, this institution is involved in preserving nature. For areas with damaged land, planting (agriculture), plantations and animal husbandry can be carried out, while water areas can be used as fisheries according to their respective conditions and potential. Thus, the role of *Baznas* Riau Province is not only for the economy/welfare but also for the environment.

This condition will maintain Indonesia's status as an agricultural country, especially in Riau Province, which wants to achieve food independence within the scope of Riau Prosperous. This means that there are many benefits from the involvement of *Baznas* Riau Province in utilizing *Zakat* funds, especially the role of preserving the environment. Moreover, the Indonesian government has committed to controlling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas effects. Agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry and fisheries are interconnected life cycle flows that support each other.



Figure 2. Longan Plant

Source: Field 2022.

Zakat recipient communities can utilize natural resources such as longan planting in the agricultural sector. According to Beik (2009), Zakat can reduce the number and percentage of poverty rates. In addition, it reduces the depth and severity of poverty. So it is time for Zakat managers, especially Baznas Riau Province, also to get involved in preserving the environment by distributing productive Zakat.

Characteristics Of the Implementing Agencies

To be involved in preserving the environment, Baznas Riau Province has a very good bureaucratic structure, norms/rules and relationship patterns. With its bureaucratic structure, Riau Provincial Baznas can delegate the tasks of utilizing productive Zakat as a program priority to help preserve nature. This field already exists, namely, Zakat distribution, which has also been running, apart from being productive and wasteful.

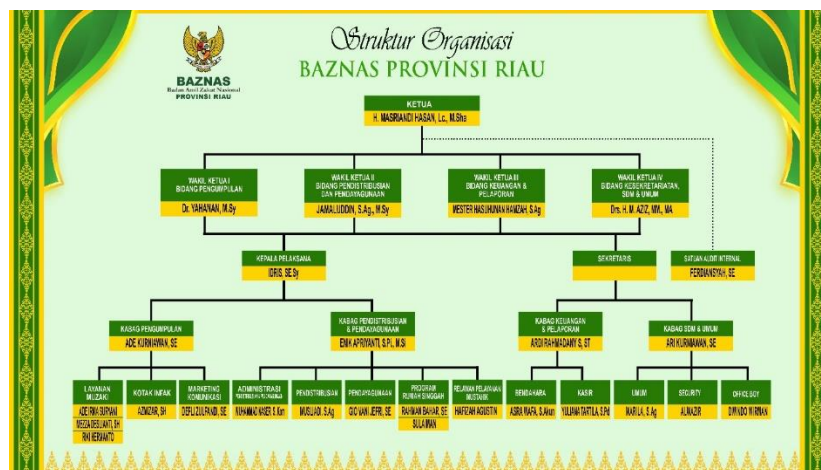


Figure 3. Structure of Baznas Riau Province

Source: Baznas Riau Province, 2024.

The owned bureaucratic structure means that it will not change or complicate existing work, but it will strengthen the involvement in preserving nature. In Baznas Riau Province, there is a structure consisting of a chairperson, deputy chairman, and secretariat which brings together the fields and staff and is directly related to the distribution or distribution of Zakat, including utilizing Zakat or productive funds. So, utilizing Zakat

funds plays an important role in preserving the environment. Zakat is hoped to be distributed productively to agriculture, plantations, livestock, and fisheries.

In terms of norms, there is nothing that will be violated or violated by *Baznas* Riau Province in distributing *Zakat* funds, especially to be involved in preserving nature. By the National *Zakat* Amil Agency Regulation Number 3 of 2018, *Zakat* can be empowered economically. The aim of utilizing *Zakat* in the financial industry is to alleviate poverty, increase productive capacity and entrepreneurship, improve the welfare of *Mustahik*, and empower regionally based *Mustahik* communities and local economic potential.

This regulation strengthens the Riau Province *Baznas* in distributing *Zakat*, especially in helping preserve nature. So far, *much Zakat* has been distributed and is related to nature conservation, such as corn planting and the Divine Blessings II Goat Livestock Group program in Batang Malas Village, West Tebing Tinggi District, Meranti Islands Regency.

This activity can be carried out because *Baznas* Riau Province has a good working relationship with *Baznas* Meranti Islands Regency. It is not only with *Baznas* Meranti Islands Regency that a good relationship is maintained but also with other partners in government and private agencies. Many Riau Province *Baznas* partners also help distribute and be involved in preserving nature.

According to Nafi (2020), the effectiveness of *Zakat* distribution still needs to be improved even though it has reached 90%, as happened in *Baznas* Kudus Regency, Central Java Province. The condition at *Baznas* Riau Province is that not all of the funds collected have been distributed 100%, so it still needs to be improved, one of which could be by focusing on programs related to nature conservation such as agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry and fisheries.

Interorganizational Communication and Enforcement Activities

Implementation will be effective if there is accurate communication with implementers and policy objectives are communicated using various sources of information. So far, *Baznas* Riau Province has done this with partners, local government, private sector and organizations or community groups such as the 3 beneficiaries in West Dumai District, Dumai City, through a hydroponic empowerment program. The types of hydroponic plants that are powered are pak choy, celery and leeks. Many other community potentials still need to be developed according to the capabilities of the users in various regions in Riau.



Figure 4. Monitoring of the Hydroponic Empowerment Program

Source: *Baznas* Riau Province, 2024

Program It is hoped that this can continue to improve the *Mustahik* economy and coordinate with the Dumai City *Baznas* for supervision and assistance in the hydroponic empowerment program. Hydroponic plants implemented by *Baznas* Riau Province and *Baznas* Dumai City support preserving nature as a mitigation effort (reducing the impact of climate change/disasters that may occur).

Productive utilization of *Zakat* will increase economic resources, which have been regulated by the government (Wahyuni, 2017). Therefore, *Baznas* Riau Province needs to improve communication and coordination with related partners so that all programs for utilizing *Zakat* funds benefit all parties while contributing to and preserving nature.

Disposition of Implementors

Based on the research, the managers of *Baznas* Riau Province have a good understanding of how to utilize *zakat* funds (productively). This is because they already have the knowledge and experience to carry out their tasks. This is proven by the success of implementing the program and excellent financial audit results. The managers also welcomed the utilization program presented by the central leadership of the *Amil Zakat* Agency based on the regulations or rules that had been made. Apart from that, managers in Riau are also diligent in monitoring and evaluating the aid that has been distributed.



Figure 5. Awards

Source: *Baznas* Riau Province, 2024.

Over the last five years, Riau Provincial *Baznas* has consistently received awards from Central *Baznas* for its programs. Likewise, financial audits carried out by independent institutions show good performance. In this way, the managers already have a good understanding of the program, as well as the response and intensity of the program, especially in utilizing *Zakat* funds.

Stayagain is increasing success in improving society's welfare and the community's economy through preserving nature, which has been done before. Mitigation action efforts at the site level through climate village programs or community climate programs are an opportunity for *Baznas* Riau Province to distribute productive *Zakat* at the small community level but have an impact on nature conservation. Moreover, internationally, Indonesia has agreed to and participated in signing the Paris Agreement on April 22, 2016, at the UN Headquarters in New York. Regarding leadership, the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia (RI) and the President of the Republic of Indonesia are committed to reducing Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2030 by 29-41%. This is proof and commitment to contribution to reducing Global GHG emissions, transparency framework and means of implementation.

To be involved in this, *Baznas* Riau Province needs to utilize management potential so that utilizing *zakat* funds has many benefits, namely poverty alleviation, community welfare and nature conservation. *Baznas* Riau Province can also partner with companies as assistants for *Mustahik* who receive assistance because they have field experience. Corporate social responsibility programs owned by companies can be collaborated on (Ariyani, 2016).

Economic, Social, and Political Conditions

Since its founding, the role of *Baznas* Riau Province has always been supported by the economic conditions of the community (poverty level), social (education) and politics (leaders and representatives of the people). Therefore, the programs created always receive support from various elements. Regarding the role of *Baznas* Riau Province in preserving nature, it also has the same potential in terms of support.

Poor people, too many people need help from agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry and fisheries. They need to be educated so that life can have many benefits. That's why it must be supported by expertise and skills. Regional heads and people's representatives in Riau also support this. Member of the Riau DPRD, Ade Agus Hartanto, saw that the Riau Provincial *Baznas* had successfully carried out the various programs and activities.

"We welcome all the programs created by Baznas Riau Province for the community's welfare. We believe and trust that the people in it can manage zakat funds in a productive form. Please improve the welfare of poor communities regarding agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry, and fisheries. "Everything will benefit Riau, especially if this impacts nature conservation," Ade said. Thus, all that remains is for *Baznas* Riau Province to implement various environmentally oriented programs.

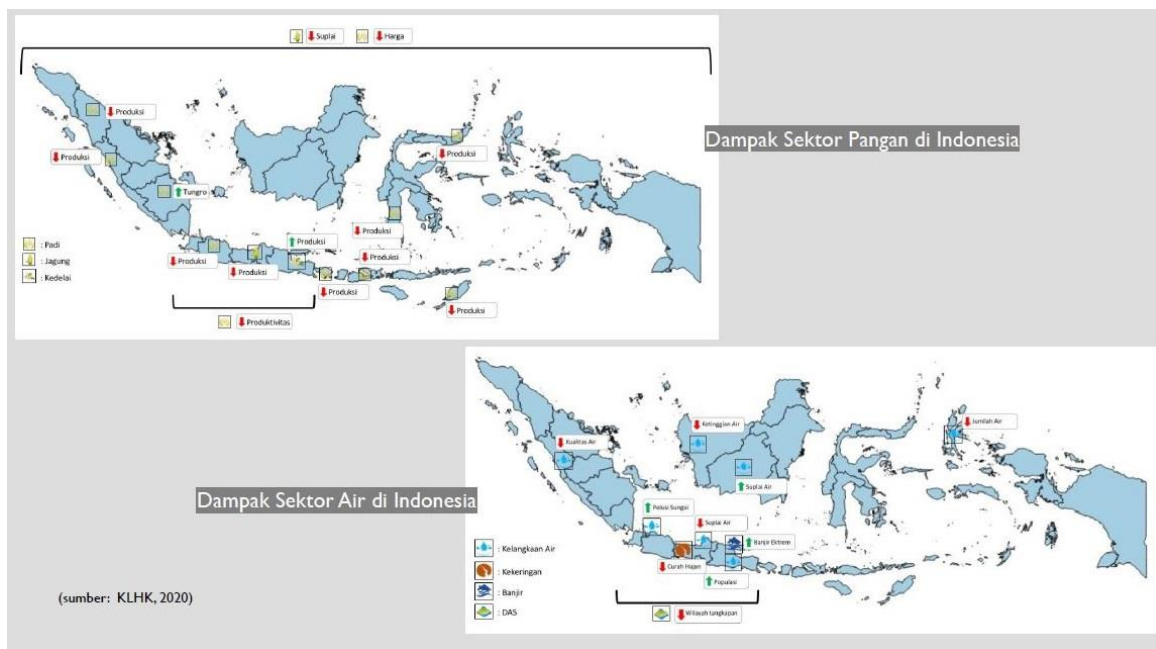


Figure 6. Impact on the Food Sector

Source: KLHK, 2022

The destruction of natural sustainability in Indonesia has caused a food and water crisis, which has also increased the poverty rate. Therefore, *Baznas* Riau Province, through the utilization of *Zakat* funds, can overcome the negative effects of climate change by distributing productive *Zakat* to the community with encouragement to implement programs oriented towards agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry and fisheries.

CONCLUSION

The Riau Province National *Zakat* Amil Agency can be involved in preserving nature through the existing *Zakat* fund utilization program. Through the Riau Prosperous and Riau Peduli Programs, programs oriented towards agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry, and fisheries can be implemented. The orientation of this program can reduce the rate of environmental damage in addition to the hope of *Zakat* itself to reduce poverty rates and increase prosperity.

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