



Risk Mitigation and Food Security in the Free Nutritious Food Program: Implications for National Defense

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes risk mitigation in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) in Indonesia, focusing on its impact on food security and national defense, particularly from a non-military defense perspective. The program aims to improve the nutritional quality of the community through guaranteed distribution of nutritious food, but faces challenges related to operational, financial, governance and oversight risks. A desk-based exploratory qualitative approach was used to explore the ISO 31000:2018 risk management framework, and assess and manage these risks in the context of the MBG. The findings show that the success of the MBG is highly dependent on strengthening distribution infrastructure, transparency in budget management and inter-agency coordination. Dependence on food imports threatens domestic food security and social stability, making it an integral part of national defense. Source triangulation and thematic analysis were used to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings. The research suggests integrated mitigation measures, including surveillance technology and strengthening domestic food security, as key to program sustainability and state stability.

INTRODUCTION

The Free Nutritious Food Program (FFNP) launched by the Indonesian government in January 2025 is part of the larger agenda of Indonesia Emas 2045, which aims to improve the quality of human resources from an early age. With an initial budget allocation of IDR 71 trillion in the first year, the program reflects the national commitment to improved nutrition as the foundation of sustainable development (Indef, 2024). Within the framework of national social policy, MBG also has a strategic dimension that touches on broader aspects of national resilience.

The implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal program poses a number of significant challenges to its implementation. Aris Sarjito (2024) states various obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the program's implementation such as distribution in remote areas. Inadequate infrastructure, such as roads and transportation facilities, are major obstacles in ensuring that nutritious food can be distributed on time and in good condition. This has an impact on the uneven receipt of food among target groups.

Inter-agency coordination is also a significant challenge. Limited synergy between the central government, local governments and implementing agencies in the field often leads to overlapping tasks and inefficient resource allocation. The issue of funding sustainability is also a major concern, especially in regions with limited budget capacity. INDEF (2024) states that the lack of long-term budget allocations can hinder program sustainability and reduce the number of beneficiaries. To overcome these obstacles, a more integrated strategy is needed, such as strengthening infrastructure, improving cross-sector coordination, and diversifying funding sources to ensure the success and sustainability of the program in the future.

Findings from an empirical study by Fatimah et al. (2024) One of the significant challenges in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Policy (MBG) is the gap in monitoring and evaluation. The lack of an effective monitoring mechanism is a major obstacle in ensuring the program runs according to plan. Many remote areas in Eastern Indonesia face geographical and infrastructural challenges, which makes it difficult to monitor the program in the field. As a result, food distribution and service quality cannot always be properly monitored, and the program's goal of improving children's nutritional status is often not achieved.

Weaknesses in accountability and potential corruption challenge this aspect of oversight. It was revealed in the CELIOS Report by Askar, M. W., et al. (2025), that logistics vendors in charge of providing and distributing foodstuffs are a critical point of weakness in the implementation of this program, exacerbated by the lack of accountability that often occurs in massive procurement of goods.

Food security is very important in the perspective of national defense because food is a basic need that supports the stability and security of a country. A country with strong food security will be better able to withstand external pressures, such as embargoes or international conflicts, and thus maintain social and political stability. In other words, food is an important part of a

multidimensional non-military defense and national security system, as ensuring sufficient food availability helps maintain the overall peace and strength of the nation. (Biwilfa, N. (2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food Security as an Instrument of Security

Food security is an important dimension of national security, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. The country faces major challenges related to food dependence on imports and inequality in domestic food distribution. Buzan (1991) argues that food security serves as one of the main components of national security, which is directly related to social and political stability. In this context, food security not only includes physical access to sufficient food, but also includes the sustainability of food supply, which when disrupted can trigger social tensions and destabilize the country.

According to FAO (2020), food security encompasses food availability, physical and economic access to food, and sustainability in the distribution of nutritious food. Strong food security minimizes threats to social and political security, which directly affects national security. Dependence on food imports, for example, not only destabilizes the economy, but also weakens domestic food security, with risks of inflation and reduced purchasing power, especially in rural areas that depend on local agriculture and livestock.

Nutrition Security: Focus on Food Quality

While food security generally includes access to sufficient food, nutritional security focuses more on the quality and diversity of nutritional intake received by the community. Nutritional security includes aspects of adequate nutrition to create a healthy and productive generation, as well as maintaining the long-term health of individuals, especially children and pregnant women (FAO, 2020). In the Indonesian context, unbalanced dietary diversity and low quality of nutrition often lead to malnutrition, which in turn affects the physical growth and mental development of the younger generation.

The Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) aims to address this issue by providing decent nutritious food to vulnerable groups. The program not only aims to meet food needs, but also to ensure that the food distributed contains the necessary nutritional elements to support children's body and brain development and maintain the health of pregnant women.

Risk Management in Food Policy: An ISO 31000 Approach

In the context of public policy, risk management plays an important role in identifying and mitigating potential risks that may affect the success of program implementation. ISO 31000 provides guidance for comprehensive risk management, which includes the identification, assessment, mitigation and monitoring of risks that may arise during the implementation of food policies (Afifa, Y. N., & Santoso, I., 2022). In the context of the Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG), the implementation of effective risk management is important to ensure that food distribution is not disrupted, funds are used efficiently, and the program reaches the right targets.

Risk management in food policy also involves external supervision by state institutions such as BPKP and KPK, which aims to reduce potential corruption and budget inefficiencies. This enables transparency and accountability in program implementation, as well as ensuring that the benefits received by the public are in line with policy objectives.

Food Security and Social Security: The Role of Food in Social Stability

Food security and social security have a close relationship in maintaining national stability. Buzan (1991) emphasizes that threats to food security are often the main trigger for social tensions, which can ultimately lead to political instability. If food security is disrupted, for example due to a global food crisis or natural disaster, then social insecurity can increase, which has a direct impact on state security.

In Indonesia, high dependence on imported food can increase vulnerability to global price fluctuations, which can trigger social tensions, especially among poorer communities. Strengthening domestic food security through policies that promote food diversification and increased local food production is therefore a very important step in ensuring social security and national security.

Linkage of MBG Program to National Food Security

The Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) plays a strategic role in strengthening national food security. The program focuses not only on food distribution, but also on increasing access to nutritious food that supports public health. By ensuring people in underprivileged areas have access to nutritious food, MBG helps reduce dependence on imports and encourages more sustainable local food production.

As explained by Afifa & Santoso (2022), the MBG program serves as a nutrition intervention that also strengthens national food security. This is crucial to minimize dependence on imported food and ensure that the country is more self-reliant in the face of the global food crisis. Strong and equitable food security not only creates a healthy society, but also supports political and social stability which in turn strengthens national defense.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a literature study-based exploratory qualitative approach to analyze strategic risks in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) and its implications for national defense, particularly from a non-military defense perspective. This approach was chosen because the issues studied are multidimensional, involving the relationship between social policy, food security, public risk management and non-traditional national security. The desk study allows researchers to explore a variety of scholarly sources and relevant policy documents without primary data collection (Creswell, 2018).

The main focus of this research is on the linkages between food security, public sector risk management and non-traditional defense. Food security in the MBG program is seen as a strategic element in human capital development and long-term national security. Meanwhile, a risk management framework is used

to identify and assess operational, financial and governance risks in the MBG program, and manage the impact of risks on national resilience.

ISO 31000-based Risk Analysis Process Flow

The ISO 31000-based risk analysis process is conducted through four main steps:

1. Risk Identification: Identify potential risks that affect the success of the MBG.
2. Risk Assessment: Assesses the impact and probability of the risk occurring.
3. Risk Treatment: Managing risk through avoidance, reduction, transfer, or acceptance.
4. Monitoring and Review: Monitor the effectiveness of mitigation measures and make adjustments if necessary.

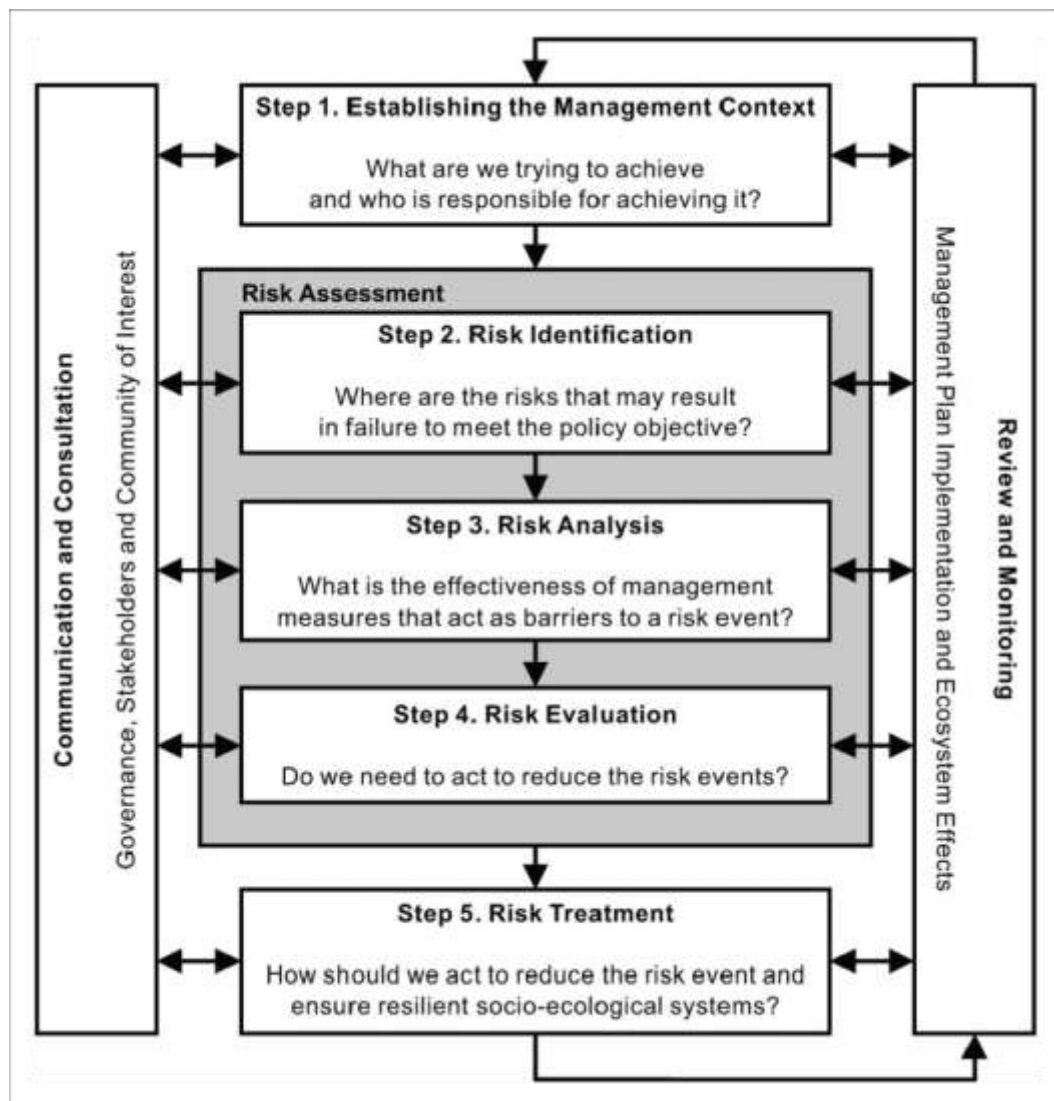


Figure1. Flowchart of the ISO 31000-based risk analysis process: (Creed et al. 2016).

Secondary Data Collection and Reliability

Secondary data were collected through a systematic literature review of sources that met the inclusion criteria. The review focused on sources relevant to food security, risk management and national defense published in the last five years (2020-2024). Only accredited sources, such as indexed scientific journals (Scopus, Google Scholar), national policy documents, and reports of international organizations (FAO) and independent institutions (INDEF), were used in this study.

Data reliability was tested through source triangulation, by comparing findings from various scientific literature, oversight agency reports, and government policy documents. This approach is in line with Creswell's (2018) opinion, which states that source triangulation increases the validity of findings by confirming results from multiple sources. In this way, it is expected that the data obtained can provide a clearer picture of the relationship between food security, risk management and national defense.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through content analysis to examine the meaning of texts and narratives in policy documents and existing scientific literature, and thematic analysis to identify emerging risk patterns. The results were then categorized into four main dimensions: operational risk, financial risk, governance risk, and risk to national resilience. The risk identification, evaluation and mitigation process was conducted using the ISO 31000 framework, with the multidimensional national defense framework as a reference to understand the impact of non-military threats (Buzan, 1991).

Source Triangulation and Validity

To increase the validity and reliability of the study results, source triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from different categories of literature, namely scientific literature, monitoring agency reports, and government policy documents. This process aims to ensure that the results of the analysis are not based on just one perspective, but include a variety of views and relevant data to get a more comprehensive picture of the risks and implications of MBG. Creswell (2018) emphasizes that source triangulation is an effective technique to increase the reliability and credibility of research findings by confirming results from multiple sources.

DISCUSSION

Identification of Strategic Risks in MBG Program Implementation

The various types of risks faced in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG), the impacts that may occur, and the mitigation measures that need to be implemented to minimize these risks are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Identification of Strategic Risks in MBG Program Implementation

Risk Type	Impact	Mitigation
Operational Risk (Logistics, Distribution, Food Quality)	Delays in food distribution reduce food quality, which affects domestic food security and social stability.	Strengthening distribution monitoring using real-time technology and improving logistics infrastructure in remote areas.
Financial and Budgetary Risks (Inefficiency, Budget Leakage, Moral Hazard)	Inefficiencies in budget management and leakage of funds are detrimental to people who need food assistance.	Implementation of a strict external audit system, as well as the use of blockchain technology for budget management transparency.
Governance and Oversight Risks (Transparency, Procurement Process Integrity, Weak Supervision)	Poor coordination between government agencies leads to mistargeting and wasted resources.	Improve coordination among government agencies with integrated information systems to improve transparency and oversight.
Non-Military Security and Defense Risks (Long-term Food Security, Potential Social Instability, Cyber Threats)	Dependence on food imports makes Indonesia vulnerable to global price fluctuations and cyberattacks that could disrupt food distribution.	Strengthening cybersecurity systems in food distribution and developing domestic food production to reduce dependence on imports.

Operational Risk (Logistics, Distribution, Food Quality)

Operational risk is a key challenge in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG). As an archipelago, Indonesia faces major challenges in ensuring timely and quality food distribution to all regions. Remote areas, such as Papua and East Nusa Tenggara, often experience transportation access difficulties and limited logistics infrastructure, which hinders smooth distribution.

Sarjito (2024) mentions that the large number of islands and remote areas in Indonesia hampers timely food distribution, thus affecting the accuracy of meeting the food needs of people who depend on government assistance. Fatimah et al. (2024) revealed that if distribution is not timely, the quality of food that should be fresh will deteriorate, which will reduce the nutritional benefits of the MBG program. Therefore, it is important to strengthen distribution supervision by utilizing real-time technology, as well as improving logistics infrastructure in remote areas.

Financial and Budgetary Risks (Inefficiency, Budget Leakage, Moral Hazard)

Managing a large budget is one of the main risks in implementing the MBG Program, which requires significant funds and careful and transparent management. Although the Indonesian government has allocated a very large budget of around IDR 71 trillion at the start of 2025 and increased to 171 trillion by mid-year, the use of the budget is still often inefficient. Without proper management, the funds could be distributed unevenly or even misused. Sarjito (2024) highlights that there will be many concerns about inefficiencies in the use of the budget. Without efficient management, a large budget could be distributed unevenly, not reach the areas most in need, or even be used in ways that are not in line with the main objectives of the program. This would be detrimental to the people who depend on food assistance from this program.

A report from CELIOS (2025) shows that despite supervisory controls, budget leakages can still occur due to a lack of transparency and moral hazard in fund management, with stakeholders acting for personal gain. Without adequate external auditing and transparent reporting, budget leakages and misuse of funds could undermine the credibility and sustainability of the program. To address this issue, the implementation of a stricter external audit system, as well as the use of technology such as blockchain, can improve transparency and prevent budget leakage.

Governance and Oversight Risks (Transparency, Procurement Process Integrity, Weak Oversight)

Weak governance and oversight are major challenges to MBG implementation. Suboptimal coordination between central and local governments often results in mistargeting in the distribution and use of resources. The government's inability to coordinate well leads to mismatches between budget allocations and the distribution of food received by the community. This is detrimental to beneficiaries, as food distribution is not well-targeted.

Sarjito (2024) notes that poor coordination between central and local government agencies is the cause of mistargeting in program implementation. This leads to an imbalance between budget allocations, food distribution, and the quality received by the community. The government's inability to coordinate well leads to inaccuracies in the distribution and use of resources, which in turn harms beneficiaries.

Rasyid (2025) asserts that without strict supervision, food distribution can be hampered or misused. Therefore, to remedy this, it is crucial to strengthen coordination between government agencies by using an integrated information system, which can increase transparency and efficiency in program management.

Non-Military Security and Defense Risks (Long-term Food Security, Potential Social Instability, Cyber Threats to Digital Distribution Systems)

Food security plays an important role in maintaining social stability and national defense. High dependence on food imports makes Indonesia vulnerable to global price fluctuations. In addition, with the development of technology in food distribution management, there are also cyber threats that can disrupt the smooth running of the program. Cyber-attacks can corrupt beneficiary data or

alter the distribution system, hindering the smooth distribution of well-targeted food.

Sarjito (2024) explains that dependence on food imports can be a serious problem for the country's resilience, as this dependence makes Indonesia vulnerable to global food price fluctuations, which can affect domestic food security. Therefore, the MBG serves as a long-term strategy to reduce dependence on imports and strengthen domestic food security. The program aims to ensure that Indonesia can meet its food needs from domestic production, thereby reducing dependence on other countries for food.

However, with the development of technology to support the distribution and management of MBG data, cyber threats to the food distribution system are also growing. Rasyid (2025) notes that cyberattacks on the digital infrastructure used to manage beneficiary data and food distribution can disrupt the smooth running of the program. These attacks can corrupt data related to beneficiaries, manipulate the distribution system, or even stop the program entirely. Therefore, strengthening the cybersecurity system is essential to maintain the integrity of the system and ensure safe and targeted food distribution.

Risk Implications for Food Security and National Defense

Linkages between MBG Failure and National Food Security Vulnerability

The Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) aims not only to address malnutrition, but also to strengthen national food security. If it fails, Indonesia's food security could be jeopardized, ultimately impacting the country's ability to meet the basic food needs of all its citizens.

Sarjito (2024) explains that MBG is part of a strategy to reduce dependence on food imports, which can increase its vulnerability to external disturbances such as the global food crisis or fluctuations in international food prices. Without a successful MBG, Indonesia's dependence on imported food will grow, making it more vulnerable to supply uncertainties that could affect the country's social and economic stability. Fatimah et al. (2024) that countries that depend on food imports are highly vulnerable to supply uncertainties, which can exacerbate domestic food crises and increase Indonesia's dependence on other countries for food supply. In the context of the MBG, the failure of the program to ensure equitable distribution and procurement of food according to standards will worsen national food security, ultimately destabilizing the country in the long run.

For example, a study by FAO (2023) shows that in countries with low food security, such as some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, food crises have caused social unrest to increase by up to 30% in the past decade, highlighting how food supply uncertainties can fuel social tensions.

Impact on Social Stability and Domestic Security

The impact of the MBG's failure to improve food security is directly related to social stability. Failure to provide sufficient, nutritious and equitable food can increase discontent among the public, potentially leading to social unrest. High dependence on imported food, coupled with the failure of MBG programs to

ensure equitable distribution, has the potential to increase social discontent, which can lead to political instability. The FAO study (2023) shows that in countries with low food security, food crises are directly related to increased social unrest.

Rasyid (2025) emphasizes that secure food security serves to support social stability and domestic security. When people feel that their basic needs are being met through fair and equitable programs, trust in the government will increase, strengthening the country's social resilience and security. Conversely, failure to achieve food security can reduce public trust and increase the risk of domestic instability.

Perspectives on Non-Traditional Defense and National Resilience

In the framework of non-military defense, food security plays an important role in national resilience. Sarjito (2024) explains that food security is not only a matter of fulfilling basic human needs, but also about building the country's resilience to broader crises. Well-maintained food security will strengthen the country's social and economic resilience, so that Indonesia will be better prepared to face potential threats originating from abroad, such as geopolitical tensions, climate change or the global food crisis.

The MBG program acts as a key pillar of social resilience, supporting national resilience to crises. Fatimah et al. (2024) point out that strong food security is directly related to state resilience, as a country that is able to provide food with its domestic resources is less likely to be affected by external crises, both economic and geopolitical in nature. Therefore, the success of MBG in improving domestic food security will have a positive impact on the country's ability to withstand increasingly complex non-military challenges.

In comparison, India and Nigeria have implemented free nutritious meal programs that contribute greatly to national resilience. In India, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, which started in 1995, has served about 125 million children with an annual budget of about \$2.8 billion. Yusriadi (2025) notes that the program generates significant economic impact, with every dollar spent providing a nine-fold economic impact through the local economy. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program has successfully increased student participation and supported the local economy by prioritizing food procurement from local farmers (INDEF, 2024).

These two programs prove that ensuring food security through education not only improves the quality of life but also strengthens the social and economic resilience of the country. The success of the MBG program in Indonesia will have a similar impact in strengthening national resilience.

Evaluation of Governance and Supervision Results by Related Institutions

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) aims to address malnutrition among vulnerable groups, such as children and pregnant women. The program, managed by the National Nutrition Agency (BGN), receives a large budget allocation to distribute nutritious food to the poor. However, despite its noble goals, its implementation is not free from challenges, especially in terms of governance and oversight. Various oversight institutions, including the Financial

and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK), and the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), play an important role in ensuring that the program runs in accordance with the regulations and objectives.

Supervision of the Free Nutritious Meal Program

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) receives close scrutiny from various related institutions, to ensure that the program is running in accordance with the objectives and standards that have been set. One notable case uncovered by the Ombudsman RI in May 2025 was the inaccuracy of beneficiary data collection in some areas. The Ombudsman found that inaccurate data collection led to some groups who really needed assistance not getting access to nutritious food, while other groups who should not have been prioritized received assistance instead. This indicates a lack of data integration between the central and local governments, leading to discrepancies in food distribution.

In addition, in monitoring conducted by BPKP in South Sulawesi in February 2025, it was found that food procurement by some providers did not comply with established standards. BPKP reported that despite efforts to supervise food distribution, foodstuffs sent to certain areas often did not meet the expected quality, and some were no longer fit for consumption. KPK also drew attention to the potential for misuse of funds in food procurement, given the large budget allocated to this program. Despite transparency through the e-procurement system, on-the-ground supervision is still not sufficient to prevent irregularities in procurement. These cases show that despite supervision, there are still many loopholes that need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the MBG program.

These findings reveal various weaknesses in the governance of the MBG program. Inaccurate targeting of beneficiary data, lack of transparency in food procurement, and weak monitoring of food quality are key issues that need to be addressed. Evaluations from these oversight institutions show that although the program has been running, its effectiveness is still plagued by structural and procedural weaknesses in its implementation.

Critically Analyze the Effectiveness of Government Corrective Actions

Although the government has taken a number of corrective measures to improve the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG), its effectiveness still needs to be evaluated more critically. One of the main steps taken is the updating of beneficiary data, which aims to ensure that assistance reaches the right hands. However, although a digitization system has been introduced, implementation on the ground is still limited. Remote areas with limited technological infrastructure are not getting real-time data updates, which results in inaccurate data collection, as revealed by the Ombudsman. Without continuous updating and a more integrated monitoring system, the problem of mistargeting remains a major obstacle for the program.

In addition, although the government has introduced an e-procurement system to improve transparency in food procurement, supervision in the field is still very weak. As found by BPKP, food procurement in some areas did not meet

the expected standards, and some foodstuffs were even expired. The use of technology for transparency is important, but without adequate physical supervision, the quality of food received by beneficiaries is still not guaranteed. Without direct supervision by competent personnel in the field, application-based systems cannot solve the overall food quality problem.

Furthermore, although the KPK highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability in procurement and distribution, the issue of coordination between relevant agencies remains a major obstacle. Lack of coordination between relevant ministries and agencies hinders efficient distribution and leads to confusion in beneficiary determination as well as discrepancies between beneficiary data and actual food distribution. The government needs to ensure that each agency involved has a clear role and can collaborate well, and strengthen supervision in the field to minimize budget misuse and untargeted distribution.

Overall, while the corrective measures taken by the government, such as data updating, e-procurement systems, and application-based supervision, are good steps, major challenges in field supervision and inter-agency coordination still hamper the implementation of this program. The government needs to strengthen direct supervision and ensure that inter-agency coordination is more effective to ensure that the MBG truly delivers optimal benefits to the people in need.

Relevant Risk Mitigation Strategies in the Non-Military Defense Framework

As a mitigation measure to the challenges identified in section 4.1, the next step is to provide recommendations to address the various risks in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program. Risks include logistics, food quality, funding, supervision, and policies directly related to food security and social resilience. With appropriate mitigation measures, the program can run more effectively, efficiently, and contribute to better national resilience.

Logistics issues and uneven food distribution, especially in remote areas, have led to delivery delays and inequalities in food access. To address this, it is important to develop efficient supply chain mechanisms by prioritizing local resources. This approach can reduce distribution costs, improve food quality and support local economies. Technology-based distribution systems, such as real-time monitoring, will ensure timeliness in food delivery and ensure quality is maintained, even in harder-to-reach areas (INDEF, 2024).

In addition to logistical issues, food quality that does not meet nutritional standards is also a major risk to the success of the MBG program. To mitigate this risk, the implementation of strict quality control on food providers is necessary. More detailed supervision at each stage of food procurement and distribution will help ensure that the food distributed meets the set nutritional standards. This will not only improve the nutritional status of beneficiaries but also optimize the desired outcomes of the MBG program (Askar, M. W., Muhammad, G. D., Fikri, B., & Darmawan, J., 2025).

The next challenge is related to funding, where budget limitations can hinder the achievement of program objectives. Therefore, advocating for a higher budget as well as partnerships with the private sector and NGOs can support the

long-term sustainability of the program. This collaboration will help expand the financial capacity to support quality and equitable food distribution, as well as strengthen the program's carrying capacity in the face of various financial challenges (INDEF, 2024).

In the context of monitoring and evaluation, it is important to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system. This system allows for timely assessment of program impacts and provides room to make adjustments and improvements where necessary. The application of data-driven technology will increase transparency in program management and facilitate quick and accurate decision-making, which is critical to ensure program effectiveness and efficiency in the long run (Askar et al., 2025).

In terms of policy advocacy, strengthening the legal and regulatory framework that supports the program is critical. Policymakers need to play an active role in ensuring that the MBG program is integrated with the broader national health strategy. Strong policies and clear regulatory support will strengthen the management and implementation of the MBG program and ensure that it achieves its objectives optimally (Ritonga & Sazali, 2025).

Finally, partnerships with local organizations, universities and health institutions are essential to improve resource mobilization and expand the reach of the program. This cooperation can strengthen food distribution and ensure that the assistance provided is well-targeted, as well as improve the social and economic impact of the MBG program. Collaboration between these various sectors will strengthen local capacity in managing food security, which in turn will enhance social security and national security (Askar et al., 2025).

Through these mitigation measures, the MBG program will not only support food security, but also contribute to social security and non-military defense, which are increasingly important in the face of potential global food threats and enhance the overall stability of the country.

Synthesis and Discussion

This article makes an important contribution to social policy studies and defense studies by highlighting the role of the Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) in strengthening food security and national defense. The main contribution of this article is to integrate social policies related to malnutrition prevention and food security, as well as non-military defense.

Strong food security not only improves the quality of life, but also ensures the country is resilient in the face of domestic and external crises. MBG serves as a non-military defense strategy, strengthening national resilience by maintaining the country's social stability and security. Food security is an important aspect of national defense, as dependence on unsafe food can destabilize the country's social and political stability.

Through a food risk mitigation approach, this article links food policy with national security, introducing a broader perspective that encompasses state resilience to threats, both military and non-military. This distinguishes the article from social policy studies that focus more on public health and welfare.

These findings confirm and enrich previous research. Fatimah et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of domestic food production that reduces dependence on imported food, strengthening the country's resilience. Aji (2025) also notes that programs such as the MBG play a role in addressing malnutrition, which has the potential to reduce the quality of human capital. This article confirms that a systemic approach linking food policy with national security can enhance the success of the MBG.

This article contrasts the findings of previous studies that view food security as separate from national defense. This article incorporates Buzan's (1991) multidimensional security theory, which emphasizes that state security depends not only on military power, but also on economic security and social security. In this context, food security becomes an integral part of national security.

In the context of risk governance, this article proposes an integrated approach to food risk management, involving coordination between the government, private sector and communities to reduce food dependency and improve domestic food security. The article emphasizes that food policy should be a priority in national development, given its impact on health, economy and national security.

Finally, in the study of civil defense, this article suggests that food security should be considered as part of the total defense system to counter threats, both military and non-military. By involving TNI and Polri in the oversight of the MBG, Indonesia's food security can be maintained, supporting national resilience against external and internal threats.

Study Limitations

This study has limitations in terms of field data, especially in relation to the impact of the MBG program in remote areas that lack adequate technology and information systems. Further research involving direct surveys and interviews with beneficiaries will provide a more in-depth picture. A long-term evaluation of the impact of MBG on national food security is also needed to understand the long-term sustainability of the program.

Future Research Directions

Future research should focus on field research, with surveys and interviews to obtain more accurate primary data. Long-term evaluation of the program's impact as well as technological innovations in food distribution, such as the use of blockchain and real-time data for monitoring, can improve the transparency and efficiency of MBG management.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Free Nutritious Food Program (MBG) aims to strengthen national food security by providing nutritious food to the community, especially poor families. However, the implementation of this program faces various strategic risks that threaten its success, including operational risks such as food distribution and quality control issues, financial risks related to budget management inefficiencies and leakages, and governance and supervision risks caused by a lack of coordination between agencies. In addition, food safety risks

and cyber threats to the digital distribution system are also major challenges that must be addressed.

Failure to manage these risks could exacerbate Indonesia's dependence on imported food, increasing its vulnerability to global food crises and threatening social stability and national security. Food security is therefore not only a health issue, but also part of national defense. The practical implication for the Ministry of Health (MOH) is to strengthen food quality supervision, while the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) should support more sustainable domestic food production to reduce dependence on imports. The Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture should improve inter-agency coordination to ensure that food distribution is well-targeted and budget management is more efficient.

Mitigation measures that need to be implemented include the application of ISO 31000:2018 for more systematic risk management, cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies, as well as digitization of the supervisory system to ensure real-time food quality. In addition, community participation in food distribution supervision and the involvement of national defense elements in food security management as part of the total defense system are essential to improve the effectiveness of this program.

Reflections on program implementation show that the success of MBG depends on inter-sectoral collaboration and structured risk management. Strong food security supports social resilience and state security, and is a key pillar in national defense. Therefore, appropriate policies and integrated mitigation measures need to be implemented consistently to achieve the program's long-term goals.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of MBG on social security, food security, and national defense stability, and to improve the distribution system and budget management to strengthen domestic food security in Indonesia's long-term defense strategy.

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