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RESEARCH

The Utilization of Abandoned Land from the Perspective of Sustainable Land Management: An Analysis of Indonesian Agrarian Law

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Abstract

Land carries a social function under Article 6 of Law No. 5 of 1960, yet abandoned land remains widespread in Indonesia, prompting the enactment of Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 on the Regulation of Abandoned Areas and Land. Existing studies on abandoned land and the Land Bank Agency mainly address agrarian reform, institutional discretion, and land grabbing risk, while limited attention has been given to long term productivity and environmental sustainability. This study aims to assess the extent to which the regulatory framework for abandoned land utilization aligns with the principles of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and the social function of land rights. It employs a normative legal method using a statute approach, analyzing Law No. 5 of 1960 and Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 alongside related regulations on State General Reserve Land, agrarian reform, and the Land Bank Agency. The findings indicate that the regulation strengthens the land administration pillar through accelerated status determination and clearer utilization channels, but leaves the land policy and information infrastructure pillars underdeveloped, lacking measurable sustainability indicators. This reveals a normative gap between administrative acceleration and substantive SLM outcomes, extending abandoned land discourse toward the sustainability of its utilization.

Keywords: Abandoned Land, Sustainable Land Management, Agrarian Law, Land Bank Agency, Social Function of Land Rights.

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INTRODUCTION

Land is a natural resource that plays a strategic role in human life, both as a place to live and as a source of livelihood (Subekti et al., 2019). However, the high strategic value of land is not always accompanied by optimal utilization and management. In practice, there is still land that remains unutilized, uncultivated, or not utilized in accordance with its designated purpose, thereby potentially giving rise to agrarian and environmental issues.

Article 6 of Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles affirms that every land right carries a social function. Therefore, land should not be utilized solely for private interests or left unused, as this can hinder the utilization of land for the welfare of society (Prasista et al., 2022). The purpose of granting land rights is fundamentally to ensure that land is utilized for social purposes, thereby benefiting the welfare of society and the state. On the other hand, the government, as the regulator and grantor of rights, has an obligation to exercise oversight to prevent legal violations, including the abandonment of land by rights holders (Utami & Cahyaningtyas, 2021).

To encourage optimal land utilization and prevent the occurrence of abandoned land, the government issued Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 on the Regulation of Abandoned Areas and Land. In Article 1, paragraph (2) of the Government Regulation, “Abandoned Land” is defined as land subject to land rights, land under management rights, and land acquired based on the Basis of Land Control that is intentionally not cultivated, not used, not utilized, and/or not maintained.

According to data from the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (ATR/BPN), during the first year of the ATR/BPN Minister’s mandate, 5,114.23 hectares of abandoned land were identified in five provinces. During the same period, Decisions on the Utilization of State General Reserve Land (TCUN) were issued covering an area of 5,198.13 hectares, with 96% of that area (5,006.68 hectares) allocated directly to the Agrarian Reform program (Sulistyo, 2025). The large area involved not only highlights the significant scale of the problem but also indicates that there is still a great deal of land that has not been optimally utilized in accordance with its designated purpose.

As State General Reserve Land (TCUN), this land can subsequently be utilized to support sustainable development as stipulated in Article 40 of Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, including through agrarian reform, national strategic projects, the Land Bank, other state reserves, and specific interests designated by the Minister. This utilization is aimed at ensuring that previously unused land can be optimally utilized to benefit the community and support economic development (Saputra, 2022).

In this context, the concept of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) is relevant as a framework for analyzing the utilization of abandoned land. SLM is an approach to managing and utilizing land resources to meet human needs while ensuring long-term productivity and preserving environmental functions (Byrne et al., 2022). Recent studies support this interconnected view, SLM interventions generate well-being outcomes precisely because changes in the physical and social environment reinforce one another, so improvements in one dimension cannot be assessed apart from their social consequences (O’Byrne et al., 2022; Zhan, 2023). Thus, SLM is a relevant approach for the utilization of abandoned land, as it treats environmental, social, and human well-being aspects as interrelated rather than separable outcomes.

Moreover, SLM is relevant not only because it promotes sustainable development, but also because abandoned land may generate different environmental and social outcomes depending on how it is managed after abandonment. Therefore, the utilization of abandoned land should be assessed not merely by its legal or administrative reallocation, but also by its long-term productivity, social benefits, and environmental sustainability.

Despite the theoretical relevance of SLM, studies on land governance in Indonesia have so far emphasized different concerns. Previous research on abandoned land and the Land Bank Agency in Indonesia has highlighted tensions between agrarian reform and investment-oriented land utilization. (Mahfud et al., 2024) found that the Land Bank Agency's authority to facilitate investment tends to be structurally stronger than its role in agrarian reform, while (Alimuddin et al., 2024) raised concerns that the Agency's broad discretion in allocating land for business partnerships could facilitate land grabbing.

A similar tension has also been identified in international studies. (Zhou et al., 2021) show that within the context of land law reform in China, legal regulation tends to follow rather than precede the direction of investment and agrarian modernization policy, such that land consolidation through land-transfer schemes risks opening space for land grabbing driven by aggressive capital penetration from both private and public sectors. Similarly, (Xu, 2018) notes that under China's decentralized system, local governments particularly at the county and township levels are granted broad authority to reallocate resources such as land, and tend to attract foreign investment to generate revenue, especially after fiscal reforms reduced other sources of local government income; this condition, in turn, has driven land-grabbing practices involving transnational capital.

This suggests that the utilization of abandoned land should be assessed not only from the perspective of agrarian reform or investment, but also based on whether its governance ensures sustainable and socially beneficial outcomes. The findings from Indonesia and China indicate that tensions between investment and agrarian reform are common in contexts where land authorities have broad discretion without strong safeguards. However, existing studies have mainly focused on agrarian justice, institutional control, land grabbing, and investment, while limited attention has been given to long-term productivity and environmental sustainability. This gap becomes more relevant after the enactment of Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, which provides various mechanisms for utilizing abandoned land under Law No. 5 of 1960, particularly the social function of land rights in Article 6. This strengthens the rationale for using SLM as an analytical framework in this study.

This study uses a normative legal approach to examine the regulation of abandoned-land utilization under Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 in relation to Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles. It analyzes abandoned-land utilization through the perspective of Sustainable Land Management (SLM), which emphasizes long-term productivity, social benefits, and the preservation of environmental functions. Accordingly, this study aims to assess the extent to which the regulatory framework aligns with SLM principles and the social function of land rights under Indonesian agrarian law.

This study begins by outlining the legal framework governing abandoned land under Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 and its relation to the social function of land rights under the Basic Agrarian Law. It then examines this framework through the three core dimensions of Sustainable Land

Management productivity, social benefit, and environmental preservation to assess the extent to which current regulatory mechanisms for utilizing abandoned land reflect sustainable governance principles.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies the normative legal research method. This method observes legal rules by considering both the vertical hierarchy of legislation and the horizontal relationships and consistency among legal provisions (Marzuki, 2008). Normative legal research bases its analysis on applicable laws and regulations relevant to the legal issues under study (Benuf et al., 2020).

This method is doctrinal in nature, treating the legal system itself as both the object and the analytical framework, and is intended to systematize the currently applicable law (*lex lata*) rather than to test it empirically against social behavior (Negara, 2023). It is considered appropriate here because the regulation of abandoned land in Indonesia is structured hierarchically, from the Basic Agrarian Law as the foundational norm down to its implementing government regulation, so that assessing its utilization requires analyzing the internal consistency of these norms rather than field-level social practice.

The approach used in this study is the statute approach. According to Peter Mahmud Marzuki, the statute approach involves examining all laws and regulations relevant to the issue at stake. This approach was selected because abandoned land in Indonesia is governed through multiple layers of legislation, from the Basic Agrarian Law to its technical implementing regulation, so that a proper understanding of the issue requires the systematic examination of these instruments in relation to one another rather than relying on a single regulatory text in isolation.

This approach is used to examine the legal provisions governing the regulation and utilization of abandoned land, specifically Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles and Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 on the Regulation of Abandoned Areas and Land, as well as other related regulations on land management and utilization.

The research site of this study is situated within the context of Indonesian agrarian law, with the analysis focusing on the national legal framework governing abandoned land. The study specifically examines Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles and Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 on the Regulation of Abandoned Areas and Land, as well as related regulations governing land management, State General Reserve Land (TCUN), agrarian reform, and the Land Bank Agency.

This scope was selected because the utilization of abandoned land is regulated primarily through national legislation, and therefore requires analysis within the broader Indonesian agrarian legal system rather than at the level of regional or local regulation.

The data sources for this study consist of secondary data obtained through library research and document analysis. The data include legal materials, comprising primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources, as well as previous studies relevant to abandoned-land utilization and Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

The primary legal sources comprise two legal documents, consisting of Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles, Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 on the Regulation of Abandoned Areas and Land, and related implementing regulations on land management, State General Reserve Land (TCUN), agrarian reform, and the Land Bank Agency. The secondary legal sources comprise four previous studies, including journal articles and other academic publications relevant to abandoned land, land utilization, agrarian law, and Sustainable Land Management. The tertiary legal materials comprise two reference sources, including legal dictionaries and encyclopedias used to support the interpretation of the primary and secondary legal materials.

The method for collecting legal materials involved library research and document analysis, which involved identifying, collecting, reading, and reviewing various laws and regulations, books, academic journals, previous research findings, as well as official documents and sources related to the utilization of abandoned land (Nazir, 2014).

This method was chosen because it allows systematic and traceable identification of legal materials across their hierarchical levels, which is necessary to maintain the internal consistency required by the normative legal research design outlined above. The legal materials obtained are then classified and systematically organized based on the research questions.

The analysis of legal materials in this study was conducted qualitatively, which involves analyzing data derived from legal materials based on concepts, theories, laws and regulations, legal doctrines, legal principles, expert opinions, or the researcher's own perspectives (Ishaq, 2017). It was conducted through in-depth reading, coding, thematic grouping, and interpretation of the meaning of the collected data (Creswell, 2009).

This qualitative approach was selected because the research problem concerns the substantive meaning and doctrinal coherence of legal norms, such as the concept of social function under Article 6 of the Basic Agrarian Law which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement.

The provisions regarding the utilization of abandoned land in Law No. 5 of 1960 and Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 were analyzed and linked to the concept of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) to examine long-term productivity, social benefits, and the preservation of environmental functions. The results are presented in a descriptive-analytical manner to address the research questions regarding the utilization of abandoned land based on SLM from the perspective of Indonesian agrarian law.

To ensure the validity of the legal analysis, this study applies a normative legal verification approach by examining the consistency and hierarchy of legal materials. Primary legal materials are analyzed by referring to the principles of statutory interpretation and the hierarchy of laws and regulations in Indonesia. Secondary legal materials are used to support doctrinal interpretation and are critically compared across relevant academic literature and jurisprudential discussions.

Official legal documents and regulatory texts are systematically examined to ensure coherence between higher and lower norms, as well as alignment between legal doctrine and statutory provisions.

This validation approach was chosen because, in normative legal research, the reliability of findings does not rest on external field verification but on demonstrating that the interpretation of norms is internally coherent and consistent with the established hierarchy of legislation (Negara, 2023). This approach is intended to ensure the internal consistency of legal reasoning and to strengthen the reliability of the normative conclusions drawn in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The legal status of abandoned land within Indonesia's agrarian legal system cannot be separated from the principle of the social function of land rights as stipulated in Article 6 of Law No. 5 of 1960 on the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles (UUPA). This principle affirms that land rights are not absolute rights free from restrictions in the public interest, but must always be aligned with their benefits to society (Amasta & Paulus, 2024). Interestingly, the concept of "abandoned land" is not a new norm introduced by Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, but has normative roots in the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles since 1960: Article 27(b), Article 34(e), and Article 40(e) each stipulate that ownership rights, rights of use for business purposes, and rights of use for building purposes are extinguished if the land is abandoned. Thus, Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 therefore re-operationalizes grounds for the termination of rights long provided for in the Basic Agrarian Law, providing more operational procedures for concepts that were previously abstract.

The state's authority to regulate abandoned and reclaimed land stems from the state's right to control under Article 33 Paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution (Siswoyo & Imran, 2022) and Article 2 Paragraph (2) of the Basic Agrarian Principles Regulations, which grant the state the authority to regulate the allocation, use, and provision of land.

Table 1. Key Changes Introduced by Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 Compared to Government Regulation No. 20 of 2021

No.	Aspect	Government Regulation No. 20 of 2021	Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025	Key Change
1	Scope of Regulation	Limited to land subject to rights, including freehold, right to cultivate, right to build, right of use, and right of management.	Expands the scope to include "abandoned areas," namely licensed or concession-based areas that are intentionally left undeveloped, including mining, plantation, industrial, tourism, and large-scale residential areas.	The regulation shifts from focusing primarily on individual land rights toward the regulation of corporate-level areas.
2	Administrative Procedures	The process involves inventorying,	The administrative procedures are	The revised procedure facilitates the faster

		identifying signs of abandonment, evaluation, graduated warnings, and final determination of abandoned land by the Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning (ATR)/Head of the National Land Agency (BPN).	streamlined and expedited, covering inventorying and identifying signs of abandonment, evaluation, graduated warnings, and final determination by the Minister of ATR/BPN.	conversion of abandoned land into State General Reserve Land (TCUN) and/or assets of the Land Bank Agency.
3	Utilization of State General Reserve Land (TCUN)	The utilization of abandoned land was not as clearly defined within a specific framework for the allocation of State General Reserve Land.	Article 40 clearly limits the allocation of State General Reserve Land to five areas: agrarian reform, support for national strategic projects, assets of the Land Bank Agency, other state reserves, and specific interests as determined by the Minister.	Provides a clearer and more structured direction for the utilization of State General Reserve Land, taking into account national strategic policies, spatial plans, and regional carrying capacity, consistent with the obligation to formulate a general land-use plan under Article 14 of the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles.

Source: Processed by the authors based on Government Regulation No. 20 of 2021 and Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025.

Beyond these normative changes, empirical data indicate whether this regulatory shift is reflected in the pace of designating and utilizing abandoned land. Based on ATR/BPN data as of June 15, 2026, around 1.2 million hectares of land were identified as abandoned, with approximately 117,000 hectares formally designated through Decisions on the Designation of Abandoned Land. During the same period, Decisions on the Utilization of State General Reserve Land (TCUN) were issued for around 51,000 areas, with the largest portion allocated to agrarian reform and Land Bank assets (Pramusinto, 2026). This marks a significant surge compared to October 2025, when only 5,114.23 hectares had been designated across five provinces, with State General Reserve Land utilization covering 5,198.13 hectares, 96 percent of which was allocated for agrarian reform (Sulistyo, 2025).

This comparison suggests that the procedural acceleration under Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 aligns with faster quantitative progress within less than a year of its enactment. However, what matters more normatively is not the numbers themselves, but the consistency between the status of State General Reserve Land (TCUN) and the mechanisms governing its utilization.

To assess this consistency more systematically, this study applies the land management paradigm framework formulated by Enemark. Within this framework, a country's land management activities can be understood through three interrelated components: land policy as the foundation that determines the direction of economic goals, social justice, and political stability related to land . land administration functions that ensure the management of rights, restrictions, and responsibilities regarding property and natural resources, including land tenure, land value, land use, and land development; and land information infrastructures in the form of cadastral and topographic data that support the operation of these functions. These three components operate within the national context of each country, with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable development that simultaneously includes economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Enemark, 2004).

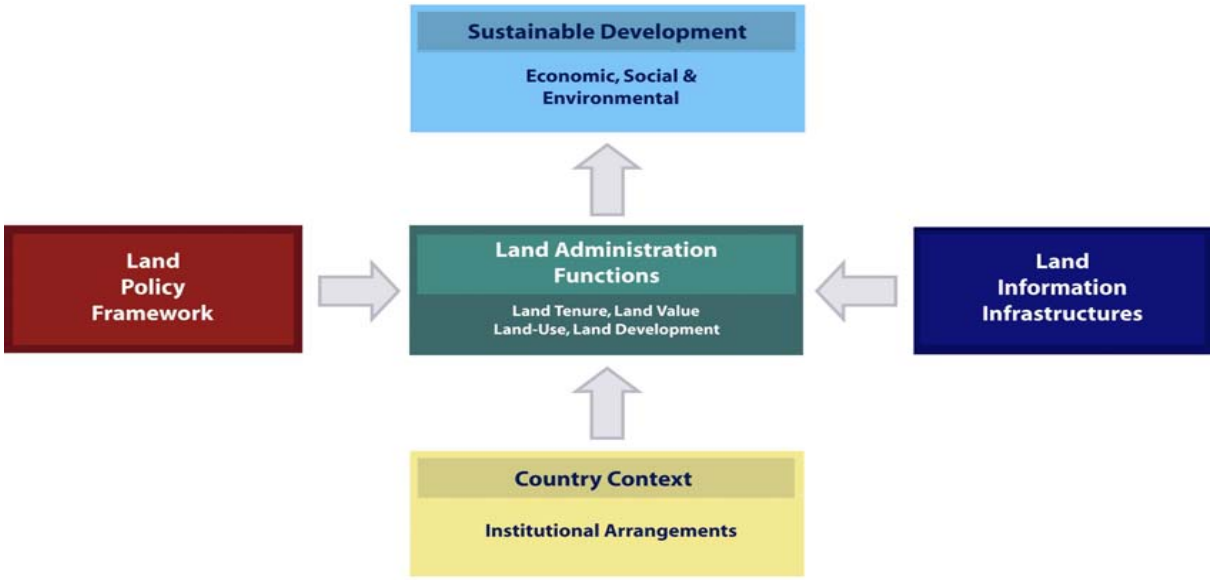


Figure 01. The land Management Paradigm. Source: Enemark, 2004

This land management framework is aligned with the principles of Sustainable Land Management (SLM), which are widely recognized in the international literature as key to curbing the rate of land degradation and preventing desertification, while also serving as a guide for various stakeholders worldwide in adopting and developing sustainable land management practices (Haregeweyn et al., 2022). Thus, the functions of land administration within the Enemark framework, specifically land tenure, value, use, and development, cannot be separated from the sustainability requirements that lie at the core of SLM, therefore, the utilization of abandoned land in this study must be evaluated not only from a purely legal-administrative perspective but also in terms of its ability to maintain long-term productivity, social benefits, and environmental functions, as emphasized in contemporary SLM studies.

This normative link between administrative functions and sustainability becomes concrete once abandoned land is transferred into institutional management. Under Article 40 of Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, land designated as State General Reserve Land (TCUN) may be transferred to the Land Bank Agency, a sui generis legal entity established under Government Regulation No. 64 of 2021, which performs the functions of planning, acquisition, procurement, development, utilization, control, and distribution of land (Sugoto et al., 2024). Of these, utilization and distribution

serve as the normative entry points for State General Reserve Land (TCUN) through two legal schemes: direct utilization and business cooperation. Functionally, the Land Bank Agency serves as an instrument for acquiring unused or unmanaged state land to be redistributed in accordance with land-use plans, ensuring land availability for sustainable development (Mahardika, 2022).

Under the direct utilization scheme, land under Management Rights (HPL) controlled by the Land Bank Agency is allocated primarily for agrarian reform. From an SLM perspective, this scheme fulfills the dimension of social benefit through the redistribution of land to reform beneficiaries. This redistribution to tenant farmers, low-income communities, and structurally land-deprived groups implements the principle of social function under Article 6 of the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles (Utami & Cahyaningtyas, 2021), realizing the land-reform ideals in Articles 7 and 17 of the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles, namely the prohibition of excessive land ownership contrary to the public interest. This direction aligns with the acceleration of agrarian reform under Presidential Regulation No. 62 of 2023, which identifies abandoned land as a source for redistribution, consistent with the broader trend in comparative agrarian law of treating state land redistribution as a structural instrument for correcting tenure inequality rather than a mere administrative policy (Home, 2022).

Despite this alignment, Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 does not specify success indicators for agrarian reform following redistribution, leaving its sustainability dependent on subordinate implementing regulations. From an SLM perspective, this gap signals a weakness in post-redistribution safeguards: the absence of obligations to provide access to capital and support means that redistributed land risks becoming unproductive again without accompanying support programs (Putri & Ehsonov, 2024).

The second scheme, business cooperation, is implemented through the transfer of rights to Management Rights land held by the Land Bank to third parties, including state-owned enterprises, regionally-owned enterprises, private enterprises, cooperatives, or other legal entities in the form of Building Use Rights, Business Use Rights, or Right of Use over the Management Rights, based on a land utilization cooperation agreement (Satrianty & Maulisa, 2024). Legally, this scheme functions as a business-to-business, state-land-based investment mechanism, in which investors obtain time-bound utilization rights while the Land Bank Agency benefits from the cooperation as one form of utilization under Article 14(2) of Government Regulation No. 64 of 2021.

The SLM framework is relevant for evaluating these two schemes for the utilization of State General Reserve Land not only in terms of whether the land has been put back into use, but also in terms of its sustainability. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in its report The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture, states that SLM is an approach that integrates land resource use with the maintenance of long-term productivity and ecosystem functions, and that it must be integrated with cross sectoral policies, not only technical agronomic decisions (FAO, 2022).

Taken together, these findings indicate that Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 substantially strengthens the administrative and procedural dimensions of abandonedland governance accelerating status determination and channeling State General Reserve Land (TCUN) toward defined utilization purposes. However, the regulation's alignment with SLM principles cannot be assumed

from procedural acceleration or allocation volume alone. Whether these outcomes translate into genuine long-term productivity, equitable social benefit, and environmental preservation depends on dimensions the regulation does not yet address, particularly measurable post utilization indicators and integrated land information (Shiba et al., 2025). This distinction between administrative achievement and substantive sustainability forms the basis for the synthesis developed in the following discussion.

Discussion

The regulation of abandoned land should be understood as a means of correcting agrarian inequality, not just as a way to maintain administrative order, since land rights under Article 6 of the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles are not intended solely for the rightsholder's personal benefit but must also serve the broader community (Suartining & Djaja, 2023). This principle aligns with Article 33(3) of the 1945 Constitution, under which land and natural resources are controlled by the state for the greatest benefit of the people, positioning the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles as an instrument to ensure justice in the control, use, and maintenance of land, particularly for vulnerable groups (Fakhrurrozi et al., 2025).

Land reform remains an important mechanism for reorganizing land ownership and resolving agrarian conflict, yet its implementation across Indonesia has not improved significantly over time; the regulation of abandoned land must therefore be directed at correcting imbalances in land control, consistent with the philosophical basis of the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles, rather than functioning merely as an administrative action (Krismantoro, 2024).

The findings above show that Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 predominantly strengthens Enemark's land administration functions pillar land tenure, through accelerated status determination and extinguishment of rights and land use by directing State General Reserve Land toward agrarian reform, national strategic projects, and business partnerships, while remaining underdeveloped in the land-policy pillar no measurable welfare or sustainability targets and the land-information-infrastructure pillar no explicit obligation to integrate cadastral and spatial data. This imbalance is the core synthesis of the study: the quantitative acceleration in determining and distributing abandoned land does not automatically equate to achieving SLM outcomes.

This imbalance is important because sustainable land management requires more than administrative reclassification or land redistribution (Eugene et al., 2024). Land administration provides institutional mechanisms for managing land rights and land use, but its effectiveness in achieving sustainable outcomes depends on coherent policy goals and reliable land information (Burns et al., 2023). Therefore, in the context of abandoned land, accelerating the allocation of land without setting measurable sustainability targets and integrated information mechanisms may increase administrative efficiency without ensuring long-term productivity, social benefits, or environmental protection (Andea, 2026). This finding supports the broader literature on land governance, which emphasizes that the outcomes of land reform and formalization processes can differ depending on how institutional arrangements and competing interests are structured (Bah & Dossa, 2025).

Normatively, Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 and Government Regulation No. 64 of 2021 hold equal standing as Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles implementing regulations yet govern overlapping subject matter without a clause resolving normative conflict. Applying the principle of *lex specialis derogat legi generali*, the former can be read as the more specific instrument for determining

State General Reserve Land (TCUN), while the latter remains the general institutional basis for the Land Bank Agency, though the absence of an explicit synchronization clause leaves a normative gap reflecting this regulatory overlap. Evaluated through Radbruch's three basic legal values of legal certainty, justice, and utility (Firdaus, 2025), is not bound to enforceable, outcome-oriented obligations, a concern reinforced by evidence that the same acceleration which strengthens procedural clarity also compresses the time available for rights holders to substantively contest a determination (Rizqi et al., 2026), a conclusion that reinforces the SLM based interpretation developed above.

These normative and administrative findings can now be situated within the broader body of research on sustainable and equitable land governance. The findings of this study are consistent with (Tenrisau, 2021) who developed the Sustainable Agrarian Arrangement System (SPAB) based on Enemark's land management paradigm, integrating land policy, land administration, and land information infrastructure. The SPAB framework emphasizes that sustainable agrarian management should extend beyond asset arrangement (redistribution) to include land use arrangement and access arrangement.

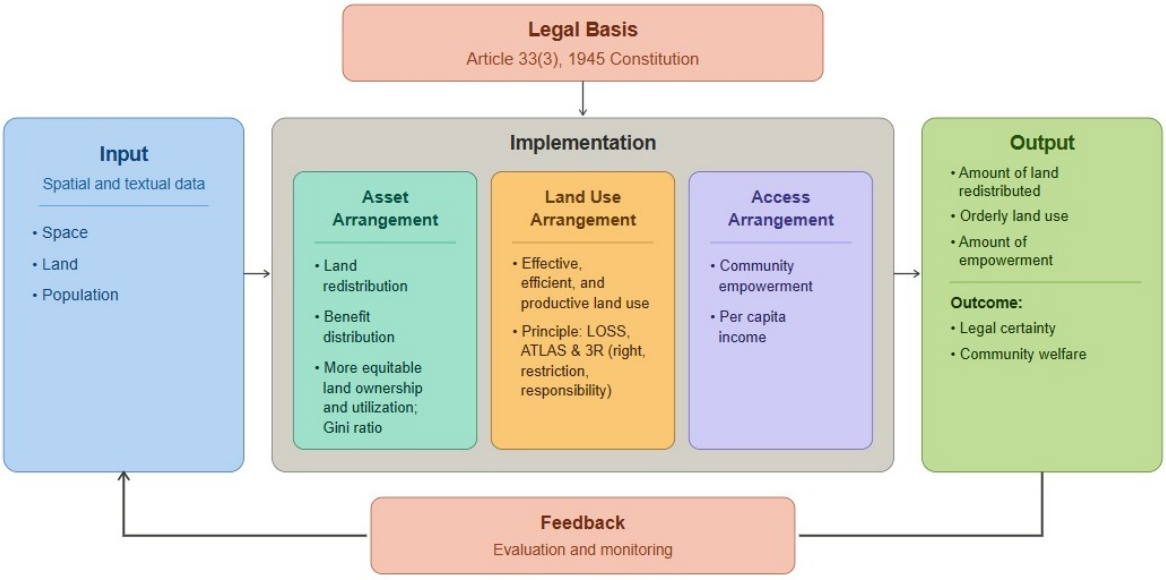


Figure 02. The Concept of a Sustainable Agrarian Arrangement System. Source: Tenrisau, 2021

This perspective supports the findings of this study that the utilization of abandoned land should not be measured solely by its legal or administrative utilization, but also by its long-term productivity, social benefits, and environmental functions. In this regard, Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 provides a legal framework for the utilization of abandoned land, but the absence of clear post-utilization success indicators and comprehensive feedback mechanisms remains a challenge in ensuring sustainable outcomes.

In contrast, this finding differs from previous studies that highlight the potential dominance of investment interests in land management. Mahfud, Djohan, and Malik (2024) argue that the Land Bank Agency's authority to facilitate investment is structurally stronger than its role in agrarian reform, while Alimuddin, Widowati, Mayasari, Febrisari, and Jusafri (2024) raise concerns that the Agency's broad discretion in allocating land for business partnerships may create risks of land grabbing. Similar concerns are reflected in Zhou et al. (2021) and Xu (2018), who show how broad governmental

discretion and investment-oriented land policies may encourage land concentration and land grabbing. These studies therefore present a more critical view of land utilization policies than the findings of this study, which identify the regulatory framework under Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 as providing multiple utilization purposes that are normatively aligned with agrarian and sustainable development objectives. However, the contrasting findings highlight the importance of strengthening implementation safeguards, access arrangements, and measurable post-utilization indicators to ensure that the regulation does not become substantively skewed toward investment interests.

This contrast is best explained by differences in institutional and regulatory context rather than by contradictory evidence: comparative research on land dispossession shows that outcomes vary systematically with each country's specific configuration of state actors, legal mechanisms, and degree of regulatory discretion (Berenschot & Loughlin, 2025) and Indonesia's more centralized, Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles-anchored allocation procedure under Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 differs structurally from the fiscally decentralized, investment-driven dynamics documented in the Chinese cases. The contrast nonetheless underscores the importance of strengthening implementation safeguards, access arrangements, and measurable post-utilization indicators so that the regulation does not drift toward investment interests in practice.

Building on these findings, this study positions itself within a distinct analytical and regulatory context. While Tenrisau focuses on the Sustainable Agrarian Arrangement System (SPAB) and prior studies primarily address agrarian reform, investment-driven land governance, and land grabbing, this study applies the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) framework specifically to the utilization of abandoned land. It further examines Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, a recent regulatory instrument that has not yet been extensively analyzed from an SLM perspective. In doing so, the analysis shifts the focus from the legal status and allocation of abandoned land toward the sustainability of its utilization, particularly in terms of long-term productivity, social benefits, and environmental functions. Methodologically, this study employs a normative legal approach to assess the regulatory framework and its consistency with SLM principles as well as the social function of land rights under Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Agrarian Principles.

The practical implication of this study is that abandoned land utilization should be accompanied by measurable indicators assessing not only whether land has been legally or administratively utilized, but whether that utilization produces sustainable outcomes. Such indicators may include the continuity of land productivity, the extent of community benefit, the suitability of land use with spatial planning, and the maintenance of environmental function, providing a basis for evaluating success after allocation and identifying problems during implementation, an approach consistent with international evidence showing that legal frameworks and institutions alone are insufficient without structured, comparable monitoring data to track land governance outcomes (Ndugwa & Omusula, 2025).

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) as an analytical framework within Indonesian agrarian law. The findings demonstrate that SLM can be used not only to assess physical land management but also to evaluate the legal and regulatory framework governing abandoned land utilization. By connecting SLM principles with the social function of land rights under the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles, this study extends the

discussion of abandoned land beyond control, redistribution, and utilization toward a broader assessment of long-term productivity, social benefit, and environmental sustainability.

From a government and policy perspective, the findings indicate the need to strengthen the implementation of Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 through clear post-utilization monitoring, measurable success indicators, and periodic evaluation. The government should ensure that the utilization purposes under Article 40 are implemented in a balanced manner and do not become predominantly investment oriented. Strengthening coordination among relevant institutions, integrating land-use planning, and providing adequate access support for beneficiaries are necessary to ensure that abandoned-land utilization fulfills its social function while contributing to sustainable land management.

This study has several limitations. It relies primarily on secondary data, the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles of 1960, Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, academic literature, and policy documents and therefore does not directly capture the experiences of communities, land beneficiaries, or government officials involved in abandoned-land utilization. As a normative legal study, its analysis focuses on the regulatory framework rather than empirically measuring actual utilization outcomes in specific locations. Future research should complement this normative analysis with primary data collected through field observations, interviews, or surveys involving relevant stakeholders, examining how the Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles and Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 are implemented in practice and whether abandoned-land utilization achieves long term productivity, social benefit, and environmental sustainability across different regional contexts, as combining normative and empirical approaches has been shown to produce more comprehensive and higher-quality legal research (Wiraguna, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study set out to assess the extent to which the regulatory framework for abandoned land under Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 aligns with the principles of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and the social function of land rights under Law No. 5 of 1960. The findings show that the answer is partial and uneven. The regulation substantially strengthens the land administration pillar by accelerating the identification, determination, and extinguishment of rights over abandoned land, and by directing State General Reserve Land (TCUN) toward defined utilization channels such as agrarian reform, national strategic projects, and business cooperation. At the same time, it leaves the land policy and land information infrastructure pillars comparatively underdeveloped, since no measurable welfare or sustainability targets are established, nor is there an explicit obligation to integrate cadastral and spatial data. Procedural acceleration and expanding allocation volume therefore cannot, by themselves, be read as evidence that SLM outcomes are being achieved.

This finding fills the gap identified at the outset of the study. Prior research on abandoned land and the Land Bank Agency in Indonesia and comparable jurisdictions has concentrated on the tension between agrarian reform and investment oriented land utilization, largely through the lens of institutional discretion and land grabbing risk, while comparatively little attention has been paid to whether governance mechanisms secure long term productivity, social benefit, and environmental preservation once abandoned land is reallocated. By applying SLM together with Enemark's land management paradigm to Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025, this study extends the discussion

of abandoned land beyond questions of legal status, redistribution, and institutional discretion toward the sustainability of its subsequent utilization, an angle not yet examined for this recently enacted regulation.

Theoretically, the study demonstrates that SLM can serve as an analytical lens not only for physical land management practices but also for evaluating the coherence of a legal regulatory framework itself, linking the social function doctrine of Article 6 of the Basic Agrarian Law to a broader sustainability standard. Practically, the analysis points to a concrete regulatory shortfall, since Government Regulation No. 48 of 2025 does not yet specify post utilization success indicators or synchronization mechanisms with the overlapping institutional basis of the Land Bank Agency under Government Regulation No. 64 of 2021, leaving justice and utility, normatively less secure than legal certainty. Strengthening implementation through measurable productivity, social, and environmental indicators, together with integrated land information systems, is therefore necessary if the utilization of abandoned land is to fulfill its intended social function rather than drift toward administrative efficiency alone.

As a normative legal study built on secondary legal materials, this analysis is necessarily confined to the coherence of the regulatory text rather than its effects on the ground, and future research combining this doctrinal assessment with field based observation of agrarian reform beneficiaries and business cooperation partners would test whether the sustainability gap identified here materializes in practice. More broadly, as Indonesia continues to expand agrarian reform and land bank mechanisms to correct historical imbalances in land control, the findings suggest that the ultimate test of abandoned land governance lies not in how quickly unused land is reclassified and redistributed, but in whether that redistribution endures as productive, socially beneficial, and environmentally sound land use over time.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies.

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