

Economic Diplomacy Activities In The Association Of Indonesian Export Entrepreneurs (GPEI) West Java

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Abstrak

Diplomasi ekonomi merupakan elemen penting dalam penguatan ekspor dan investasi di Indonesia, terutama di tengah tantangan globalisasi dan persaingan internasional. Gabungan Pengusaha Ekspor Indonesia (GPEI) Jawa Barat memainkan peran strategis sebagai fasilitator antara pemerintah, pelaku usaha, dan mitra dagang internasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis aktivitas diplomasi ekonomi yang dilakukan oleh GPEI Jawa Barat dalam mendukung ekspor serta mengidentifikasi tantangan dan peluang yang dihadapi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data primer diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dengan pihak GPEI Jawa Barat, sementara data sekunder dikumpulkan dari dokumen dan laporan terkait kegiatan ekspor. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa GPEI Jawa Barat aktif dalam berbagai aktivitas, seperti promosi ekspor melalui pameran dagang, kemitraan dengan mitra internasional, pendampingan bagi pelaku usaha, serta advokasi kebijakan perdagangan. Namun, terdapat beberapa tantangan yang dihadapi, seperti ketergantungan pada mitra dagang tradisional, kendala logistik dan infrastruktur, minimnya kebijakan pendukung dari pemerintah, serta keterbatasan adopsi teknologi oleh pelaku usaha. Sebagai kesimpulan, peran GPEI Jawa Barat dalam diplomasi ekonomi sangat signifikan dalam mendukung penguatan ekspor dan daya saing produk lokal. Namun, diperlukan strategi lebih lanjut, seperti perluasan akses pasar ke wilayah potensial, peningkatan kolaborasi dengan pemerintah dalam kebijakan ekspor, serta pemanfaatan teknologi digital untuk meningkatkan efisiensi dan daya saing.

Kata Kunci: *Diplomasi Ekonomi, GPEI Jawa Barat, Ekspor, Kemitraan Perdagangan, Regulasi Perdagangan*

Abstract

Economic diplomacy is a crucial element in strengthening exports and investments in Indonesia, especially amid globalization challenges and international competition. The Indonesian Exporters Association (GPEI) of West Java plays a strategic role as a facilitator between the government, business actors, and international trade partners. This study aims to analyze the economic diplomacy activities carried out by GPEI West Java in supporting exports and identifying the challenges and opportunities encountered. This research employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with GPEI West Java representatives, while secondary data were collected from documents and reports related to export activities. The findings reveal that GPEI West Java actively engages in various activities, including export promotion through trade fairs, partnerships with international trade partners, business mentoring, and trade policy advocacy. However, several challenges persist, such as dependence on traditional trade partners, logistical and infrastructure constraints, the lack of supportive government policies, and limited technology adoption among business actors. In conclusion, GPEI West Java plays a significant role in economic diplomacy to strengthen exports and enhance the competitiveness of local products. However, further strategies are required, such as expanding market access to potential regions, increasing collaboration with the government on export policies, and leveraging digital technology to improve efficiency and competitiveness.

Keywords: *Economic Diplomacy, GPEI West Java, Export, Trade Partnerships, Trade Regulations.*

A. Introduction

Economic diplomacy has become a key pillar of modern international relations, especially amid the ever-evolving dynamics of globalization.¹ Indonesia, as a developing country with significant economic potential, considers economic diplomacy a vital strategy to support economic growth, enhance global competitiveness, and foster mutually beneficial international cooperation. Globalization has transformed traditional diplomacy by strengthening interactions between nations and expanding the role of non-state actors.² Entities such as multinational corporations, business organizations, and financial institutions play a significant role in shaping global economic policies.³ In this context, the Indonesian Exporters Association (GPEI) of West Java holds a strategic role as a bridge between the government and business players in promoting local products in international markets.⁴

Indonesia's economic diplomacy aims to maximize its comparative advantages across various sectors, including trade, investment, and technological innovation. West Java, as one of Indonesia's largest economic hubs, has remarkable export potential, ranging from textiles and agriculture to handicrafts. Through the role of the Indonesian Exporters Association (GPEI), this potential can be optimized by establishing effective partnerships with international counterparts, promoting local products, and addressing global trade barriers. One of GPEI's key contributions is helping local SMEs enter international markets.⁵ SMEs often face challenges in understanding export requirements, such as quality standards, certifications, and international regulations. By providing guidance and training, GPEI encourages SMEs to improve product quality and meet global market demands.⁶ This initiative not only boosts regional exports but also has a positive impact on local economic growth.⁷ Economic diplomacy also plays a crucial role in attracting foreign investment to support national development.⁸ In this regard, GPEI acts as a promoter, introducing West Java's investment potential to international partners.

Economic diplomacy in the global era is not only focused on trade but also on capacity building, technological innovation, and strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation. In this regard, the Indonesian Exporters

¹ Nicholas Bayne dan Stephen Woolcock, *The New Economic Diplomacy: Decision-Making and Negotiation in International Economic Relations* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 3.

² Robert O. Keohane dan Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), 15.

³ Raymond Saner dan Lichia Yiu, "International Economic Diplomacy: Mutations in Post-Modern Times," *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy* 84 (2003): 7.

⁴ Gabungan Pengusaha Ekspor Indonesia (GPEI), "Peran Strategis GPEI dalam Meningkatkan Ekspor Indonesia," *Laporan Tahunan GPEI Jawa Barat*, 2023, 10.

⁵ Desi Amelia dan Sari Utami, "Strategi Peningkatan Ekspor Produk Tekstil Jawa Barat: Analisis SWOT," *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis* 10, no. 3 (2019): 112.

⁶ Gabungan Pengusaha Ekspor Indonesia (GPEI), "Peran Strategis GPEI dalam Meningkatkan Ekspor Indonesia," *Laporan Tahunan GPEI Jawa Barat*, 2023, 17.

⁷ Gabungan Pengusaha Ekspor Indonesia (GPEI), "Peran Strategis GPEI dalam Meningkatkan Ekspor Indonesia," *Laporan Tahunan GPEI Jawa Barat*, 2023, 17.

⁸ Robert O. Keohane dan Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), 33.

Association (GPEI) serves as a facilitator, helping businesses capitalize on opportunities and overcome emerging challenges. Through this approach, GPEI supports the development of more inclusive and sustainable international relations. As part of its economic diplomacy strategy, GPEI also contributes to raising awareness among local businesses about the importance of international cooperation. By providing education and information on global trends, regulations, and market opportunities, GPEI helps create a business community that is better prepared to face global challenges. Through effective collaboration with the government, businesses, and international partners, GPEI not only helps increase export value but also strengthens Indonesia's position as a key player in global trade. This demonstrates that economic diplomacy, when supported by competent actors like GPEI, can be an effective tool for achieving sustainable economic development.⁹

B. Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach, a research method that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words, as well as observable behavior. Data analysis in the qualitative approach is conducted inductively, focusing on meaning as an essential element of the study.¹⁰ This approach involves data collection in a natural context, inductive analysis, and interpretation of findings. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument or human instrument. To fulfill this role, the researcher must possess extensive theoretical knowledge and insight. This is essential for formulating questions, analyzing, understanding, and interpreting the research subject clearly and meaningfully. The data used in qualitative research must be authentic—data that accurately reflects reality. It is not limited to what is seen or spoken but also includes deeper meanings beyond the surface.¹¹

Interviews are a data collection method conducted through direct communication between the researcher and respondents to obtain relevant information. Observation involves directly monitoring ongoing activities, such as the cultural diplomacy efforts of the Indonesian Exporters Association (GPEI) to enhance exports in West Java. To complement the data, document studies are used to support interviews and observations. Data from interviews and observations become more credible when backed by relevant documents, such as export records from companies under GPEI's supervision.¹² In this research, data is obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data refers to information collected directly from the field, while secondary data is obtained from existing documents, reports, or other relevant sources that support the research.¹³ This research was conducted at the Office of the Indonesian Export

⁹ Kishan S. Rana, "Economic Diplomacy in Emerging Markets: Strategies for International Engagement," *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2017): 278.

¹⁰ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), 15.

¹¹ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), 2.

¹² Nana Syaodih, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2013), 220

¹³ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), 62.

Companies Association (GPEI), located at Teras Gloya, Jl. Ir. H. Djuanda No. 48, Bandung City.

C. Discussion

Economic diplomacy is a key strategy in strengthening a country's competitiveness in international trade. The Indonesian Exporters Association (Gabungan Pengusaha Ekspor Indonesia/GPEI) plays a crucial role in promoting exports and expanding access to global markets. According to the economic diplomacy framework proposed by Nicholas Bayne and Stephen Woolcock, economic diplomacy involves interactions between state and non-state actors to achieve international economic interests. This article examines how GPEI's role and strategies in economic diplomacy align with Bayne and Woolcock's approach.

GPEI and Economic Diplomacy: Bayne and Woolcock's Framework

Bayne and Woolcock divide economic diplomacy into three main dimensions: negotiation diplomacy, commercial diplomacy, and structural diplomacy. These three dimensions can be used to understand how GPEI supports Indonesia's export sector.

a. Negotiation Diplomacy

Negotiation diplomacy, in the context of GPEI, is reflected in the organization's advocacy efforts to protect and promote the interests of Indonesian exporters in international trade policies. GPEI serves as a bridge between businesses and the government, conveying concerns regarding export regulations, trade barriers, as well as tariff and non-tariff issues. By participating in international trade forums and policy dialogues, GPEI ensures that the interests of national exporters are well represented in global trade agreements.

b. Commercial Diplomacy

Commercial diplomacy focuses on export promotion and investment facilitation through business-government relations. GPEI plays a key role in this area by organizing trade fairs, trade missions abroad, and forming partnerships with international business associations. These initiatives aim to introduce Indonesia's top export products, such as textiles, agricultural goods, and handicrafts, to global markets. Additionally, GPEI provides training programs for exporters to help them understand international standards and global marketing strategies, enhancing their competitiveness.

c. Structural Diplomacy

Structural diplomacy involves shaping regulations and frameworks that influence the global economic environment in the long run. GPEI actively engages with international trade institutions and organizations to create a more favorable trade climate for Indonesian exporters. By participating in global trade forums such as the World Export Development Forum (WEDF), GPEI contributes to formulating policies that strengthen Indonesia's position in international trade.

The Strategic Role of GPEI West Java in Economic Diplomacy

As one of the most active regional branches, GPEI West Java has made significant contributions to expanding local export networks. Through commercial diplomacy strategies, GPEI West Java has developed various support programs for SMEs and local entrepreneurs to improve their competitiveness in international markets. Partnerships with foreign trade counterparts have been a key strategy in strengthening the position of West Java's products, particularly in the textile, agriculture, and handicraft sectors.

In the context of structural diplomacy, GPEI West Java has also played an important role in shaping trade policies that respond to global challenges, such as digital trade and environmental sustainability. Through its advocacy efforts, GPEI pushes for improvements in export infrastructure, increased incentives for exporters, and the elimination of non-tariff barriers that hinder local export growth.

Challenges in Implementing Economic Diplomacy

Despite GPEI's crucial role in Indonesia's economic diplomacy, several challenges persist. Research findings indicate that GPEI West Java faces major obstacles in supporting local exports, including post-pandemic economic recovery, global inflation, infrastructure limitations, and dependence on traditional trade partners. Additionally, a lack of technological innovation in production and marketing has hindered the competitiveness of Indonesian export products.

Global economic uncertainty caused by trade wars and geopolitical crises further complicates Indonesia's export stability. In this context, GPEI must strengthen its negotiation diplomacy strategy by engaging more actively with the government and international trade organizations to ensure continued market access for Indonesian exporters. Moreover, expanding export markets to emerging regions such as Africa could be a strategic move to reduce Indonesia's reliance on traditional trade partners.

D. Conclusion

This study examines the economic diplomacy activities carried out by the Indonesian Export Companies Association (GPEI) of West Java in supporting exports and enhancing the competitiveness of local products in the international market. GPEI West Java plays a crucial role as a facilitator between the government, business actors, and international partners. The organization supports local businesses, particularly SMEs, in understanding international regulations, promoting flagship products through trade exhibitions, and increasing export capacity through training and mentoring.

GPEI implements economic diplomacy through export promotion, trade partnerships, participation in international forums, and policy advocacy that aligns with the needs of business actors. These activities contribute to increasing regional export value and strengthening Indonesia's position in global trade. In response to the digitalization era, GPEI utilizes online platforms such as digital catalogs and e-commerce to expand access to international markets. This demonstrates a strong adaptation to global trends, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite its strategic role, GPEI faces various challenges, including dependence on traditional trading partners, limited logistics infrastructure, lack of supportive government policies, and low technology adoption among business actors.

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