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Farmer Group Institutional Strengthening Strategies In Rice Farming (Case Study Of Farmer Group Lalang Tinting I Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang Sub-District Bulukumba District)

Rahmi Yuniartie Asih, Jumiati[1)]*, Sumarni B, Nurdin[1)], Muh.Ikmal[1)], Nadir[1)], Akbar[1)], Ardi Rumallang[1)]

Abstract: *Farmer Institutions are organizations established and developed by farmers to strengthen and advocate for their interests. However, farmer groups are often less effective as learning platforms for farming activities, necessitating institutional strengthening. This study aims to identify internal and external factors and formulate strategies to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency. This research adopts a qualitative approach with descriptive data analysis and purposive informant selection. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, involving 10 informants. The results indicate that internal factors consist of 7 strengths and 4 weaknesses, with a total score of 3.54, while external factors include 3 opportunities and 2 threats, with a total score of 3.28. Based on the IE matrix analysis, the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group falls in quadrant I (Grow and Build strategies). The SWOT analysis produced four alternative strategies: SO, WO, ST, and WT. This study highlights the importance of institutional strengthening through optimizing strengths and opportunities, addressing weaknesses, and mitigating threats. Strengthening strategies are expected to enhance the capacity of farmer groups, foster collaboration, and support sustainable agriculture in the region.*

Key words: *Farmer Group ; Institutions; Strategy; SWOT*

Author Institution(s)
1) Program Studi Agribisnis, Fakultas Pertanian, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia,90221

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Corresponding Author
Jumiati
jumiati.amin@unismuh.ic.id
(Agribusiness Study Program, Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar)
(Jalan Sultan Alauddin 259, Gunung Sari, Rappocini, Makassar City, South Sulawesi 90221)

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Introduction

Building the agricultural sector's resilience and sustainability requires agricultural institutions, particularly in light of global concerns including land conversion, climate change, and rising food demand (Sihombing 2023). One example of an institution at the farmer level is a farmer group, which is a community-based organization established to carry out different agricultural chores collectively (Hidayati, 2018). As agriculture moves from subsistence to modern agribusiness, farmer groups serve as strategic production units (et al 2019). Additionally, farmer organizations serve as a platform for collaboration and education (Yolanda Holle 2022). In addition to serving

as a platform for education, farmer groups are an organization capable of implementing a management system in compliance with institutional regulations and managing agricultural resources in an integrated fashion (Jumiati et al. 2024).

Farmer organizations can boost competition in the agricultural sector, hasten the adoption of new technology, and assist in the shift from traditional farming practices to market-oriented sustainable agriculture (Ruhimat 2021). These expectations, however, frequently run counter to the actual situation. Using traditional technologies and straightforward organizational structures, a large number of farmer organizations function at the home level (Boekoesoe 2023). Many of these groups are locked in low organizational performance, despite the fact that they are expected to become increasingly complex organizations with corporate collaboration and modern technology (Demmallino et al, 2018).

These collective efforts often fail due to issues such as lack of funds, technological ignorance, and lack of member spirit. As a result, agricultural products have poor quality and productivity, and farmers are unable to reach their potential (Ruhimat 2021).

This suggests that strengthening the institution is an urgent need to maintain the sustainability of farmer groups. An important strategy to increase organizational capacity, improve cooperation among members, and overcome challenges in the modern era is institutional strengthening ((Hermanto and Swastika 2016).

Limited business capital, lack of knowledge about agricultural technology, and lack of collectivity spirit among innovative farmers are some of the challenges that farmers must overcome ((Faried et al. 2024). In addition, this strengthening is necessary to encourage farmers to be themselves in managing their own farming enterprises, strengthen inter-organizational linkages, and ensure production sustainability through innovation and modernization (Harnaha O.M 2023).

A strong institutional system can increase productivity and efficiency with active farmer participation, infrastructure maintenance, and equitable water distribution (Jumiati et al. 2023). In addition, a case study on the Terang-Terang Farmer Group in South Sulawesi shows that challenges can be turned into opportunities by properly managing resources, organizations and norms. An integrative approach can transform agricultural and livestock waste into new inputs, such as organic fertilizer and renewable energy. This will support sustainable farming systems (Jumiati et al. 2024).

Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group, located in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang Sub-district, Bulukumba Regency, is one of the farmer groups that has great potential but also faces many problems. Since its establishment

in 1978, the group has been the main platform to support farmers focusing on rice commodities. However, several obstacles have hindered the group's institutional progress, such as a lack of technological knowledge, limited business capital, and a lack of mutual cooperation spirit (Nuryanti and Swastika 2016). Local wisdom, which used to be a source of community strength, has faded, exacerbating these challenges (Utami and Rangkuti 2021).

Developing human resources, increasing business capital, modernizing technology, and expanding cooperation networks are important steps to face these challenges (Hermanto and Swastika 2016). Support from educational institutions, the private sector and the government can be an important catalyst for building resilient and adaptive farmer group institutions (Foe and Sunaryanto 2020). To continue to strengthen local agribusiness institutions, the following approaches must

be implemented: increasing cooperation with financial institutions and maximizing government support; improving the role and function of institutions and institutional administrators; increasing organizational awareness for all members; including farmer youth in the management structure of agribusiness institutions; training in digital-based institutional administration management; and maximizing the role and function of institutions and institutional administrators (Akbar et al. 2022). Farmer groups like Lalang Tinting I can survive and become highly competitive contemporary agribusiness models with this method ((Kassem et al., 2022) (Steve Hatfield-Dodds 2007).

This research aims to analyze the internal and external factors affecting the institutionalization of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group, and formulate relevant strengthening strategies to increase its capacity in the future.

Methods

Location and time of research

This research was conducted in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency, during the period of November to December 2024.

Informant Determination Technique

The technique used in determining this informant is purposive, which is chosen with certain considerations and objectives. Purposive is used because qualitative research is carried out by entering certain social situations to people who are considered to know about these social situations (Sugiyono, 2021). This approach was chosen because it is considered appropriate for research with qualitative methods. The informants of this research amounted to 10 people consisting of the chairman, secretary, treasurer and 7 members of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency. The determination of informants is based on farmer group members who have a minimum of 5 years of rice farming experience, better understand farmer group institutions and have a land area of 0.5 ha (50 are).

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study is based on internal and external environmental analysis, referring to the strategic formulation method developed by Cravens & David (1998). The analysis consists of three main stages: the Input Stage, Matching Stage, and Decision Stage. In the Input Stage, identification and evaluation of internal and external factors are conducted using the IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) and EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) matrices. Each factor is assigned a weight based on its importance (ranging from 0.0 to 1.0) and a rating based on the actual condition (on a scale of 1 to 4). The weighted score is calculated by multiplying the weight and rating, and the total score reflects the strategic position of the organization (Freddy Rangkuti, 2013)

Internal-External (IE) Matrix

The IE matrix is a tool for generating strategic alternatives based on two key dimensions: internal factors (derived from the IFAS matrix) and external factors (derived from the EFAS matrix). The IE matrix is adapted from the Grand Strategy Matrix model, categorizing strategic positioning using a score range: There are three scores, namely a score of 1.0-1.99 indicates that the internal position is weak, a score of 2.0 - 2.99 the position is average, and a score of 3.0 - 4.0 is strong. In the same way, on the Y-axis used for the EFAS matrix, a score of 1.0 -1.99 is classified as low, a score of 2.0 - 2.99 is classified as moderate, and a score of 3.0 - 4.0 is classified as high(Rayhan, Praptono and Yastica, 2023).

In the Matching Stage, the IE (Internal-External) Matrix is used to determine the organizational position,

while the SWOT Matrix is applied to formulate strategic alternatives by combining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT Matrix produces four sets of strategic options: SO (Strengths-Opportunities), ST (Strengths-Threats), WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities), and WT (Weaknesses-Threats) (Hamzah et al, 2025).

Results and Discussion

The strategy is based on a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to identify internal and external factors that affect farmer group performance. This approach aims to formulate appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of farmer group institutions. Internal factors refer to aspects of strengths and weaknesses found in the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency, which include resources, skills and internal capacity. External factors are opportunities and threats that come from the environment outside the group, which affect the operations of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Paenre Lompoe Village. This research used 10 informants to obtain in-depth data.

Table 1. R-O-N Matrix of Performance of Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group, Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency.

Resources	*Organisation*	*Norm*
Has 25 members, land area of 23.57 Ha. Has assets in the form of tractor machines, harvesting machines and 1 Brigade unit. Capital in the form of APBN assistance, and PKP.	There is an organizational structure, there is a chairman, secretary, treasurer and group members.	There are Articles of Association and Bylaws and a Definitive Plan of Group Needs as well as rules resulting from meetings (mutual agreement).

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2024

The institution of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Penre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency, is managed through three main elements, namely resources, organization, and norms. Resources include natural resources, human resources, financial resources, and facilities and infrastructure that are managed effectively. Managing actors, namely the Lalang Tinting 1 Farmer Group, are tasked with utilizing these resources according to institutional rules, both written and unwritten (Jumiati 2022).

Internal and External Factors in the Institutional Strengthening Strategy of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group.

A. Internal Factors

Table 2. Internal Factors of Institutional Strengthening of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Rice Farming in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency

Internal Factors	
Strenghts	**Weaknesses**
1. Strategic location 2. Large land area	1. Farmer group education level 2. Knowledge about the use of agricultural tools is still lacking 3. Lack of attendance at

Internal Factors	
	counseling or training 4. The selling price of grain fluctuates
3. Having capital in farming	
4. Have suffcient seeds and fertilizers	
5. Owning agricultural tools and machinery	
6. Has an organizational structure	
7. Have bylaws	

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2024

1. Power

a. Strategic location

The land owned by the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group is in a location where access to the main road and infrastructure is close to the main road and infrastructure, the distance of the land to irrigation is also close, making this an advantage of this farmer group and a supporting and supporting factor in farming (Jeko, at al., 2024)

b. Large land area

The land owned by the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group is 23.57 Ha. Because the average farmer group member has more than 50 acres of land and the land owned by the average farmer group is privately owned land, this is the main strength for the farmer group (Andrias at al., 2017)

c. Having Capital

Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group since its formation has received APBN funding assistance of 20 million and 40 million and the latest PKPP assistance of 75 million with sufficient capital making this farmer group superior to other farmer groups (Umar et al. 2023).

d. Sufficient Production Facilities

Production facilities in the form of seeds and fertilizers and pesticides in the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group include sufficient for the needs of its group members. Production facilities in the form of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are always fulfilled through production input assistance from the government every year. Sufficient production facilities are an important factor in increasing farm productivity (Umar et al. 2023).

e. Owning Alsintan

Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group has agricultural machinery in the form of 1 group tractor machine (because most members have personal tractors), 2 Combine Harvester machines, and 1 Brigade unit. The importance of using alsintan in increasing rice production (Umar et al. 2023).

f. Has an Organizational Structure

The Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group has a complete organizational structure, starting from the chairman, secretary, treasurer and group members. Making this farmer group work according to their respective responsibilities, organizational structure is important in the application of agricultural innovation ((Faried et al. 2024).

g. Having by-laws

Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group has basic rules in the institution. The rules owned in the form of AD and ART which are the basic reference in activities, training in the preparation of AD / ART can increase members' understanding of the organization and strengthen farmer group institutions ((Nayasilana et al. 2022).

2. Weaknesses

a. Education Level of Farmer Groups

Weaknesses in human resources are in terms of education of farmers, based on the results of the study showed that the average farmer only felt elementary and secondary school education. The low level of education of farmers can affect the effectiveness of farmer group institutions (Gusti, et al., 2022).

b. Knowledge about the use of agricultural tools is still lacking

Many members of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group still do not know how to use existing agricultural tools and machinery. Usually if the landowner does not know how to use it, they prefer to pay someone to run the machine. The average farmer can only use a tractor machine for plowing. The lack of knowledge about tools is due to the lack of farmers in their skills (Gusti, et al., 2022).

c. Lack of Attendance at Counseling/Training

When counseling or training is usually held at Gapoktan and has been conveyed to all members of the farmer group. But at the time of the implementation of counseling, many were not present, one of the obstacles usually coincided with farmers who went down to the fields and prioritized them. Fluctuations in grain prices can affect farmers' income (Nuryanti and Swastika 2016).

d. Fluctuating Grain Selling Price

At the time of simultaneous harvest, the harvest is usually abundant, which makes the price of grain fall. When the harvest is abundant but the demand decreases, it will cause the selling price to be cheap and vice versa. Price fluctuations have an impact on farmers' income (Nuryanti and Swastika 2016).

B. **External Factors**

Table 3. External Factors for Strengthening the Institutionalization of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group, Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency

External Factor	
Opportunies	**Threaths**
1. Subsidized fertiziler assistance 2. The existence of input assistance 3. The existence of alsintan assistance	1. Erratic climate change 2. Price fluctuation

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2024

1. Opportunities

a. Subsidized Fertilizer Assistance

The Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group always receives subsidized fertilizer assistance every year. This fertilizer subsidy is very helpful for farmers in farming (Fatimah and Muhafidin 2024).

b. Saprodi Assistance

Production facilities assistance obtained by this farmer group is in the form of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Production facilities assistance is usually obtained at the beginning of the year or before entering the planting season. this policy supports agricultural sustainability and productivity (Fatimah and Muhafidin 2024).

c. Agricultural machinery Assistance

The Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group has received a lot of agricultural machinery and equipment assistance which has helped farmer group members and made it more efficient in time, energy and also costs in farming. this policy supports sustainability and agricultural productivity (Fatimah and Muhafidin 2024).

2. Threats

a. Erratic Climate Change

The climate change experienced by farmers lately is a prolonged drought that makes the planting season shift and the harvest is less. As well as the quality of crops that decrease and can even lead to crop failure (Mahmudin, et al., 2022)

b. Price Fluctuations

Price instability is a major challenge in the agricultural sector, including rice farming, as price fluctuations can disrupt farmers' income and their economic resilience ((Nuryanti and Swastika 2016).

IFAS and EFAS Matrix

The Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS) matrix is a tool used to determine the results of the evaluation of internal and external factors on institutional strengthening of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group, Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency.

According to Rangkuti (2017), making the IFAS matrix is done through several stages. The first step is to identify factors that are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group. Next, each factor is given a weight based on its level of importance, with a scale of 1.0 for the most important factor to 0.0 for the least important, where the total weight cannot exceed 1.00. After that, each factor is rated from 4 (very influential) to 1 (not influential). The weights and ratings are then multiplied to produce a score. Finally, the total scores are summed to evaluate the institution's internal and external strengths. If the average score is more than 2.50, the institution is considered strong; if it is less than 2.50, the institution is weak.

Table 4. Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) Matrix on the Strategy for Strengthening the Institutionalization of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Rice Farming in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency

Internal Factor	Weight	Rating	Skor (Weight x Rating)
Strengths			
Strategic location	0.12	4	0.47
Large land area	0.11	4	0.46
Having capital in farming	0.11	4	0.43
Have suffcient seeds and fertilizers	0.12	4	0.47
Owning agricultural tools and machinery	0.11	4	0.43
Has an organizational structure	0.11	4	0.43
Have bylaws	0.12	4	0.47
Total Number of Strengths	**0.79**		**3.15**
Weaknesses			
Farmer group education level	0.04	1	0.04
Knowledge about the use of agricultural tools is still lacking	0.06	2	0.11
Lack of attendance at counseling or training	0.06	2	0.11
The selling price of grain fluctuates	0.06	2	0.12
Total Number of Weaknesses	**0.21**		**0.39**
Grand Total	**1.00**		**3.54**

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2024

Based on the table of internal factors of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Paenre Lompoe Village, it shows that the strongest factors supporting institutional strengthening of farmer groups are strategic land location and sufficient production facilities. These two factors get a high weight with a contribution score of 0.47 each. The strategic location supports easier access to markets and good irrigation, while the use of

production facilities accelerates productivity and work effectiveness, which are the main foundations in strengthening farmer group institutions.

The most significant weakness in institutional development is the education level of the farmer group with a total score of 0.04. The weakness in human resources refers to the education level of the farmers. This deficiency can reduce the ability of farmer groups to plan and manage resources optimally. Overall, while farmer group institutions have significant internal strengths, the weaknesses indicate the need to focus on improving the quality of human resources. By addressing these weaknesses, these farmer groups can strengthen their institutional sustainability.

Tabel 5. External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS) Matrix on the Strategy for Strengthening the Institutionalization of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Rice Farming in Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency

External Factor	Weighth	Rating	Skor (Weight x Rating)
Opportunities			
Subsidized fertiziler assistance	0.26	4	1.04
The existence of input assistance	0.27	4	1.07
The existence of alsintan assistance	0.23	3	0.68
Total Number of Opportunities	**0.75**		**2.79**
Threats			
Erratic climate change	0.13	2	0.25
Price fluctuation	0.12	2	0.24
Total Number of Threats	**0.25**		**0.49**
Grand Total	**1.00**		**3.28**

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2024

Based on the table of external factors, the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group in Paenre Lompoe Village shows a total score of 3.28, which indicates the strength of external opportunities that are quite good in supporting institutional development. The main opportunity comes from input assistance with a contribution score of 1.07. Which reflects the importance of aid, and government programs opening up wider access to resources and markets. In addition, increased production through alsintan rocks with a score of 0.68 is a strategic opportunity to increase group productivity and competitiveness, especially in the face of market changes.

However, external threats such as erratic climate change and price fluctuations have the potential to hinder institutional development. Erratic climate change results in a lack of land productivity, while price instability threatens the stability of farmers' income. These threats are exacerbated by climate change which creates risks to planting and harvesting schedules.

Internal and External (IE) Matrices

Strategies in the IE matrix are divided into three main categories based on the position of the weighted results. Growth and development strategies are applied if the results are in cells I, II, or IV, and include intensive strategies such as market penetration, market development, and product, as well as integration strategies such as backward, forward, and horizontal integration. Retain and maintain strategies are used in cells III, V, or VII, focusing on market penetration and product development. Meanwhile, take-it-or-leave-it strategies are applied to cells VI, VIII, or IX, which involve shrinking or closing down the business. This IE matrix utilizes the total IFAS score as the X-axis and the total EFAS score as the Y-axis to determine the appropriate strategic position.

The internal factor analysis with IFAS obtained a strength score of 3.15 and a weakness score of 0.39 so that the total IFAS matrix score was 3.54. Analysis of external factors with EFAS obtained an opportunity score of 2.79 and a threat of 0.49 and for the total EFAS matrix obtained was 3.28. Furthermore, the total score

of these two matrices is used to determine the position in the following IE matrix:

Table 6. *Internal and External (IE) Matrix*

Total Average	IFAS			
EFAS		Strong 4.00-3.00	Medium 2.99-2.00	Weak 1.99-1.00
	High 3.00-4.00	3,54	II	III
	Medium 2.00-2.99	IV 3,28	V	VI
	Low 1.00-1.99	VII	VIII	IX

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2024

Based on the IE matrix, it can be seen that the position of institutional strengthening of the Lalang Tinting Farmer Group I cut point is in cell I, which means that the suitable strategy to do is Grow and build strategies, namely growth and development. In this case, the feasible strategies are intensive strategies and integration strategies.

The Grow and Build position shows that the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group of Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency has significant internal strengths and good enough external opportunities to take advantage of growth. Therefore, institutional strengthening should focus on increasing competitiveness, improving operational efficiency, and developing market reach. The implementation of these strategies will help increase the independence of the groups and ensure their institutional sustainability in the future.

Based on the SWOT analysis table, the strategies that can be applied in the institutional strengthening strategy of the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group, Paenre Lompoe Village, Gantarang District, Bulukumba Regency are as follows:

1. S-O Strategy (Strengths and Opportunities)

   This strategy is made by utilizing all existing strengths to take advantage of the maximum opportunity. The resulting S-O alternative strategy is to increase the quantity, quality of farming by utilizing strategic land, existing production facilities and alsintan assistance received. This strategy focuses on increasing the quantity and quality of farm productivity through extension and training programs. The strategic land location is utilized as a field practice center, allowing members to directly apply training materials. The use of modern agricultural technology is also prioritized to increase production efficiency and yield. With this approach, farmers can not only increase their farms in quantity and quality, but also have better skills, supporting more effective and efficient farm management.

2. W-O (Weakness and Opportunity) Strategy

   This strategy is applied based on the utilization of opportunities to minimize existing threats. The resulting W-O alternative strategy is to organize or include training for farmer group members to add insight and knowledge about technological advances and current and future agricultural developments, as well as to find solutions to overcome price fluctuations. This strategy aims to increase the capacity of human resources (HR) of farmer groups by utilizing opportunities through training. By attending training, farmers can more easily adopt modern technologies, such as the use of modern farming tools and technology-based cultivation techniques to increase productivity. In addition, training also provides insight into

efficient farm management, such as the use of fertilizers and appropriate cropping patterns, as well as information on markets.

3. S-T ((Strengths and Threats) Strategy

   This strategy uses strengths to overcome threats. The resulting S-T alternative strategy is to maximize the potential and existing agricultural technology to overcome changes in climate change and reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers. This strategy aims to optimally utilize land potential and agricultural technology to face the challenges of climate change and reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers. Modern agricultural technologies, such as climate-resistant crop varieties and efficient irrigation systems, are used to improve adaptation to uncertain climate conditions. In addition, farmer groups are encouraged to develop organic fertilizers based on local resources, which are environmentally friendly.

4. W-T Strategy (Weakness and Threats)

   This strategy minimizes shortcomings to avoid existing threats. The resulting W-T alternative strategy is to maximize the role of extension workers and the government in the form of training and counseling to farmer group members. This strategy aims to create adaptive and independent farmer groups through farm diversification and optimizing the role of extension workers. Farm diversification allows farmer groups to reduce dependence on one type of commodity, reduce economic risk and utilize local potential to increase competitiveness, such as utilizing the area for agro-tourism. Meanwhile, the role of extension officers as facilitators is crucial to increase the capacity of members, accelerate technology adoption and open access to markets and government programs. This collaboration can strengthen farmer groups to face challenges.

Conclusion

Strengths like a strategic position, a sizable land area, adequate capital, access to seeds and fertilizer, ownership of agricultural equipment, organized structure, and well-defined bylaws are internal elements that impact the Lalang Tinting I Farmer Group. Low member education, little familiarity with farm equipment, non-participation in training, and volatile rice prices are among its weaknesses. Threats from external sources include climate change and volatile market pricing, while opportunities include things like access to agricultural machinery, production facilities, and fertilizer subsidies. Utilizing strategic land, production facilities, and Alsintan assistance are some strategies for strengthening institutions. Other strategies include training members to increase their technological knowledge and price solutions, optimizing agricultural technology to address climate change and lessen reliance on chemical fertilizers, and expanding the role of government and extension workers.

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