



# STRENGTHENING PESANTREN INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDONESIA THROUGH THE SYNERGY OF THREE MINISTERS

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## Abstract

*The collapse of a prayer hall building at a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) has become a critical moment for the government to enhance protection efforts for students through infrastructure strengthening. As a concrete follow-up, three ministries have established cooperation through the signing of a Joint Agreement on the Synergy of Pesantren Education Infrastructure Management. This paper analyzes the form and effectiveness of inter-ministerial synergy and explores its potential for strengthening the planning and standardization of pesantren infrastructure in Indonesia. The scope of cooperation includes data sharing related to pesantren, technical support for building reliability and environmental health, coordination in the permitting process, and the supervision of Building Approval (PBG) by local governments. Commission V of the DPR RI should exercise its oversight function to ensure building quality, student safety, and budget transparency. Through its budgetary function, Commission V must also ensure that construction budgets are equitable, just, and well-targeted to produce safe, decent, and comfortable pesantren infrastructure.*

## Introduction

Pesantren play a strategic role in shaping national character but face various challenges in basic infrastructure, such as classrooms, dormitories, sanitation, and clean water access (Hendri, 2025). The collapse of the Al-Khoziny Islamic Boarding School in Sidoarjo at the end of September 2025, which resulted in numerous fatalities, highlighted safety issues due to the lack of Building Approval (PBG) permits in many pesantren. Minister of Public Works (PU), Dody Hanggodo, revealed that only 51 out of approximately 42,000 pesantren across Indonesia have official permits (Nursyamsi & Intandari, 2025). This situation violates Law No. 28 of 2002 on Buildings, as amended by Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation, since most pesantren are self-funded with limited resources, and the cost of obtaining permits is considered high by administrators.

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Commission V of the DPR RI has emphasized the urgency of overseeing pesantren infrastructure to ensure compliance with building safety standards and applicable technical regulations (Ameliya, 2025). Meanwhile, the synergistic efforts between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), the Ministry of Public Works (KemenPU), and the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri) to support physical development and pesantren empowerment still face challenges, including weak cross-sectoral coordination, the absence of an integrated national data system, and limited technical supervision in the field (Sendy, 2025). This paper aims to analyze the form and effectiveness of inter-ministerial synergy and to examine its potential in strengthening the planning and standardization of pesantren infrastructure that is safe, sustainable, and equitable.

## Forms of Inter-Ministerial Synergy

Indonesia has more than 42,329 pesantren across 34 provinces, hosting millions of students and serving as vital pillars of national religious education (Sunda, 2025). The collapse of Al-Khoziny Islamic Boarding School, which killed dozens of students, revealed serious issues such as unapproved structural modifications, foundation failures, and weak compliance with building safety standards in many pesantren. Additionally, the implementation of PBG as a replacement for Building Permits (IMB) has yet to be fully applied to most pesantren buildings. Reports indicate that only a few pesantren hold formal building permits (Nursyamsi & Intandari, 2025).

According to the Minister of Religious Affairs, strengthening pesantren infrastructure is not merely about physical structures but represents state protection for children studying in religious institutions. As a concrete step, the Ministry of Public Works will take on a technical role to ensure that every pesantren building is safe and structurally reliable. Minister Dody Hanggodo stated that his ministry will begin by mapping and sampling building assessments in various regions to ensure feasibility and safety (Khairina, 2025). Technical teams from the Ministry of Public Works will also assist in the building permit process and provide basic technical training to pesantren managers (Sunda, 2025).

This initiative represents tangible inter-ministerial cooperation to protect students, most of whom live in dormitory-based educational environments. The existing synergy focuses on dividing technical and programmatic responsibilities. The Ministry of Religious Affairs functions as the liaison and identifier of pesantren needs (data, educational support priorities, accreditation). In several programs, Kemenag provides basic facility assistance (classrooms, libraries). The Ministry of Public Works handles construction aspects, technical recommendations, PBG processing through the Building Information Management System (SIMBG), and rehabilitation or restructuring programs for public facilities. However, the ministry's supervisory capacity at the district/city level still needs strengthening to ensure consistent PBG enforcement. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Home Affairs facilitates funding and program coordination at the village level, particularly for connectivity, sanitation, and clean water access, as

well as encouraging pesantren-based economic empowerment through village and BUMDes schemes (Nursyamsi, 2025).

Although the division of roles is logical, implementation on the ground faces significant challenges. The lack of a nationally integrated database on pesantren needs, inconsistent regional licensing procedures, and fragmented budgets across ministries all hinder effective coordination. The Al-Khoziny case demonstrates a gap between PBG requirements and on-site practices, with many unapproved building expansions. Supervision and compliance with technical regulations are crucial to ensuring building safety. Although the Ministry of Public Works and local governments have authority over PBG issuance via SIM-BG, field implementation, especially verification and administrative sanctions, remains weak, particularly for self-funded institutions like pesantren. The collapse of Al-Khoziny stands as concrete evidence of the fatal consequences of weak oversight.

As a policy alternative, a national priority-based pesantren registration system should be established. The first step is to build an integrated database involving the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Home Affairs through local governments, covering land ownership status, building plans, PBG ownership, structural conditions, and urgent needs. To support funding, a co-funding scheme involving the Ministry of Finance through Kemenag or the Ministry of Public Works, local governments, and the private sector can be implemented. Providing incentives for pesantren that comply with PBG requirements would encourage the creation of safe, decent, and regulation-compliant buildings.

## Cross-Ministerial Synergy in Pesantren Infrastructure Development

The synergy between Kemenag, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Home Affairs is essential for strengthening governance, oversight, and implementation of pesantren infrastructure that is safe and sustainable. This collaboration enables construction and rehabilitation efforts to meet better technical standards. Kemenag oversees pesantren affairs, the Ministry of Public Works provides technical construction expertise, and the Ministry of Home Affairs supervises local governments responsible for implementing PBG.

Support from the Ministry of Public Works in construction and planning enhances the durability and safety of educational facilities, dormitories, and worship spaces within pesantren. Due to budget limitations, the government will prioritize funding for pesantren that meet three main criteria: (a) those located in high-risk or disaster-prone areas; (b) those hosting more than 1,000 students and requiring adequate facilities and capacity; and (c) those unable to continue construction due to financial constraints (Safitri et al., 2025).

Through inter-ministerial coordination, particularly in PBG issuance, pesantren can obtain legal certainty for their buildings, minimizing administrative violations and facilitating government aid distribution. Joint data sharing and planning among ministries are expected to prevent program overlap and ensure

precise budget allocation. Infrastructure programs can thus focus on pesantren with the most urgent rehabilitation or improvement needs.

Such cross-ministerial synergy is expected to address fundamental issues in pesantren infrastructure development, especially regarding technical standards, legal certainty, and financing. With proper and safe infrastructure, pesantren can not only serve as religious education institutions but also develop into centers of community economic and social empowerment. Their strategic role as government partners in shaping moral and competitive human resources will thus be strengthened. Moving forward, this inter-agency collaboration is expected to open broader participation from civil society, religious organizations, and the private sector in supporting sustainable pesantren development, through funding, technical assistance, and technology-based innovations aligned with educational and community empowerment needs.

## Conclusion

The main problems in pesantren infrastructure development in Indonesia stem from weak inter-ministerial coordination, limited technical supervision, and suboptimal PBG implementation as a safety standard. The collapse of Al-Khoziny in Sidoarjo clearly demonstrates that many pesantren facilities are still constructed without sufficient technical guidance or integrated oversight. Therefore, inter-ministerial synergy must be strengthened, not only administratively but also technically, participatively, and sustainably.

Commission V of the DPR RI should take a strategic role in promoting regulations mandating PBG implementation and safety audits for all pesantren buildings. It should also integrate inter-ministerial programs, optimize oversight and budgetary functions to ensure that funds are allocated for safety, feasibility, and sustainability, and promote local and private co-funding schemes. These measures would not only create safer and more decent learning environments for students but also strengthen pesantren's contribution as centers of character education and community economic empowerment.

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