Analysis of Talent Management and Succession Selection Planning at BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency

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Abstract
This study aims to analyze the implementation of talent management and succession selection planning at the Regional Civil Service and Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Labuhanbatu Regency. A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 key informants, participatory observation, and document review from January to March 2026, analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The findings reveal that among 312 mapped administrator and supervisory civil servants (ASN), 18.3% (57 employees) are categorized as top talent (boxes 9, 8, and 7), 52.6% (164 employees) as potential talent (boxes 6, 5, and 4), and 29.1% (91 employees) as requiring development (boxes 3, 2, and 1). Talent management has been executed through nine-box grid mapping, performance-potential assessments, and the Talent Management Information System (SIMATA). Nevertheless, succession selection planning remains suboptimal as 68.4% of successors (39 out of 57 top talents) lack a documented Individual Development Plan (IDP) and talent pool updates are inconsistent. This study recommends periodic data validation, full integration between e-Kinerja and SIMATA, and systematic IDP formulation.
Keywords: Talent Management; Succession Planning; Nine-Box Grid; Merit System; BKPSDM.

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Introduction

The management of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in Indonesia has undergone a fundamental transformation. Whereas civil service governance in the past tended to be administrative and oriented toward rank seniority, following the enactment of Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning State Civil Apparatus [1], the ASN management paradigm has been directed entirely toward a merit system based on qualifications, competencies, and performance in a fair and objective manner.

Within this merit system framework, talent management serves as a strategic instrument to ensure the availability of bureaucratic leadership cadres. According to Collings and Mellahi [2], talent management comprises systematic organizational activities to identify key positions, establish a talent pool consisting of high-performing and high-potential individuals, and build a structured human resource architecture to fill strategic roles sustainably.

Labuhanbatu Regency is one of the regional governments in North Sumatra Province that has demonstrated a progressive commitment to accelerating talent management implementation. On January 14, 2026, the Labuhanbatu Regency Government conducted a talent management expose at the National Civil Service Agency (BKN) Headquarters in Jakarta [3]. During the expose, BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency reported that employee mapping had been carried out using the nine-box grid method based on two primary dimensions: performance and potential.

Despite receiving appreciation for this initiative, BKN provided crucial technical evaluation notes, including the need to accelerate valid ASN data updates, integrate the e-Kinerja system with the talent management application, and formulate targeted competency development interventions for employees in the low-potential group [3]. These evaluation notes indicate a persistent gap between normative policy design and empirical implementation practices at the regional level.

On the other hand, the urgency of position succession within the Labuhanbatu Regency Government has become increasingly pressing. Staffing projections indicate that during the 2025–2027 period, 47 ASNs at the administrator and supervisory levels will reach the mandatory retirement age (BUP), directly resulting in vacancies across 34 strategic structural positions. Without structured, talent-pool-based succession selection planning, these vacancies risk slowing bureaucratic decision-making and degrading the quality of public services.

Based on these empirical phenomena and gaps, this study aims to: (1) analyze and describe the implementation of ASN talent management at BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency; (2) analyze succession selection planning mechanisms and talent pool readiness; and (3) identify inhibiting factors and formulate merit-based optimization strategies. Theoretically, this study enriches public-sector human resource management literature, while practically providing evidence-based policy recommendations for the Talent Committee Team of BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency.

Literature Review

Pella and Inayati [4] define talent management as an integrated process to ensure an organization has the right human resources in the right positions at the right time. This cycle encompasses talent identification, potential and performance assessment, competency development, and the retention of superior talent.

From a regulatory perspective, Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (PANRB) Regulation Number 3 of 2020 concerning ASN Talent Management [5] stipulates

that government agency talent management is carried out through talent acquisition, talent development, talent retention, talent placement, and monitoring and evaluation. The primary instrument in talent acquisition and mapping is the nine-box grid matrix, which combines the performance appraisal axis (SKP) and the potential assessment axis (competency test/assessment), as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Nine-Box Grid Talent Mapping Matrix (PermenPANRB No. 3/2020 & Talent Committee Decree)

Potential / Performance	Low Performance	Moderate Performance	High Performance
High Potential	Box 7 Top Talent	Box 8 Top Talent	Box 9 Top Talent
Moderate Potential	Box 4 Potential Talent	Box 5 Potential Talent	Box 6 Potential Talent
Low Potential	Box 1 Needs Development	Box 2 Needs Development	Box 3 Needs Development

Under the standards of PermenPANRB No. 3 of 2020 [5], Boxes 9, 8, and 7 represent the talent spectrum with high potential capacity, wherein BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency groups these three boxes as priorities for talent pool inclusion, with the stipulation that employees in Box 7 must first undergo a performance acceleration program prior to promotion.

Furthermore, according to Rothwell [6], succession planning is a systematic organizational effort to ensure leadership continuity in key positions through the identification, development, and evaluation of internal cadres. Rothwell emphasizes five core principles of effective succession: competency-based, transparent, planned, documented through an Individual Development Plan (IDP), and periodically evaluated. This entire process rests upon the merit system regulated in Law Number 20 of 2023 [1], which prohibits political patronage in filling public offices.

Empirical studies over the past five years highlight various dynamics and challenges in implementing talent management and succession planning in the public sector. First, Suparman and Naibaho [7] examined talent management policy implementation in regional governments and found that primary obstacles stem from unintegrated employee performance and potential databases as well as low consistency among regional apparatus organizations (OPDs) in updating talent data periodically. Second, Pratama and Nugroho [8] investigated the digitalization of ASN talent mapping and demonstrated that utilizing talent management information systems and nine-box grid matrices enhances promotion objectivity, though its effectiveness is frequently hindered by manual double-entry processes across civil service applications.

Third, Lestari et al. [9] analyzed the relationship between talent pools and bureaucratic leadership succession readiness, finding that maintaining a list of top candidates does not guarantee successor readiness unless accompanied by measurable Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Fourth, following the enactment of Law Number 20 of 2023 [1], Hidayat and Kurniawan [10] examined merit system acceleration in regional government agencies and emphasized that filling strategic positions from outside the talent pool due to urgent vacancies can erode internal cadres' trust in the fairness of the merit system. Fifth, Wulandari and Santoso [11] evaluated the governance maturity of ASN talent management at the regency/municipality level and concluded that most regional governments still face a competency development paradox, wherein training budget constraints prevent development interventions from reaching employees in low-performance and low-potential quadrants. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

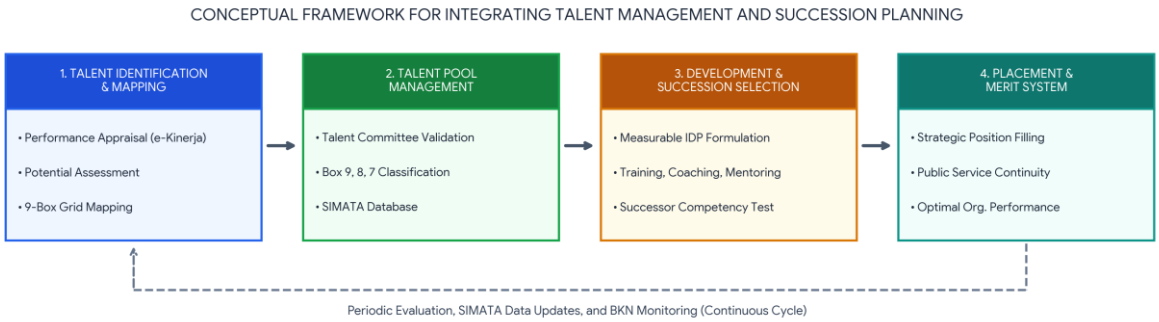


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Integrating Talent Management and Succession Selection Planning

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a single-case study design to explore in depth the institutional dynamics and technical constraints of talent management system implementation. The research was conducted at BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province, from January to March 2026.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling comprising 10 key informants directly involved in either policy formulation or talent mapping (Table 2). Data collection utilized semi-structured in-depth interviews (45–90 minutes), participatory observation of Talent Committee meetings, and document review of Talent Committee Decree No. 800/45/BKPSDM/2025, the 2025 9-Box Grid Mapping Recapitulation, the SIMATA database, and e-Kinerja reports.

Table 2. List of Research Informants

Code	Position / Work Unit	Research Role
INF-01	Head of BKPSDM Labuhanbatu	Talent Committee Advisor
INF-02	Head of Performance Development & Appraisal Division	Mapping Team Chairperson
INF-03	Head of Procurement and Mutation Division	Talent Committee Member
INF-04	Sub-Division Head of Performance Appraisal	SIMATA Administrator
INF-05	Sub-Division Head of Career Development	IDP Document Manager
INF-06–10	5 Administrator & Supervisory ASNs	Box 9, 8, and 6 Talents

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana [12], consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking with key informants.

Results

4.1 Profile of Mapped Civil Servants (ASN)

The organizational structure of BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency consists of 1 Secretariat and 3 technical divisions (Procurement and Mutation Division, Performance Development and Appraisal Division, and Discipline and Welfare Division) overseeing 9 sub-divisions. As of early 2026, BKPSDM had mapped 312 administrator and supervisory ASNs, as detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Profile of Mapped ASNs and Projected Position Vacancies (2025–2027)

Staffing Profile Indicator	Total	Percentage
Total Administrator & Supervisory ASNs	312 Employees	100.0%
Master's Degree (S2)	68 Employees	21.8%
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	198 Employees	63.5%
Diploma III / High School	46 Employees	14.7%
Projected ASN Retirements (2025–2027)	47 Employees	15.1%
Strategic Positions Requiring Successors	34 Positions	100.0%

The discrepancy between the 47 retiring ASNs and the 34 strategic positions arises because 13 supervisory positions fall under the bureaucratic simplification scheme (reclassification into functional positions), thereby focusing structural succession on 34 key roles.

4.2 Implementation of ASN Talent Management

The nine-box grid mapping presented at the BKN Headquarters expose in January 2026 [3] yielded a distribution of 312 ASNs as presented in Table 4 and Figure 2. The majority of ASNs fall into the potential talent category (52.6%), serving as a strategic reserve asset to be elevated into top talent.

Table 4. Distribution of Nine-Box Grid Mapping Results for Labuhanbatu Regency ASNs

Talent Category	Boxes	Total	Percentage
Top Talent	9, 8, 7	57 Employees	18.3%
Potential Talent	6, 5, 4	164 Employees	52.6%
Needs Development	3, 2, 1	91 Employees	29.1%
Total Population	**All**	**312 Employees**	**100.0%**

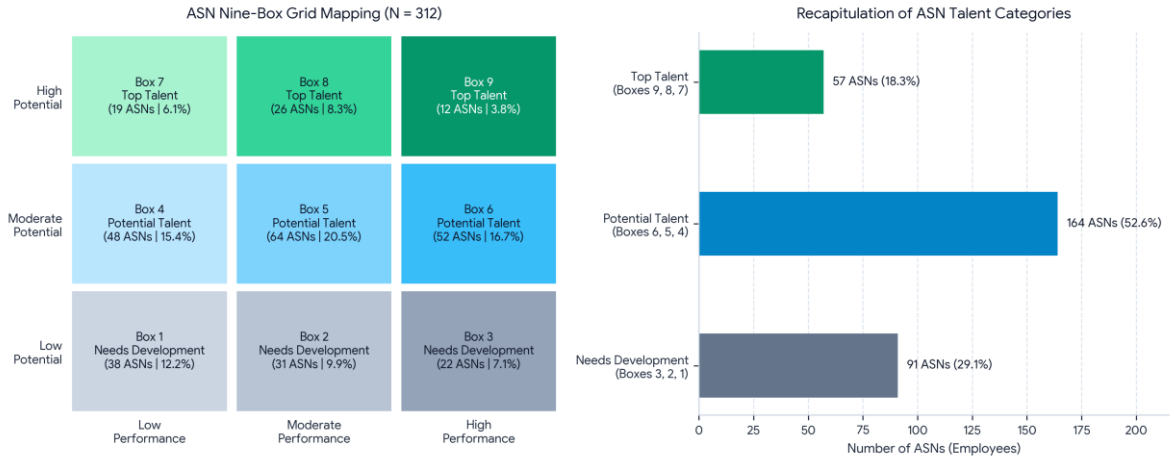


Figure 2. Distribution of Nine-Box Grid Matrix and Recapitulation of ASN Talent Categories

> *"We have mapped all administrator and supervisory officials. Only 12 individuals fall purely into Box 9, and they serve as the top priority for Department Head positions. Meanwhile, Boxes 5 and 4 contain a very large number of employees, which becomes our shared homework to enhance their capacity."* **(Interview INF-02)**

In the e-Kinerja/SKP performance appraisal stage, 89 ASNs (28.5%) achieved a 'Very Good' rating (91–100), 172 ASNs (55.1%) achieved 'Good' (76–90), and 51 ASNs (16.4%) achieved 'Fair' (60–75). During the 2025 development phase, BKPSDM conducted Administrator/Supervisory Leadership Training (PKA/PKP) for 24 top-talent participants, talent management technical guidance for 45 potential-talent participants, and coaching and mentoring for 18 top talents. However, 91 ASNs in the Needs Development category (Boxes 3, 2, and 1) have not yet received structured interventions, creating a development paradox driven by budget constraints.

4.3 Succession Selection Planning

The Talent Committee established by the Decree of the Head of BKPSDM has mapped successor candidates for 34 strategic positions. A total of 27 positions (79.4%) already have candidates within the talent pool, whereas 7 positions (20.6%) still lack successors meeting specific technical competency requirements (Table 5).

Table 5. Successor Readiness in Strategic Positions of Labuhanbatu Regency

Strategic Position	Total	Successor Available	No Successor Yet
Head of Department / Agency	12	9 (75.0%)	3 (25.0%)
Department Secretary / Sub-District Head	22	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)
Total Positions	**34**	**27 (79.4%)**	**7 (20.6%)**

A critical finding of this research is the weak documentation of Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Out of 57 talent pool members, only 18 individuals (31.6%) possess formal IDP documents, while 39 individuals (68.4%) do not. Consequently, development programs remain uniform and fail to target individual competency gaps.

> *"IDP documents have actually been discussed frequently in committee meetings, but not all have been formalized in writing on an individual basis. As a result, competency development patterns remain general and unmeasured per successor candidate."* **(Interview INF-03)**

> *"As employees placed in the high-box mapping, we actually look forward to clarity regarding our career plans and which specific training programs we must attend to fill target positions, so our preparation is more focused."* **(Interview INF-07)**

Additionally, a review of 11 administrator position appointments during the 2024–2025 period revealed that 8 positions (72.7%) were filled from the talent pool, whereas 3 positions (27.3%) were filled from outside the talent pool through competency testing and open selection due to urgent operational needs.

4.4 Implementation Inhibiting Factors

Triangulation of interviews and document reviews identified five primary inhibiting factors hindering the optimization of talent management and succession selection (Table 6 and Figure 3).

Table 6. Matrix of Five Main Inhibiting Factors in Talent Management and Succession Selection

No.	Main Inhibiting Factor	Informants	Empirical Evidence
1	SIMATA data inaccurate & outdated	90% (9/10)	42 SKP & training records not updated
2	e-Kinerja not integrated with SIMATA	80% (8/10)	Repetitive manual data entry (double entry)
3	IDPs not systematically formulated	80% (8/10)	68.4% of successors (39 employees) lack IDPs

4	Limited development budget	70% (7/10)	Structural training budget decreased by 15%
5	Low OPD comprehension	60% (6/10)	12 OPDs delayed submitting data updates

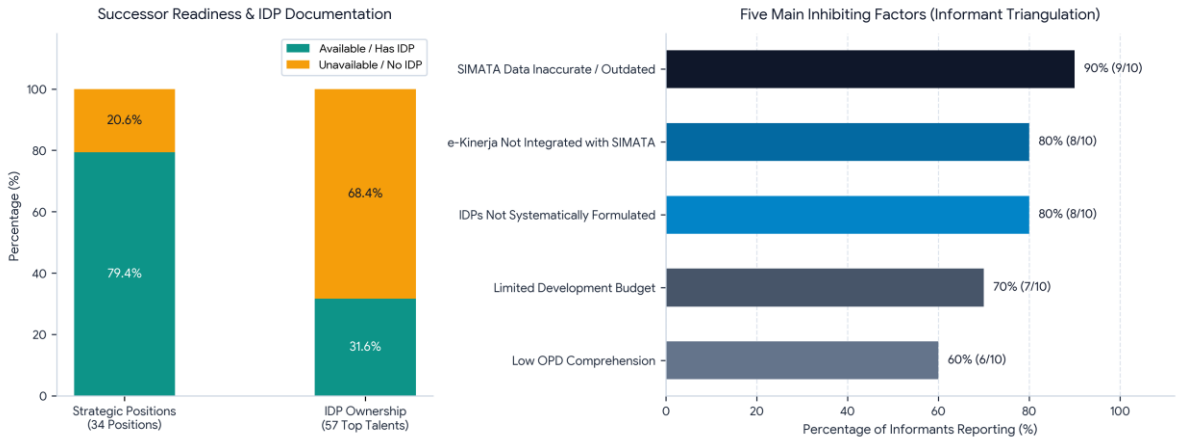


Figure 3. Successor Readiness Level, IDP Ownership, and Proportion of Main Obstacles

4.5 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm Collings and Mellahi's theory [2] that effective talent management requires an integrated human resource architecture. Labuhanbatu Regency has established an institutional foundation through the Talent Committee and the SIMATA application; however, the lack of e-Kinerja integration creates administrative duplication that risks undermining mapping accuracy.

The absence of IDPs among 68.4% of successors also validates Rothwell's warning [6] that without measurable IDPs, a talent pool merely becomes an inventory list of names rather than a leadership acceleration process. Meanwhile, filling 27.3% of positions from outside the talent pool—although legally permissible via open selection under Law No. 20 of 2023 [1]—must be restricted so as not to demotivate high-performing internal cadres.

> *"Regional leadership commitment is very strong to ensure future position appointments are entirely based on the merit system and talent pool. Technical challenges such as data integration and IDP formulation are currently being accelerated following the evaluation from BKN Headquarters."* **(Interview INF-01)**

Overall, referring to the evolutionary framework and Talent Management Maturity Model proposed by Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen [13] and Bersin by Deloitte [14], the maturity level of talent management at BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency stands at the emerging toward maturing phase. Within this maturity model, the emerging toward maturing phase describes an organizational transition that has moved beyond conventional administrative personnel governance—evidenced by the establishment of the Talent Committee, the mapping of 312 ASNs via the nine-box grid instrument in SIMATA, and regional leadership commitment demonstrated at the BKN Headquarters expose [3]. Nevertheless, the organization has not yet fully reached the mature stage because its talent management ecosystem still suffers from systemic fragmentation, namely the lack of automated integration between e-Kinerja and SIMATA, delayed data reconciliation from regional apparatus organizations, and the uneven preparation of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for 68.4% of successor candidates. Consequently, accelerating toward the mature stage requires shifting the focus from mere administrative talent mapping to real-time data integration and measurable successor development execution.

Conclusion

The implementation of talent management at BKPSDM Labuhanbatu Regency has progressed through nine-box grid mapping of 312 ASNs, comprising 18.3% top talent, 52.6% potential talent, and 29.1% requiring development. Succession selection planning covers 79.4% of the 34 strategic positions, yet remains suboptimal because 68.4% of successors lack an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and 27.3% of appointments still originate from outside the talent pool. The five primary obstacles include inaccurate SIMATA data (90%), lack of e-Kinerja integration (80%), unsystematic IDP formulation (80%), budget constraints (70%), and low OPD comprehension (60%).

As practical implications and future development, this study recommends that: (1) BKPSDM conduct semi-annual SIMATA data reconciliation through OPD liaison administrators (PICs), integrate the e-Kinerja API with SIMATA, and mandate IDP formulation for all 57 talent pool members; (2) the Labuhanbatu Regency Government strengthen budget support for cost-effective competency development based on coaching/mentoring and e-learning; (3) BKN Regional Office VI Medan provide continuous technical assistance until the mature stage is achieved; and (4) future researchers conduct longitudinal quantitative studies to empirically test the impact of IDPs on bureaucratic performance.

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