



## **SME DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY**

### ***STRATEGI PENGEMBANGAN UKM SEBAGAI FONDASI EKONOMI NASIONAL***

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#### **Article Info**

##### **Article history :**

Received : 01-07-2024

Revised : 04-07-2024

Accepted : 06-07-2024

Published : 08-07-2024

#### **Abstract**

With the dynamic dynamics of the global economy, Indonesia as a developing country with a large population is facing challenges and emerging opportunities in managing the national economy. To anticipate this, the national economic foundation in Indonesia needs to be strengthened, especially the entrepreneurial factor, such as the development of SMEs. The aim of the research is to analyze the development strategies of SMEs as the foundation of the national economy. The research method used a qualitative method supported by literature studies (books, journals and the internet). The results are 5 strategies that can be implemented to develop SMEs as the foundation of the national economy, such as development strategy of SMEs in the free market sector, development strategy of SMEs in the role and government policy sector, development strategy of SMEs in the competitive human resources sector, development strategy of SMEs in the physical capital sector and strategic development of SMEs in the entrepreneurial sector. By implementing strategies in these sectors, SMEs will be able to become the backbone of the local economy, increasing employment opportunities for local communities, reducing unemployment rates and increasing the economic productivity of society in Indonesia as a whole.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Development of SMEs, National Economic Foundation

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#### ***Abstrak***

*Dengan dinamika ekonomi global yang dinamis, negara Indonesia sebagai negara berkembang dengan populasi yang besar menghadapi adanya tantangan dan munculnya peluang dalam pengelolaan ekonomi nasional. Untuk mengantisipasi hal tersebut, fondasi ekonomi nasional di Indonesia perlu diperkuat, khususnya pada faktor kewirausahaan yaitu pengembangan UKM. Tujuan penelitian adalah menganalisis strategi pengembangan UKM sebagai fondasi ekonomi nasional. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif yang didukung studi literatur (buku, jurnal dan internet). Hasilnya adalah terdapat 5 strategi yang dapat diimplementasikan guna pengembangan UKM sebagai fondasi ekonomi nasional yaitu strategi pengembangan UKM di sektor pasar bebas, strategi pengembangan UKM di sektor peran dan kebijakan pemerintah, strategi pengembangan UKM di sektor sumber daya manusia yang kompetitif, strategi pengembangan UKM di sektor modal fisik dan strategi pengembangan UKM di sektor kewirausahaan. Dengan adanya pengimplementasian strategi-strategi pada sektor-sektor tersebut, UKM akan mampu menjadi tulang punggung ekonomi lokal, meningkatkan kesempatan kerja bagi masyarakat lokal, mengurangi tingkat pengangguran dan meningkatkan produktivitas ekonomi masyarakat secara keseluruhan.*

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi, Pengembangan UKM, Fondasi Ekonomi Nasional



## INTRODUCTION

With the dynamic dynamics of the global economy, Indonesia as a developing country with a large population is facing challenges and emerging opportunities in managing the national economy. According to Smith (2013), the national economy is the totality of economic activities carried out by individuals who pursue their personal interests through market mechanisms regulated by the "invisible hand" so that the results of individual interests can benefit society as a whole. In other words, economic activities carried out by individuals in a market, such as selling goods or services, can increase productivity and have the potential to open up new jobs. With an increase in new jobs, it will make a significant contribution to GDP, especially taxes and help distribute income or economy that is more evenly distributed throughout society. So, the thing that needs to be considered is strengthening the foundations of the national economy (Bimantoro, 2020).

The main foundation in achieving strengthening of a country's national economy is people's purchasing power. People's purchasing power is influenced by production factors such as land, labor, capital and entrepreneurship which are managed efficiently and productively, especially the establishment of potential new SMEs (Samuelson, 1983). The foundation of a strong national economy is based on free market principles where the forces of demand and supply regulate the production and distribution of goods and services. However, the role of the Indonesian Government is also needed in providing infrastructure and enforcing laws to strengthen the foundations of the national economy (Smith, 2013). In the production factor, namely entrepreneurship, at the foundation of the national economy, what can be done to increase productivity is by developing SMEs.

SME is an abbreviation of Small and Medium Enterprises, which is a type of business that plays an important role in increasing the economic growth of a country or national economy (Yudhistira, 2022). SMEs are usually run by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of large companies. In Indonesia, SMEs as a form of entrepreneurship have a major contribution to the economy. Then, SMEs can also absorb more workers compared to large businesses. In other words, SMEs are the most important pillar of the economy in Indonesia. To realize the development of SMEs that contribute greatly to the country, SME owners, both individuals and business entities, must have effective and efficient strategies. Based on this, a more in-depth analysis is needed regarding what strategies can be used to develop SMEs as the foundation of the national economy.

### **Theoretical basis**

The word national comes from the English word "*nation*" which means nation, people or country. According to Weber (1922), the national is an idea that includes cultural and historical dimensions that function to bind individuals into a coherent political community. According to Anderson (1991), national is defined as an imagined political community *or* whose members do not all know each other but have a collective image of their unity as a community. Meanwhile, Smith (1991) explains that national is a group of people who have ethnic ties. and the same culture and have a strong sense of togetherness and collective identity such as history, language, culture and symbolism.



The word economics comes from the Greek word "*oikonomia*". *Oikonomia* comes from two words, namely "*oikos*" which means household and "*nomos*" which means rules. According to Putong (2010), economics is all about things related to life in the household where the word "household" does not just refer to a family, but a wider household, namely the household of the nation or state. Meanwhile, Deliarnov (2016) explains that economics is a human activity in managing material resources for the prosperity of a community group or individual. In general, economics is household arrangements or household management.

The word foundation comes from English, namely '*foundation*', which means the basis for something. Foundations are the basic elements that support and enable growth and stability. Foundations include various interrelated aspects and form a solid framework for sustainable development (Smith, 2013). Based on its elements, the foundations related to the national economy are described as follows:

1. Free market (Smith, 2013): A free market is an economic system where the prices of goods and services are determined by the interaction between supply and demand without excessive government interference.
2. Role and Policy of Government (Keynes, 1936): The role of Government is to establish and enforce policies or legal rules to keep markets efficient and fair. Government policy is divided into fiscal policy (related to public spending and taxation) and monetary policy (related to interest rates and the amount of money in circulation).
3. Competitive Human Resources (Potter, 1990): competitive human resources are born from human resources that expand access to education and training through e-learning platforms, digital education and the use of AI. Competitive human resources will be able to increase productivity in various economic sectors, encourage innovation and development of new technology and increase competitiveness in the global market (including attracting foreign investment and increasing exports).
4. Physical Capital: Physical capital includes tangible assets used in producing goods and services. The main components of physical capital such as transportation (roads, bridges, railways, airports and ports), communications (telecommunication networks, internet and information technology), utilities (electricity networks, water, gas), production facilities (factories, warehouses) , commercial buildings (offices, shopping centers) and others.
5. Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship plays a role in creating jobs, increasing innovation, expanding markets and encouraging a sustainable economy. In the role of entrepreneurship to create jobs, this contributes significantly to reducing the unemployment rate and increasing people's income.

SME is an abbreviation for Small and Medium Enterprises. SMEs are defined separately in Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2008 tentang Usaha Mikro, Kecil dan Menengah. In Article 1 paragraph 2, it is stated that small businesses are productive economic businesses that stand alone and are carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies owned by large businesses that meet the criteria for small businesses. Then, Article 1 paragraph 3 states that medium businesses are productive economic businesses that stand alone and are carried out by individuals or business entities that are not



subsidiaries or branches of companies that are owned or part of either directly or indirectly with small or large businesses with a total net worth. more than IDR 500,000,000,- to IDR 10,000,000,000,- and does not include buildings and land of business premises.

According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), development is the process, method and act of developing. According to Hardjana (2011), development is learning activities held over a certain period of time to increase the possibility of improving performance. Then, Hasibuan (2011) explained that development is an effort to improve employees' technical, theoretical, conceptual and moral abilities in accordance with job/position requirements through education and training. Meanwhile, Siagian (2012) states that development includes learning opportunities which aim to further increase the knowledge *and skills required* for current work and are used to prepare employees according to growth and change.

The word strategy comes from the Greek word "*strategos*" which means an effort to achieve victory in a war (originally used in a military environment). According to Quinn (1999), strategy is a form or plan that integrates the main goals, policies and series of actions in an organization into a unified whole. Meanwhile, Marrus (2002) states that strategy is a process of determining plans by top leaders that focus on the long-term goals of the organization accompanied by the preparation of a method or effort on how to achieve these goals. A well-formulated strategy will help organize and allocate the company's resources into a unique and sustainable form.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method used to analyze strategies for developing SMEs as the foundation of the national economy is a qualitative method with descriptive analysis supported by literature studies (via books, journals and reliable internet sources).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

SMEs are part of the independent Indonesian economy and have great potential to improve welfare, especially in the national economic sector. When the economic or monetary crisis occurred in Indonesia in 1998, SMEs were one of the parties who were able to overcome the crisis and enable Indonesia to rise from adversity. If SMEs are seen as a form of entrepreneurship which is one of the factors for strengthening the foundations of the national economy, SMEs, which are often started by individuals or small groups, can create new businesses or develop unique business ideas with lower risks compared to large companies. In terms of flexibility, SMEs are able to adapt quickly to changes in the business environment or technological changes which enable SMEs to remain competitive with their rivals in the global market.

According to Firdaus (2024), the SME sector needs special attention from the Indonesian Government because it is a contributor to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has succeeded in absorbing a very large workforce reaching 97%. In fact, the number of SMEs in Indonesia reaches approximately 65 million with a contribution to GDP of 61%. Based on this information, SMEs are not only economic entities that play a role in national economic development, but also as a forum for entrepreneurship that is capable of producing innovation and creating added value for society as a whole. The various advantages and benefits offered by SMEs make it necessary to develop SMEs in Indonesia to increase their role to the maximum. However, in developing SMEs, in-depth thinking is needed about the strategies that must be implemented so



that SME development becomes part of the foundation of the national economy. Several important strategies that must be carried out in developing SMEs are as follows:

1. SME development strategy in the free market sector

SME development strategies in the free market sector are very important to ensure competitiveness and business sustainability in a competitive environment. Some strategies that can be implemented are:

- a. Product and Service Innovation through research and development (R&D) and diversification. Research and development (R&D) functions as an investment in research to develop new products or improve existing products. Meanwhile, diversification is carried out to increase product or service variations to meet wider market needs.
- b. Utilization of technology by means of digitalization and automation. Digitalization is carried out by using digital technology for business operations, marketing and sales. Examples are the use of e-commerce and social media. Meanwhile, automation can be done by implementing automation technology to increase production and operational efficiency.
- c. Improving the quality and standards of SMEs by having certification and quality control. The certification obtained needs to be recognized internationally or nationally for the product and production process. Meanwhile, quality control is carried out by implementing a strict audit system to ensure product consistency and excellence.
- d. There is access to markets with an export system and strategic partnerships. Exports are carried out to take advantage of opportunities to trade goods/services so they can enter the global market. Meanwhile, strategic partnerships are carried out to collaborate with large companies or institutions so that they can expand networks and market access.
- e. Use of data and analytics and use *Customer Relationship Management* (CRM). Data analytics is used to understand market trends and consumer behavior so as to determine which products are more suitable to sell to them. Meanwhile, CRM is used to manage relationships with customers and increase customer satisfaction.
- f. Marketing that uses SEO, SEM and social media systems to increase visibility (attract new customers) as well as branding to make consumers have more confidence in the products offered.
- g. Sustainability and social responsibility by implementing sustainable practices and *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR). Sustainable practices are used to create environmentally friendly businesses. Meanwhile, CSR is used to improve the image of a business and its contribution to society.

2. SME development strategy in the sector, role and government policy

The SME development strategy in the sector, the role and government policies are very important for the economic and social growth of society. Some strategies that can be implemented are:



- a. Providing access to financing through Kredit Usaha Rakyat (KUR) and interest subsidies and credit guarantees. The KUR program which has low interest and easy conditions for disbursement will be very helpful in meeting business capital needs. Meanwhile, interest subsidies and credit guarantees are very useful for reducing risks for financial institutions that provide loans to SMEs.
  - b. Reduction of regulatory and tax burdens through simplified licensing processes and tax incentives. Simplifying the licensing process can simplify the licensing and bureaucratic processes to make it easier for SMEs to operate. Meanwhile, tax incentives provided by the Government in the form of tax exemptions or reductions for certain periods can reduce the production burden for new SMEs.
3. SME development strategy in the competitive human resources sector

The strategy for developing SMEs in the competitive human resources sector is very important because it can increase productivity, work innovation and business growth. Some strategies that can be implemented are:

- a. Training and skills development through continuous training and digital skills development. Continuous training is carried out by holding regular training programs to improve employees' technical and managerial skills. Meanwhile, digital skills development focuses on training in the field of information and communication technology to utilize digital technology in business operations.
- b. Education and career development through education and certification programs as well as career path development. Education and certification programs are carried out to support employees so that they are able to obtain formal education and professional certification in their field of work. Meanwhile, career path development is carried out by SMEs which provides a clear career advancement or promotion system for employees who excel.
- c. Proper recruitment and selection through a strict recruitment process and competency assessment. A strict recruitment process for employee selection in SMEs can ensure that only the best candidates are recruited. Meanwhile, competency assessment is carried out using assessment tools and techniques that are able to explore the employee's potential.
- d. Compensation and incentives through competitive compensation packages and incentive programs. A competitive compensation package provides competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain the best talent. Meanwhile, incentive programs are implemented based on employee performance, thereby encouraging them to increase productivity and work motivation.
- e. A supportive work environment through a positive work culture and employee welfare. A positive work culture is carried out by building good and healthy collaboration and cooperation between departments or within one department. Meanwhile, employee welfare can be achieved by providing health facilities, *work life balance* and mental support.



- f. Implementation of performance management through a performance appraisal and feedback system. The performance appraisal system must be carried out fairly and transparently to measure and improve employee performance. Meanwhile, constructive feedback can be seen from the results of employee performance assessments (whether the employee can be retained or not).
  - g. Leadership development through leadership training programs and *mentoring/coaching programs*. Leadership training programs are carried out by providing training programs to develop leadership skills at all levels of the organization. Meanwhile, mentoring/coaching is carried out with the presence of an experienced mentor/coach to develop employee skills professionally with intensive guidance.
  - h. Utilization of technology for HR based on HR management systems and e-learning/online training. The HR management system is carried out using HR management software to automate and increase the efficiency of HR processes. Meanwhile, e-learning/online training is carried out using a digital platform that provides easy-to-access training and flexible training access times.
4. SME development strategy in the physical capital sector

SME development strategies in the physical capital sector are very important because they have a direct and significant impact on the organization's ability to operate effectively, efficiently and competitively. Some strategies that can be implemented are:

- a. Development of infrastructure and facilities through facility expansion and SME layout optimization. Facility expansion is carried out by building or expanding factories, warehouses and other production facilities to increase production capacity and operational efficiency. Meanwhile, optimization of the SME layout is carried out by redesigning the SME to improve workflow and efficiency of the production process.
- b. Maintenance and asset management based on proactive maintenance and effective asset management. Proactive maintenance is carried out by carrying out routine maintenance and equipment repairs to reduce *downtime* and extend the life of production machines. Meanwhile, effective asset management is carried out using an asset management system to track the condition and maintenance of physical assets.
- c. Inventory and logistics management based on inventory management systems and supply chain optimization. An inventory management system is carried out to optimize the stock of raw materials and finished products. Meanwhile, supply chain optimization is used to increase logistics and distribution efficiency to reduce costs and delivery times.
- d. Increased production capacity through facility scalability and increased physical capital. Facility scalability is carried out by designing which facilities can be easily upgraded according to demand growth. Meanwhile, increasing physical capital is carried out by allocating funds for purchasing new equipment and modernizing existing production facilities.
- e. Use of information technology based on *Enterprise Resource Planning* (ERP) systems and use of *the Internet of Things* (IoT). ERP systems are used for better integration and



operational efficiency for SMEs. Meanwhile, IoT is used to monitor and manage equipment and production processes in *real time* .

- f. Financing and investment through access to financing and budget management. Access to financing is done by looking for sources of financing that can be used for investment in physical capital such as bank loans and others. Meanwhile, budget management is carried out by managing the budget well to ensure optimal allocation for physical capital development.

#### 5. SME development strategy in the entrepreneurial sector

SME development strategies in the entrepreneurial sector play a key role in encouraging innovation, economic growth and job creation. Some strategies that can be implemented are:

- a. Network development through building collaborative networks between SMEs, universities, research institutions and industry to support the exchange of knowledge, technology and business opportunities.
- b. Protection of intellectual property by providing legal protection and support for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to SMEs so that the innovation and creativity of SMEs in the entrepreneurial sector is protected.
- c. Implementation of geographic expansion by establishing branches or SME distributor partners in strategic locations.

By implementing strategies in these sectors, SMEs will be able to become the backbone of the local economy, increasing employment opportunities for local communities and reducing unemployment rates, creating products and services that can fill unmet market gaps, expanding economic development to the region. inland or remote areas, contribute significantly to state tax revenues and help protect the environment by implementing long-term sustainable business development that is environmentally friendly.

## CONCLUSION

Foundation in achieving strengthening of a country's national economy is people's purchasing power. People's purchasing power is influenced by production factors such as land, labor, capital and entrepreneurship which are managed efficiently and productively , especially the establishment of potential new SMEs. The foundation of a strong national economy is based on free market principles where the forces of demand and supply regulate the production and distribution of goods and services. However, the role of the Indonesian Government is also needed in providing infrastructure and enforcing laws to strengthen the foundations of the national economy. In the production factor, namely entrepreneurship, at the foundation of the national economy, what can be done to increase productivity is by developing SMEs. SMEs also as a form of entrepreneurship have a major contribution to the economy, especially in absorbing more labor compared to large businesses. To support the effective and efficient development of SMEs as the foundation of the national economy, several strategies are implemented, namely the SME development strategy in the free market sector, the SME development strategy in the role and government policy sector, the SME development strategy in the competitive human resources





sector, the SME development strategy in physical capital sector and SME development strategies in the entrepreneurship sector. By implementing strategies in these sectors, SMEs will be able to become the backbone of the local economy, increasing employment opportunities for local communities and reducing unemployment rates, creating products and services that can fill unmet market gaps, expanding economic development to the region. inland or remote areas, contribute significantly to state tax revenues and help protect the environment by implementing long-term sustainable business development that is environmentally friendly. The development of SMEs as the foundation of the national economy is expected to increase competitiveness in the global market and help equalize regional development so that there is an increase in community welfare.

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