



Strategies for Entering the Malaysian Export Market for Processed MSME Products

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the export promotion strategies of packaged food products implemented by micro enterprises (UMK) in Nunukan Regency. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with data collected through interviews, field observations, and documentation. The data sources consisted of primary data obtained directly from micro entrepreneurs and technical officials, as well as secondary data from relevant policy documents. The findings reveal that the export promotion strategies applied by UMK comprise four main aspects: (1) export certification and licensing, (2) branding and product packaging enhancement, (3) training and capacity building for UMK actors, and (4) cross-border strategic partnerships. Halal certification, distribution permits from BPOM, and export documents such as the Certificate of Origin serve as the main foundations for facilitating export processes. In the aspect of branding, attractive packaging design, strong brand identity, and alignment with Malaysian consumer preferences have proven to enhance product competitiveness. Training in digital marketing, export regulation comprehension, and packaging design plays a vital role in improving the professionalism of UMK actors. Additionally, partnerships with local Malaysian distributors, participation in international trade exhibitions, and collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) and Trade Attachés have expanded market access and strengthened cross-border business networks. Nevertheless, challenges such as limited access to international marketing networks, high promotion and logistics costs, and complex export regulations remain significant obstacles. Local government efforts through certification facilitation, integrated training, and the establishment of trade partnerships have been proven to play a crucial role in strengthening UMK export promotion strategies.

Introduction

Micro, Medium, and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) are businesses capable of creating jobs, providing economic services to the community, and ensuring national stability (Hanim and Noorman, 2018; Hardyansah & Putra, 2023; Hayati & Fatarib, 2022). Furthermore, MSMEs are capable of absorbing labor on a large scale, thereby reducing unemployment. Microenterprises, or MSMEs for short, have fast transactions and address the community's primary needs. Therefore, the government strives to prioritize MSMEs, as they can directly impact the lives of middle- and lower-income communities (Quak et al., 2022; Hasanuddin et al., 2025; Kasonde & Chilolo, 2026). Through the National Entrepreneurship Movement, the government is increasingly providing guidance to MSMEs, particularly to address the

challenges faced by Indonesian MSMEs. MSMEs are also a crucial pillar of the Indonesian economy, consistently contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In February 2021, the government issued Government Regulation Number 7 of 2021, defining Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This regulation defines Micro Enterprises as productive businesses owned by individuals and/or sole proprietorships that meet certain criteria as stipulated in the regulation (Ramadhan et al., 2026; Bunawan, 2025; Mahfud, 2025). Meanwhile, a Small Business is a stand-alone productive economic enterprise run by an individual or business entity that is not a subsidiary or branch of a medium-sized or large business. A Medium Business is defined as a stand-alone productive economic enterprise run by an individual or business entity that has no direct or indirect links to a Small or Large Business, and meets criteria based on net assets or annual sales revenue. Government Regulation No. 7 of 2021 concerning the Facilitation, Protection, and Empowerment of Cooperatives and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises explains that MSME criteria are grouped based on business capital or annual sales revenue (Government of Indonesia, 2021).

Nunukan Regency, located on the Indonesia-Malaysia border, has significant potential for cross-border trade. This region is not only rich in natural resources but also boasts a diverse population that can be a promising market for packaged processed food products. Data from the Nunukan Regency Office of Cooperatives, Small, Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade (2024) shows fluctuations in the number of actively produced packaged products. In 2021, there were only 9 packaged products, increasing to 79 products in 2022 and reaching 317 products in 2023. However, this number decreased drastically to 76 products in 2024. This decline indicates that the increase in production volume was not accompanied by a sustainable effective marketing strategy, especially in efforts to penetrate the export market to Malaysia. The data recorded in the BPS online data began in August 2024. The system was relatively slow to release due to diverse demographics, which then affected transportation delays (Liu et al., 2026; Zhao et al., 2025; Liu & Shalaby, 2024).

Based on Nunukan Regency's 2024 export data, goods classified as HS Code 19, including processed cereals, flour, starch, or milk products, and industrial baking products, recorded an export value of US\$0.03 million. Although its contribution to Nunukan Regency's total exports remains relatively small, at around 0.01%, this data indicates growing export activity in the processed packaged food sector. However, exports declined by 85.95% compared to the previous period. This decline indicates challenges in shipping continuity or product competitiveness in destination markets (Monios & Wilmsmeier, 2022; SIBARANI & Moenardy, 2025; Gatonye et al., 2026). This situation could be caused by several factors, such as limited production capacity, ineffective promotional strategies, and low export market penetration for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSEs) in the processed food sector (Amelia et al., 2025; Suryawati et al., 2025; Fitriyanti & Wulandari, 2025). Nevertheless, the presence of exports in HS Code 19 remains a positive indicator for the regional economy. This indicates that MSEs in Nunukan Regency have begun to penetrate export markets, particularly with flour- and milk-based processed products such as cookies, packaged bread, and ready-to-eat snacks. With strengthened promotional strategies, improved product quality, and local government support through export facilitation and quality certification, this sector has the potential to become a pillar of Nunukan Regency's non-oil and gas export diversification in the future. One of the main factors contributing to this decline is the weak promotional strategies implemented by MSEs. Most businesses still rely on traditional promotional methods and have not optimally utilized digital media as a promotional tool (Clary, 2026; Yovanto et al., 2026; Jan et al., 2026).

According to Rahman (2021), only 15% of MSEs in Nunukan Regency have used digital platforms to market their products. This situation highlights a gap in understanding the importance of digital marketing as a key to expanding market reach across borders. In addition to limited promotion, lack of access to information and international marketing networks is also a serious obstacle. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (2023) noted that less than 10% of MSEs in Nunukan collaborate with foreign distributors. This indicates MSEs' limited ability to build business relationships with trading partners in Malaysia, despite Nunukan's proximity to that country being a strategic opportunity for exporting processed packaged food products. Other obstacles come from regulations and export standards. Export procedures to Malaysia require meeting various quality and certification requirements, which are often complex for MSEs. According to the Ministry of Trade (2023), most MSEs face difficulties in adapting to product quality standards set by the Malaysian market. Furthermore, competition from more well-known processed food products from Thailand and Vietnam adds to the challenges for businesses in Nunukan to penetrate this market. In fact, the Malaysian market shows promising prospects. Euromonitor International (2023) noted that demand for processed food products in Malaysia is expected to grow by 12% over the next five years, particularly for products with added value and attractive packaging.

Research by Lim (2022) revealed that Malaysian consumers are more interested in products with high quality, attractive packaging designs, and environmental friendliness. This presents a significant opportunity for MSEs in Nunukan Regency to strengthen their promotional strategies and packaging innovations to make their products more competitive in the export market. Based on these conditions, this study focuses on analyzing the promotional strategies of micro-enterprises in Nunukan Regency who are entering the Malaysian export market. The research focuses on identifying the promotional strategies implemented, their effectiveness in attracting foreign consumers, and the obstacles encountered in the cross-border promotion process. The results of this study are expected to provide concrete recommendations for MSEs and local governments in strengthening the competitiveness of packaged processed food products in the international market.

Methods

Research Approach

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to explain or describe something (Arikunto, 2016:3). The method used in this research is qualitative. Moloeng (2005) in (Setiawan & Fithrah, 2019) states that the purpose of qualitative research is to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects by describing them through words and natural language. According to Sugiyono (2005:21), a descriptive method is a method used to describe or analyze research results but is not used to draw broader conclusions. In this study, the researcher will process and analyze data to provide an overview of the promotional strategies of packaged processed food products used by micro-enterprises in Nunukan Regency.

Type of Research

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This study provides an overview of the promotional strategies of packaged processed food products used by micro-enterprises and explains the conditions or phenomena encountered. Furthermore, this qualitative descriptive research was also used to obtain information on the extent to which promotional strategies were implemented by each packaged food product micro-enterprise.

Managing the Researcher's Role

The researcher's role in this research is crucial because it determines the depth of the data obtained. The researcher must be flexible and adapt the research process to the real-world situations encountered during the research. This is done to ensure objective results that can be used by packaged food product businesses. The researcher's experience, having worked at the One-Stop Integrated Investment Service Office since 2017, including as a Policy Analyst and then as an Investment Governance Analyst, is a crucial element in this research. This qualitative descriptive research also aims to evaluate promotional strategies for packaged food products and develop recommendations that can be used as a guide in formulating investment promotion strategies in Nunukan Regency.

Research Location

This research is conducted in Nunukan Regency, which is known for its processed packaged food products that meet export and import standards: Businesses in Nunukan District whose products have entered the export market and those that have not yet entered the export market. The Office of Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade of Nunukan Regency.

Data Sources

This research will utilize primary and secondary data from relevant sources to ensure a more focused research and produce objective findings. According to Husein Umar (2013:42), primary data is: Primary data is data obtained from primary sources, either from individuals or individuals, such as interviews or questionnaires typically conducted by researchers. Meanwhile, according to Nur Indrianto and Bambang Supono (2013:142), primary data is: Primary data is research data obtained directly from the original source (not through intermediaries). Based on the researchers' preliminary observations, it can be concluded that the current export promotion strategy is successful. Techniques used include interviews, observations, surveys, and other media to obtain field data from primary sources.

Researchers require data on the number of businesses that have successfully exported and imported packaged processed food products, as well as data on the number of businesses currently in the export and import process in accordance with applicable standards. Secondary data is primary data that has been further processed and presented either by the primary data collector or by another party, for example, in the form of tables or diagrams (Husein Umar 2013:42). Meanwhile, according to Nur Indrianto and Bambang Supomo (2013:143), secondary data is a source of research data obtained indirectly by researchers through intermediary media (obtained and recorded by another party). This data is obtained from various promotional strategy documents, articles, tables, notes, meeting minutes, SMS messages, photographs, video recordings, films, and other objects. Secondary and primary data are expected to support and complement each other. Other documents, such as supporting files, can also be used as supporting evidence in research.

Data Collection Techniques

According to (Sugiyono, 2013:224), data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research, because the primary goal of research is to obtain data. Without understanding data collection techniques, researchers will not obtain data that meets established data standards. From the definition above, it can be seen that data collection techniques are closely related to the research problem being addressed. The researcher used a direct question-and-answer exchange of information and ideas between the author and informants. Interviews with

informants are one method used to obtain information. One of the informants to be interviewed is an analyst from the Office of Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade who has a deep understanding of the development of Micro-Enterprises in Nunukan Regency. Interviews were conducted systematically using pre-developed guidelines in the form of questions, with the aim of providing objective and in-depth data to support this research. The interview results will be in the form of notes and audio-visual recordings, which will then be formulated as supporting evidence in the analysis and discussion of this research.

Through field observation, researchers can directly experience the situations and conditions occurring in the field. This method is applied to obtain more accurate and optimal data, allowing for structured and systematic decision-making. Field observation allows researchers to directly study and observe the activities of micro-enterprises operating in the packaged food processing sector. This allows researchers to collect relevant evidence and support the research findings comprehensively (Sugiono, 2013). Through field observation, researchers can also see and experience the conditions prevailing in the world of micro-enterprises operating in the packaged food processing sector. This direct observation not only provides insight into conditions on the ground but also allows researchers to understand the dynamics and challenges faced by micro-enterprises. Researchers can observe production processes, marketing strategies, and even operational challenges faced in managing packaged food processing businesses. With this approach, field observation provides a more in-depth picture of the actual conditions of micro-enterprises, which serves as important data to complement and enrich the research findings. During the research, the data collected included export-import agreements for packaged processed food products, Business Identification Numbers (NIK), distribution permits, and halal standards. The primary data collected during the research can also be obtained through field notes, photographs, and documentation to verify the accuracy and veracity of information for specific issues, as a means of deepening the research findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

After conducting interviews, observations, and data collection, the next step is data analysis. According to Sugiyono (2020:131), data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation. This involves organizing the data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing it, arranging it into patterns, selecting what is important and what will be studied, and drawing conclusions so that the data can be easily understood by both the individual and others. The data collected comes from official agencies such as the Office of Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade, and the Office of Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services. The data includes official documents such as Business Identification Numbers (NIK), export-import agreements, distribution permits, halal certifications, health tests, as well as review notes and other related documents. The collected data will be used by researchers to deepen their understanding and then compiled into a systematic report. Following this, the data will be analyzed and reviewed, based on the opinion of Miles and Huberman (as cited in Sugiyono, 2020:133), who state that qualitative data analysis involves four interactive and continuous steps until complete, achieving data saturation: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This is expected to produce a narrative of findings that can serve as a basis for further research. The research results, which serve as the starting point, will be followed by a data reduction process, systematically organized by type, source, informant, time, and location of the study. The sorted data will then be summarized and abstracted. The results of this evaluation will serve as a reference in formulating investment promotion strategies in Nunukan Regency and serve as a reference and focus for the research to address the research problem formulation.

Result and Discussion

Promotional Strategies and the Role of the Regional Government in Encouraging Exports of Packaged Processed Food Products by Micro-Enterprises to Malaysia in Nunukan Regency

Nunukan Regency, as a border region directly adjacent to Malaysia, has significant potential for cross-border trade, particularly for Micro-Enterprises (MSEs) in the packaged processed food sector. In an effort to penetrate the Malaysian export market, MSEs have implemented various promotional strategies to increase competitiveness and expand market reach. These strategies include utilizing digital media, partnering with local distributors, and participating in international trade fairs. However, despite these opportunities, MSEs also face various challenges, such as limited access to marketing networks, stringent export requirements, and a lack of understanding of Malaysian market preferences. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of currently used promotional strategies is necessary to identify their effectiveness and find solutions that can strengthen the competitiveness of MSEs in entering the Malaysian export market. As explained by H. Sabri, Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, regarding the role of DKUKMPP in supporting MSE exports of packaged processed food products to Malaysia:

"DKUKMPP plays a role in providing mentoring and facilitation to MSEs, from coaching to improve product quality and certification, to helping expand market networks through exhibitions and collaborations with distributors in Malaysia. We also continue to encourage MSEs to utilize digital platforms for promotions to expand their market reach." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

DKUKMPP plays a crucial role in providing various support to MSEs to increase their competitiveness in the export market. Through mentoring and promotional facilitation programs, MSEs are expected to be better prepared to meet Malaysian market standards and strengthen their marketing strategies.

This is in line with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development for Export-Import Actors, regarding the promotional facilitation mechanism provided to MSEs entering the Malaysian market:

"We provide training and mentoring to MSEs in branding, digital marketing, and promotional strategies tailored to Malaysian market preferences. Furthermore, we also assist them in accessing export networks through collaborations with importers and businesses in Malaysia. (Interview, January 12, 2025)"

The facilitation provided focuses heavily on improving MSEs' promotional skills so they can more effectively reach consumers in Malaysia. This training covers not only conventional marketing aspects but also the use of digital technology as a broader and more efficient promotional tool. Similar to the previous informant's response, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, explained the licensing requirements that MSEs must meet to export packaged processed food products to Malaysia:

"MSEs must meet a number of licensing requirements before they can export their products, including obtaining an official business license, halal certification, a distribution permit from the Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM), and other certifications required by Malaysia. We are also striving to expedite the licensing process so that MSEs are not hampered in marketing their products abroad." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

Licensing is a key factor that MSEs must meet to penetrate the export market. Although there are a number of regulations that must be followed, local government efforts to expedite the licensing process are a strategic step in supporting MSEs to become more competitive in the international market. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, explained the obstacles she faced in promoting exports to Malaysia:

"One of the biggest challenges we face is the lack of access to marketing networks in Malaysia. Although we have used social media for promotion, reaching the right consumers and distributors remains a major challenge." (Interview, January 10, 2025)

This indicates that despite the widespread implementation of digital strategies, limited direct access to the Malaysian market remains a barrier for MSEs. Therefore, further support is needed in building partnerships with Malaysian businesses to expand the market. Echoing the previous interviewee, Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, also expressed the obstacles she faced in promoting exports to Malaysia:

"We often have difficulty understanding the regulations and product standards desired by the Malaysian market. Furthermore, promotion and shipping costs are also a barrier for small businesses like ours." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

This obstacle reflects the need for further education for MSEs regarding export regulations, as well as support in terms of promotional incentives and logistics costs to make it easier for MSEs to reach foreign markets. Echoing the response from the previous informant, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported in South Nunukan District, explained the challenges of exporting to Malaysia:

"One of the main obstacles is competition with products from other countries that are already better known in Malaysia. Furthermore, our products are still less well-known in the Malaysian market, so we need a more aggressive promotional strategy." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

Fierce competition with foreign products is a major challenge for MSEs, necessitating more innovative promotional strategies and collaboration with trading partners in Malaysia to increase the competitiveness of local products in the international market. H. Sabri, Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, further explained the programs and policies implemented to promote MSE exports:

"We have implemented various programs to support MSE product exports, such as facilitating halal certification and distribution permits, providing branding and marketing training, and opening market access through collaboration with importers in Malaysia. Furthermore, we regularly include MSEs in international trade exhibitions to introduce their products to foreign markets." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

The programs implemented by the DKUKMPP demonstrate the local government's commitment to providing concrete support to MSEs. With these policies, MSEs are expected to be better prepared to compete in the export market, particularly by increasing the competitiveness of their products in Malaysia. In line with the explanation provided by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development for Export-Import Actors, regarding training or mentoring programs for MSEs related to export promotion strategies, he stated:

"We regularly provide training and mentoring for MSEs, particularly on digital marketing, product packaging that meets export standards, and branding strategies to increase product recognition in Malaysia. We also provide technical guidance on export requirements so that MSEs can comply with applicable regulations." (Interview, January 14, 2025)

This training and mentoring are crucial factors in improving MSE readiness to enter the export market. With this guidance, MSEs can better understand how to utilize effective marketing strategies and meet the standards set by the export destination countries. Not unlike the previous informant, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, explained the licensing requirements that MSEs must meet to export packaged processed food products to Malaysia:

"Some of the requirements that MSEs must meet include having a Business Identification Number (NIB), a Home Industry Food Production Certificate (SPP-IRT) or BPOM distribution permit, halal certification, and other export documents such as a Certificate of Origin (COO). We also continue to strive to expedite the licensing process so that MSEs do not encounter administrative obstacles in exporting their products." (Interview, January 21, 2025)

The licensing process is a crucial aspect of MSE product exports. With support from the PMPTSP Service in streamlining licensing procedures, it is hoped that more MSEs will be able to penetrate the export market more efficiently. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, explained the export permit process for MSEs in Nunukan Regency:

"The process is quite lengthy. We have to apply for a Business License (NIB), halal certification, BPOM distribution permit, and export documents such as the COO and export invoice. However, with assistance from the DKUKMPP and related agencies, we feel more supported in processing these permits." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

Although some MSEs still consider export permit procedures complex, assistance from the local government helps them understand and complete the administrative process more easily. Echoing the previous interviewee's response, Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who has exported to Nunukan District, also revealed the promotional strategies she has implemented to reach the Malaysian market:

"We utilize social media and e-commerce as our main promotional tools. We also collaborate with local distributors in Malaysia to introduce our products to a wider market. Participation in trade shows is also an important strategy in expanding our marketing network." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

Digital marketing strategies and collaboration with local distributors are effective ways to reach the Malaysian market. With this approach, MSEs can expand their market without relying on more expensive conventional marketing methods. Corroborating the responses given by previous informants, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported in South Nunukan District, explained the promotional strategies she has implemented to reach the Malaysian market:

"We focus on digital marketing by optimizing social media and e-commerce platforms. In addition, we actively participate in bazaars and exhibitions in Malaysia to introduce our products directly to consumers." (Interview, January 8, 2025)

This strategy demonstrates that digital marketing and international exhibitions are two important elements in MSEs' export efforts. By utilizing digital technology, MSEs can reach a wider market and increase the competitiveness of their products in Malaysia. As explained by H. Sabri, Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, regarding any form of cooperation with the Malaysian government to facilitate the export of MSE products, he stated:

"The Nunukan Regency Government has established cooperation with Malaysia, specifically through MoUs with several importers and distributors in Sabah and Sarawak. In addition, we are also collaborating with the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) and the Trade Attaché in Malaysia to facilitate marketing access for MSE products. We also encourage MSEs to participate in various trade exhibitions held in Malaysia to introduce their products to a wider market." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

Collaboration with the Malaysian government and relevant parties in export destination countries is a strategic step in strengthening market access for MSE products. With this support, it is hoped that MSEs in Nunukan Regency will be able to more easily penetrate export markets and increase the competitiveness of their products. In line with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development of Export Import Actors, regarding the effectiveness of the promotional strategies that have been implemented by MSMEs so far, that:

"The promotional strategies implemented by MSEs are quite varied, ranging from digital marketing through social media and e-commerce to direct promotions through trade shows. However, their effectiveness still needs to be improved, particularly in terms of branding and packaging that better aligns with the tastes of the Malaysian market. Furthermore, MSEs need to be more active in collaborating with local distributors in Malaysia to make their products easier to market." (Interview, January 8, 2025)

The promotional strategies implemented by MSEs are quite good, but there are still several aspects that need improvement. Improving the quality of packaging and branding, as well as collaborating with local distributors, are important factors in increasing product competitiveness in the export market. Similar to the previous informant's response, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, expressed his opinion regarding the obstacles or challenges faced by MSEs in obtaining export permits.

"Some of the obstacles frequently encountered by MSEs in obtaining export permits include a lack of understanding of export regulations, limited resources for processing permit documents, and the lengthy process of obtaining necessary certifications, such as BPOM distribution permits and halal certification. To address this, we continue to provide outreach and assistance to MSEs so they are better prepared to process export permits." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

Obstacles in obtaining export permits pose a unique challenge for MSEs. Therefore, the government's role in providing guidance and expediting the administrative process is crucial to enable MSEs to more easily penetrate export markets. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, explained the support provided by the local government in Nunukan Regency for MSEs in obtaining export permits:

"The local government is quite helpful in the licensing process, especially in providing assistance with the necessary documents. However, there are still challenges in terms of the cost and time required to obtain all the necessary permits. I hope there is a

simpler and faster mechanism to support MSEs to make it easier to export." (Interview, January 16, 2025)

Local government support in the licensing process is very helpful, but there are still challenges in terms of time and cost efficiency. Therefore, simplifying procedures could be a solution to expedite the export process for MSEs. A similar opinion to that of the previous informant, Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, also expressed support for export permits for MSEs from the local government in Nunukan Regency:

"I really appreciate the government's assistance in terms of export assistance and training. However, I feel that a more integrated system for permit processing is needed, so that MSEs don't have to process various documents at different agencies. If this system could be more efficient, it would greatly assist MSEs in increasing their competitiveness in the export market." (Interview, January 19, 2025)

The need for a more integrated system for processing export permits is one of the areas that local governments need to address. With a more efficient system, the export process for MSEs can run more smoothly and effectively. Corroborating the response from the previous informant, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported in South Nunukan District, explained the support provided by the Nunukan Regency regional government for export permits for MSEs:

"The regional government has been quite good at providing assistance and training for MSEs. However, I hope there will be more assistance programs in the form of subsidies or incentives for MSEs who want to export their products. For example, subsidies for certification costs or assistance with overseas promotions to increase our product recognition in the international market." (Interview, January 21, 2025)

Support in the form of assistance and training is already quite good, but incentives or subsidies for certification and export promotion could provide additional encouragement for MSEs to expand their markets abroad. The export promotion strategy for packaged processed food products to Malaysia implemented by MSEs in Nunukan Regency encompasses various approaches, both digital and conventional. Marketing through social media and e-commerce platforms is one of the primary methods used to reach consumers in Malaysia. Furthermore, participation in trade shows and collaboration with local distributors are also strategies implemented to expand the market. While these measures have been quite effective, challenges remain in branding and tailoring products to Malaysian consumer preferences. Support from the local government in facilitating MSE product exports is also a crucial factor in this promotional strategy. The government has provided mentoring programs, training, and collaboration with relevant parties in Malaysia to open up broader market opportunities. However, regulatory and licensing challenges remain a barrier for MSEs, particularly in obtaining necessary certifications such as BPOM distribution permits and halal certification. The lengthy and costly process presents challenges that require further attention.

Furthermore, despite government guidance and facilitation, the effectiveness of promotional strategies still needs to be improved. Some businesses experience difficulties accessing a broader distribution network in Malaysia. Furthermore, the fragmented licensing system across multiple agencies is a barrier that slows down the export process. Therefore, a more integrated and efficient system is needed to facilitate MSEs in processing all required permits. Going forward, to optimize export promotion strategies, more supportive policies are needed, including streamlining export procedures and providing incentives for MSEs seeking to enter

foreign markets. Furthermore, increasing the capacity of MSEs in digital marketing and branding strategies is a priority. With synergy between the government and MSEs, it is hoped that packaged processed food products from Nunukan Regency can further develop and compete in the Malaysian export market.

Supporting and inhibiting factors in efforts to improve promotional strategies for packaged food exports to Malaysia

Factors supporting and inhibiting efforts to improve promotional strategies for packaged food exports to Malaysia refer to various aspects that influence the success of MSEs in expanding their international markets. Supporting factors include government support in the form of regulations, promotional facilitation, and trade cooperation with Malaysia. Furthermore, advances in digital technology and social media help MSEs market their products more widely and efficiently. However, on the other hand, various obstacles can hinder promotional strategies, such as limited capital, complex licensing requirements, lack of access to broader distribution networks, and competition from imported products that are already well-known in the Malaysian market. Therefore, understanding these factors is crucial for implementing more effective promotional strategies and positively impacting MSE exports. As explained by H. Sabri, Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, regarding the role of DKUKMPP in overcoming the obstacles faced by MSEs in export promotion:

“The Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP plays a role in providing assistance to MSEs to increase the competitiveness of their products in the export market. We provide branding training, facilitate halal certification and distribution permits, and introduce MSE products through various international exhibitions. Furthermore, we collaborate with foreign trading partners to open market access for MSEs.” (Interview, January 6, 2025)

The programs implemented by DKUKMPP are a concrete step in helping MSEs face export challenges. With support from the local government, MSEs can be better prepared to face competition in the global market and increase the competitiveness of their products internationally. In line with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development for Export-Import Actors, he explained the most common obstacles faced by MSEs in their export promotion strategies:

“One of the main obstacles faced by MSEs in their export promotion strategies is a lack of understanding of digital marketing and access to global export platforms. Many MSEs still use conventional marketing methods, making it difficult for them to reach a wider market. Furthermore, limited capital is also a factor that hinders them from increasing product competitiveness in the export market.” (Interview, January 8, 2025)

This obstacle highlights the importance of more intensive training and mentoring for MSEs so they can better understand digital marketing strategies and adapt to global market trends. Not unlike the previous informant, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, expressed the main obstacles in obtaining permits for MSEs wishing to export their products:

“The export licensing process remains a challenge for MSEs, especially in terms of meeting administrative requirements such as Business Identification Numbers (NIB), BPOM distribution permits, halal certification, and other export documents. Many MSEs do not understand the process for obtaining these documents, often resulting in delays in obtaining export permits.” (Interview, January 12, 2025)

This complex licensing process presents a unique challenge for MSEs. Therefore, the government's role in providing technical guidance and expediting administrative procedures is crucial to enable MSEs to more easily enter the export market. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, explained the most common challenges she faces in export promotion strategies:

“The main challenge in export promotion strategies is building trust with overseas buyers. We must ensure that our products are of consistent quality and meet international standards. Furthermore, digital marketing and distribution costs are quite high, requiring a well-thought-out strategy to maximize the returns on these promotional investments.” (Interview, January 16, 2025)

This challenge emphasizes the importance of the government's role in providing financial support and mentoring to MSEs so they are better prepared to implement effective export promotion strategies. This opinion, similar to the response given by the previous informant, Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, also revealed the most common challenges she faces in export promotion strategies:

“We face challenges in terms of product packaging, which must meet international standards. Overseas distributors want products with an attractive appearance and packaging that is safe for consumers. However, for MSEs, the cost of improving packaging quality is quite high and poses a barrier to the export process.” (Interview, January 19, 2025)

Strict packaging standards are one aspect that MSEs must pay attention to. Therefore, government assistance in providing solutions related to product packaging can significantly assist MSEs in increasing their competitiveness in the export market. Corroborating the responses of previous informants, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported in South Nunukan District, explained the most common challenges she faces in export promotion strategies:

“Another major challenge is maintaining continuity of production and supply. Many overseas buyers require a stable supply of products in specific quantities, while MSEs often experience limited raw materials or labor. Therefore, we must have a better production strategy to smoothly meet market demand.” (Interview, January 21, 2025)

This challenge in production continuity underscores the importance of efficient supply chain management for MSEs. With a sound production strategy, MSEs can more easily maintain stable supplies and meet international market demand sustainably. As explained by H. Sabri, Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP (Food and Drugs Management Agency), regarding the main challenges often encountered in promoting packaged food product exports to Malaysia:

“The main challenge in promoting packaged food product exports to Malaysia is meeting the strict standards and regulations of the destination countries. Many MSEs experience difficulties in obtaining halal certification, distribution permits, and product labels that comply with Malaysian regulations. Furthermore, limited access to international marketing networks also hinders MSEs in expanding their export markets.” (Interview, January 6, 2025)

The challenges mentioned by the Head of DKUKMPP indicate that regulations and product standards are the main obstacles for MSEs seeking to penetrate export markets. Therefore, more intensive government assistance is needed to ensure MSEs meet the requirements set by

export destination countries. This is in line with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development for Export-Import Actors, regarding the effectiveness of the promotional facilitation program provided to MSEs:

"We have implemented various promotional facilitation programs, such as participation in international trade shows, digital marketing training, and collaboration with importers in Malaysia. However, the effectiveness of these programs still needs to be improved because not all MSEs are able to optimally utilize the facilities provided, especially in digital marketing and branding." (Interview, January 8, 2025)

The promotional facilitation program implemented by the local government provides opportunities for MSEs to introduce their products to the Malaysian market. However, improvements in the use of digital technology are needed to make promotional strategies more effective. Similar to the previous interviewee's response, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, expressed his concern regarding whether there are policies that make it easier for MSEs to obtain export permits.

"We have implemented a policy to expedite the processing of export permits by providing integrated services for MSEs. Several requirements, such as the Business Identification Number (NIB), the Household Industry Food Production Certificate (SPP-IRT), and the BPOM distribution permit, can now be processed more efficiently. However, the main obstacle still faced is meeting food safety standards and international certification, which requires considerable time and expense." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

The ease of processing export permits significantly assists MSEs in entering the international market. However, the cost and time required to obtain international standard certification remain challenges that require solutions. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, explained how she overcomes obstacles in promoting product exports to Malaysia:

"We overcome export promotion barriers by utilizing social media and e-commerce. Furthermore, we collaborate with distributor agents in Malaysia to ensure our products are more readily accepted in the local market. The biggest challenge we face is competition with similar products from other countries that are already well-known in Malaysia." (Interview, January 16, 2025)

The strategy of utilizing digital media and collaborating with local distributors is an effective solution for MSEs in overcoming export promotion barriers. However, competition with similar products remains a challenge that must be addressed through innovation and product quality improvements. Similar to the previous informant's response, Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, also shared how she overcomes barriers to promoting her products to Malaysia:

"We participate in various international trade shows to introduce our products directly to Malaysian consumers. Furthermore, we actively market through digital platforms to increase the awareness of our products to potential buyers. However, we still face challenges in adjusting our prices to remain competitive in the Malaysian market." (Interview, January 19, 2025)

Participation in trade shows and digital marketing are important strategies for export promotion. However, adjusting prices to remain competitive remains a challenge for MSEs

competing with similar products from other countries. Corroborating the responses of previous informants, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported in South Nunukan District, explained how she overcomes obstacles in promoting her products to Malaysia:

"We focus on improving product quality and packaging to make them more attractive to the Malaysian market. Furthermore, we also collaborate with business communities in Malaysia to expand our marketing network. The main obstacle we face is the relatively high shipping costs, especially for small shipments." (Interview, January 21, 2025)

Improving product quality and packaging is one way to increase competitiveness in the export market. However, high shipping costs remain a challenge that needs to be overcome so that MSE products can compete more effectively in the Malaysian market.

As explained by H. Sabri, Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, regarding steps that can be taken to increase the effectiveness of MSE export promotion to Malaysia:

"We strive to increase the effectiveness of export promotion through various strategic measures, such as expanding market access through international exhibitions, utilizing digital platforms to promote MSE products, and providing intensive training on global marketing strategies. Furthermore, we collaborate with relevant agencies to simplify export procedures and support MSEs in meeting international standards." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

The steps implemented by DKUKMPP demonstrate a commitment to supporting MSEs in increasing the competitiveness of their products in the Malaysian market. By strengthening digital promotion and participating in trade shows, MSEs can more easily reach potential buyers and increase their sales in the export market. In line with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development for Export-Import Actors, regarding efforts that can be made to increase MSEs' access to export markets through better promotion, he stated:

"We continue to encourage MSEs to utilize various digital and e-commerce platforms to market their products. Furthermore, we also provide technical guidance and mentoring on branding strategies to increase their product recognition in foreign markets, particularly in Malaysia." (Interview, January 8, 2025)

These promotional facilitation efforts are crucial in helping MSEs gain broader market access. With training and mentoring, MSEs can develop more effective marketing strategies and understand export market trends. Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, expressed a similar opinion regarding solutions that can be implemented to overcome licensing obstacles that hinder the promotion of packaged food product exports to Malaysia:

"We continue to strive to simplify the licensing process by facilitating access to information, expediting licensing services through a digital system, and providing direct assistance to MSEs so they can meet export requirements more quickly and efficiently." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

The ease of obtaining export permits plays a significant role in supporting MSEs in penetrating the Malaysian market. With the solutions provided by the PMPTSP Service, MSEs can more easily comply with regulations set by export destination countries. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, explained her advice for other MSEs on developing more effective export promotion strategies to Malaysia:

"MSEs must be more active in utilizing social media and e-commerce as marketing tools. Furthermore, building networks with local distributors in Malaysia is also an important step in expanding the market. Participating in trade shows and strengthening product quality to meet export standards should also be a primary focus." (Interview, January 16, 2025)

This advice suggests that MSEs need to adopt digital marketing strategies and build partnerships with parties who can help introduce their products to the Malaysian market. Similar to the previous informant's response, Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who has exported in Nunukan District, also shared advice for other MSEs on how to develop more effective export promotion strategies to Malaysia:

"Consistency in promotion is crucial. MSEs must regularly update their product information on social media and marketplaces, and actively interact with potential buyers. Furthermore, collaborating with the MSE export community can help share experiences and successful strategies for penetrating foreign markets." (Interview, January 19, 2025)

A consistent promotional strategy and collaboration with the export community can help MSEs gain greater recognition in foreign markets and increase their chances of attracting buyers in Malaysia. Echoing the previous interviewee's response, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported to South Nunukan District, offered advice to other MSEs on how to develop more effective export promotion strategies to Malaysia:

"MSEs must continue to innovate in product packaging and branding to make them more attractive to Malaysian consumers. Furthermore, understanding market preferences and complying with applicable export regulations are key to ensuring product acceptance in the international market." (Interview, January 21, 2025)

The importance of innovation in packaging and branding demonstrates that MSEs need to continually adapt to market trends to compete effectively in export markets. By understanding regulations and consumer preferences, their products can be more competitive in Malaysia. As explained by H. Sabri ST. M.Si., Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, regarding the availability of specific support or policies from the local government to strengthen export promotion strategies, stated:

"The local government has provided various programs to support export promotion, such as facilitating trade fairs, export training for MSEs, and assistance in obtaining certifications required for international markets. Furthermore, we also collaborate with the Ministry of Trade and the Trade Attaché in Malaysia to facilitate access for local products to these markets." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

This statement demonstrates that the local government has taken concrete steps to support export promotion, both through policies and facilitation programs for MSEs. This support includes providing market information, facilitating trade fairs, and technical assistance in meeting export standards set by destination countries. This aligns with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development of Export-Import Actors, who explained the main obstacles in connecting MSEs with the Malaysian market:

"One of the main challenges faced by MSEs in accessing the Malaysian market is limited distribution and promotional networks. Many business actors do not fully understand export regulations, including those related to customs and product certification. Furthermore, competition with similar products from other countries is

quite intense, requiring a more aggressive marketing strategy." (Interview, January 8, 2025)

From this explanation, it is clear that one of the biggest challenges in connecting MSEs with the Malaysian market is limited access to information and business networks. Furthermore, differences in regulations, competition with products from other countries, and MSEs' lack of understanding of export procedures are also major obstacles to expanding their markets to destination countries. Similar to the previous interviewee, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, expressed his opinion regarding how local governments can expedite the licensing process to support export promotion strategies:

"We continue to strive to accelerate the export licensing process through a digitalized service system. Currently, MSEs can apply for licensing online through the OSS (Online Single Submission) system. Furthermore, we are collaborating with relevant institutions to provide assistance in processing permits, especially for businesses applying for export permits for the first time." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

Government support in expediting export licensing is a crucial factor in promoting the export of MSE products. Simplifying procedures, digitizing licensing services, and cross-agency coordination are efforts that can expedite the export administration process, making it easier for MSEs to reach foreign markets. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who exports her products in Nunukan District, explained whether government support has been helpful in improving export promotion.

"Government support is very helpful, especially in promoting products abroad through trade shows. I once participated in a government-facilitated exhibition, and from there, I found several potential buyers from Malaysia. However, I wish there were more intensive mentoring programs in handling the negotiation process with international buyers." (Interview, January 16, 2025)

This interview reveals that government support, such as promotional facilitation programs and assistance in meeting export standards, is very helpful for MSEs in increasing the competitiveness of their products. However, several challenges remain, particularly in marketing and distribution to destination countries. A similar opinion echoes that of the previous informant. Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who also exports to Nunukan District, expressed his concern about whether government support has been particularly helpful in enhancing export promotion.

"The government has been very helpful in terms of the legality and licensing of our products. For example, in processing halal certification and distribution permits from the Food and Drug Authority (BPOM). This is very important because buyers in Malaysia are very concerned about the legality of the products they import. However, we also hope for access to a wider distribution network in Malaysia to make our products more accessible to consumers there." (Interview, January 19, 2025)

This statement confirms that MSMEs have significantly benefited from the government's facilitation program. However, they also hope for strengthening digital marketing and assistance in facing competition in the international market. Corroborating the responses of previous informants, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who has exported in South Nunukan District, explained that government support has been helpful in increasing export promotion:

"I have benefited from the government-facilitated export training. From the training, I learned how to create packaging that meets international standards and how to effectively apply for export permits. However, the biggest challenge for us is limited capital to expand production and promote our products to the Malaysian market. I wish there were more accessible financing programs for MSMEs looking to scale up their exports." (Interview, January 21, 2025)

Government support is considered crucial for increasing the export success of MSE products, particularly in promotion and marketing. Businesses hope for closer collaboration between the government and MSEs in developing more effective promotional strategies, including through the use of digital technology, collaboration with international business networks, and easier access to financing. As explained by H. Sabri, ST., M.Si., Head of the Nunukan Regency DKUKMPP, regarding the ongoing support of MSEs through exhibitions in Malaysia, he stated:

"The local government regularly facilitates MSEs to participate in trade exhibitions in Malaysia. These exhibitions are a very effective promotional platform for businesses to introduce their products to potential buyers and distributors in Malaysia. Furthermore, through these exhibitions, businesses can also establish broader business partnerships." (Interview, January 6, 2025)

From this explanation, it can be concluded that the local government has provided facilities for MSEs to participate in trade exhibitions in Malaysia as an export promotion strategy. These exhibitions not only help introduce local products to the international market but also open up opportunities for partnerships and broader distribution networks for businesses. This is in line with the explanation given by Saparudin, Sub-Coordinator of Promotion Facilitation and Development for Export-Import Actors, who explained that business actors are always facilitated by exhibitions in Malaysia:

"We actively collaborate with various parties to provide access for MSEs to participate in exhibitions in Malaysia. In addition to providing a venue for product promotion, these exhibitions also provide opportunities for MSEs to understand market trends, establish business relationships, and improve product quality to meet international market demand." (Interview, January 8, 2025)

Government support in facilitating trade exhibitions is crucial for MSEs. They serve not only as promotional platforms but also as educational tools for business actors, helping them better understand market needs and increase the competitiveness of their products. Not unlike the previous informant, Irsan Jumianto, SH., Head of the Licensing Division at the PMPTSP Service, expressed his opinion regarding the benefits of exhibitions in Malaysia for businesses:

"Trade exhibitions are an important strategy for exporting MSE products. Besides increasing product visibility, these exhibitions also facilitate business licensing. After attending exhibitions, many MSEs begin to understand the importance of product legality, such as halal certification, BPOM (Food and Drug Monitoring Agency) certification, and other distribution permits, which are key requirements for exporting to Malaysia." (Interview, January 12, 2025)

Trade exhibitions not only serve as a promotional tool but also help businesses understand the legal aspects required for export. By participating in exhibitions, MSEs are better prepared to face export requirements and competition in the international market. Adding another point, Rica Fatmawati (Regan Coklat), an entrepreneur who exports her products in Nunukan District, explained that she consistently benefits from trade shows in Malaysia:

"I have participated in several trade shows in Malaysia, facilitated by the government. This has been very helpful in introducing my products to consumers there. From these shows, I have acquired several loyal customers who continue to order my products in large quantities." (Interview, January 16, 2025)

This statement demonstrates that trade shows have a tangible impact on MSEs. In addition to being a promotional platform, they also serve as a means to acquire new customers and expand product distribution networks overseas. A similar opinion echoes that of the previous informant. Novi Anggerani (Bronis Mokaf), an entrepreneur who also exports in Nunukan District, expressed that trade shows in Malaysia always facilitate their business:

"Government support is very helpful. I can introduce my products to many potential buyers in Malaysia through exhibitions. However, I hope the government can also assist with post-exhibition distribution, because often after exhibitions, we have difficulty finding distributors who can help market our products sustainably." (Interview, January 19, 2025)

While trade shows are helpful in introducing products, the next challenge facing business owners is ensuring sustainable marketing after the exhibition. Therefore, a more comprehensive strategy is needed so that MSEs are not only successful at exhibitions but also able to maintain the sustainability of their exports.

Corroborating the response from the previous informant, Nuruhana (An-Nur Mandiri), an entrepreneur who exports in South Nunukan District, explained that business owners are always facilitated by exhibitions in Malaysia:

"I really appreciate the exhibitions facilitated by the government. This is a great opportunity for small businesses like us to enter the export market. However, what I hope is additional training before the exhibition, for example on how to negotiate with international buyers so we can be more confident when meeting potential customers." (Interview, January 21, 2025)

Trade exhibitions are indeed a significant opportunity for MSEs, but to be more effective, business owners also need training in marketing and negotiation. This way, they can be better prepared to face global competition and increase their chances of export success. Efforts to improve promotional strategies for packaged food exports to Malaysia are supported by various factors, both government policies and business initiatives. Local government support in the form of promotional facilitation, licensing assistance, and participation in international trade exhibitions are key factors strengthening MSE competitiveness in the export market. Furthermore, the use of digital media, such as e-commerce and social media, also helps MSEs reach a wider market more cost-effectively. However, several inhibiting factors remain challenges for MSEs in developing export promotion strategies. One of these is the administrative hurdles in obtaining export permits, which are considered time-consuming and costly. Furthermore, limited access to international marketing networks and a lack of understanding of regulations in export destination countries also hinder MSEs from marketing their products more widely. To overcome these obstacles, stronger synergy between the government and businesses is needed. The government needs to continue simplifying licensing procedures and providing more intensive training on export promotion strategies and international regulations. Furthermore, MSEs also need to be more proactive in improving product quality, expanding business networks, and optimizing digital marketing strategies to compete in export markets, particularly in Malaysia.

Promotional Strategies and the Role of the Regional Government in Encouraging Exports of Packaged Processed Food Products by Micro-Enterprises to Malaysia in Nunukan Regency

Nunukan Regency, as a border region with Malaysia, has significant potential for cross-border trade, particularly for Micro-Enterprises (MSEs) in the packaged processed food sector. In an effort to penetrate the Malaysian export market, various promotional strategies have been implemented to increase competitiveness and expand market reach. These strategies include utilizing digital media, partnering with local distributors, and participating in international trade shows. However, challenges such as limited access to marketing networks, strict export requirements, and a lack of understanding of Malaysian market preferences remain barriers for MSEs.

The regional government plays a role in providing assistance and facilitation to MSEs, from improving product quality and obtaining certification to opening market access through trade shows and collaborations with distributors in Malaysia. In addition, MSEs receive training in branding, digital marketing, and promotional strategies tailored to Malaysian consumer preferences. This assistance aims to help MSEs understand export regulations and standards so they can meet the requirements set by the destination country. Certification is a key foundation for MSEs to penetrate the export market, especially to countries like Malaysia that have strict regulations. Required certifications include: This is important considering that the majority of Malaysia's population is Muslim, so a halal certificate from an official institution like the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) serves as a guarantee of consumer trust. Distribution Permit from the BPOM: To ensure the safety and quality of packaged processed food products. Certificate of Origin (COO) and other export documents: Required for cross-border shipping.

The Nunukan regional government plays an active role in facilitating and expediting the licensing and certification process, ensuring that MSEs avoid administrative hurdles that could hinder exports. Licensing requirements are a crucial aspect of exporting packaged processed food products to Malaysia. MSEs must have an official business license, halal certification, a distribution permit from the BPOM, and other export documents such as a Certificate of Origin (COO). The regional government strives to expedite the licensing process to ensure that MSEs do not encounter administrative obstacles that could hinder the marketing of their products abroad. Despite the implementation of digital strategies for export promotion, MSEs still face various obstacles, such as limited access to marketing networks in Malaysia, high promotional and shipping costs, and a lack of understanding of export regulations. Furthermore, competition with products from other countries that are better known in the Malaysian market presents a challenge. Therefore, a more aggressive promotional strategy and partnerships with Malaysian businesses are needed to increase MSE products' recognition and acceptance in the international market.

To encourage MSE export promotion, the local government has implemented various programs, such as facilitating halal certification and distribution permits, branding and marketing training, and opening market access through collaborations with Malaysian importers. MSE participation in international trade exhibitions is also continuously encouraged to increase their product exposure abroad. The training and mentoring provided encompasses not only conventional marketing aspects but also the use of digital technology as a broader and more efficient promotional tool. Furthermore, collaboration with the Malaysian government and relevant parties, such as the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) and the Trade Attaché in Malaysia, is a strategic step in strengthening market access for MSE products. Through cooperation agreements with several importers and distributors in Malaysia, MSEs in Nunukan

Regency are expected to more easily penetrate export markets and increase the competitiveness of their products. Although the local government has provided various supports, several challenges remain in the effectiveness of MSE promotional strategies.

Improving the quality of packaging and branding, as well as collaboration with local distributors in Malaysia, are important factors that need to be strengthened. Furthermore, a more integrated and efficient permit management system is also needed to ensure MSEs do not face difficulties in processing various export documents at various agencies. With various efforts that have been made, the export promotion strategy for packaged processed food products from Nunukan Regency to Malaysia continues to improve. Synergy between MSEs, the local government, and business partners in Malaysia is key to ensuring export sustainability and strengthening the competitiveness of local products in the international market. Branding is a crucial strategy for increasing product appeal in the Malaysian market. Branding strengthening efforts include: Attractive Packaging Design: Professional packaging tailored to Malaysian consumer tastes can enhance product competitiveness. Product Identity: MSEs are encouraged to create strong, recognizable brands. Product Image: Building a product's image as a unique, high-quality processed food from a border region can be a unique selling point. According to Lestari (2017), attractive packaging and appropriate branding can increase consumer interest and loyalty in export markets. The export promotion strategy to Malaysia currently employed by Micro Enterprises (MSEs) in Nunukan Regency encompasses various approaches to increase competitiveness and market reach.

One key strategy is the use of digital media, which, according to Sari (2021), can improve market access and accelerate the penetration of MSE products into international markets. Furthermore, collaboration with local distributors in Malaysia is also a reliable strategy, as Rahman (2020) found that collaboration with trading partners in destination countries can help MSEs overcome logistical and export regulatory challenges. Participation in international trade shows is also considered an effective measure. Yusuf (2019) noted that exhibitions provide opportunities for MSEs to introduce their products directly to potential buyers and build broader business networks. Furthermore, promotional strategies through e-commerce platforms are also being implemented, as Putri (2018) found, which found e-commerce plays a crucial role in increasing MSE product exposure and facilitating cross-border transactions. Another widely used approach is halal certification and distribution permits, which Hidayat (2022) believes can increase Malaysian consumer confidence in Indonesian MSE products, given that the majority of Malaysians are Muslim and prioritize halal product safety. MSEs are also increasingly focusing on strengthening branding and packaging design. Lestari (2017) noted that attractive packaging tailored to consumer preferences can enhance product competitiveness in export markets. In addition, community-based marketing strategies and business associations are also implemented to strengthen the position of MSE products in Malaysia. As Prasetyo (2016) stated, community networks can help MSEs gain access to a wider market through recommendations and collaboration between business actors. With these various strategies, MSEs in Nunukan Regency continue to strive to strengthen the competitiveness of their packaged food products in the Malaysian market.

The synergy between digitalization, partnerships with distributors, participation in exhibitions, and strengthening branding and business communities are key to ensuring export sustainability and improving the position of MSEs in the international market. Training is a strategy to strengthen the capacity of MSEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) to enable them to compete in the international market. Some forms of training provided include: Digital marketing training, which is an essential strategy in empowering Micro Enterprises (MSEs), especially in facing the challenges of the global market. According to Zimmerman's (1995)

empowerment theory, training is a form of intervention aimed at increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make decisions and act independently. In the context of MSEs, training serves as a means to improve technical and non-technical competencies so that business actors can compete and adapt to international market dynamics, including in aspects of marketing, regulations, and product quality. In the era of global digitalization, digital marketing training has become an unavoidable necessity for MSEs.

This training aims to improve business actors' skills in utilizing social media, marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms to market products more widely. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), digital marketing enables the delivery of more personalized, measurable, and efficient marketing messages to target consumers. Thus, MSEs that master digital marketing have a greater opportunity to expand their markets internationally. In digital marketing training, MSEs are taught practical strategies such as utilizing SEO (Search Engine Optimization), content marketing, and paid advertising on social media. This knowledge is crucial because, according to Chaffey (2015), the success of digital marketing lies in the ability to precisely target the market and build consistent consumer engagement. Through this training, MSEs can adapt their promotional strategies to the characteristics of consumers in target countries, including Malaysia, a strategic trading partner in the border region. Branding and Packaging Design Training: Helps MSEs develop competitive product packaging and brands. Branding and packaging design play a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, training in this area is crucial to helping MSEs create a strong brand identity and attractive packaging. Based on Aaker's (1996) branding theory, brand equity, or brand value, consists of perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand awareness. Training that focuses on logo creation, color selection, and product narratives significantly assists MSEs in building a professional image that can compete in the international market. Packaging design is not just about aesthetics; it also encompasses functionality, product information, and perceived quality. Packaging design training teaches MSEs to understand consumer preferences based on the culture and customs of the destination country. As explained by Underwood (2003), packaging can be the primary communication medium between a product and consumers, especially in situations where direct interaction is not possible. Therefore, this training is crucial in helping MSEs adapt their product presentation to meet Malaysian market expectations, for example in terms of language, symbols, and halal certification. Training on understanding export regulations ensures that MSEs understand the standards and regulations applicable in destination countries, including logistics and documentation. In addition to marketing and branding, understanding export regulations is also a crucial component of the training.

This training helps MSEs understand food safety standards, customs procedures, certification requirements such as halal certification and distribution permits, and export documents such as the Certificate of Origin (COO). Based on international trade theory by Krugman and Obstfeld (2009), non-tariff barriers, such as technical regulations, are often the main barriers for small businesses entering foreign markets. With adequate understanding, MSEs can be more prepared and confident in following export procedures. Through intensive training on export regulations, MSEs gain not only theoretical understanding but also administrative skills, such as obtaining permits and certification. This training aims to improve the efficiency of the export process and reduce the risk of product rejection in destination countries due to non-compliance with applicable standards.

This also aligns with the compliance-based training approach, which emphasizes the importance of training as a tool to ensure compliance with international trade laws and regulations. Integrated training in digital marketing, branding, packaging design, and understanding export regulations can foster a strong business ecosystem for MSEs. According

to the UNDP's capacity building approach (1998), ongoing training relevant to market needs can improve business sustainability and strengthen competitiveness. With targeted training support from the local government and strategic partners, MSEs in Nunukan Regency have a significant opportunity to expand their market reach to Malaysia and other countries in a more professional and competitive manner. Collaboration is key to the success of MSEs in expanding market access in Malaysia. Forms of collaboration include:

Partnerships with Local Malaysian Distributors: Assisting with direct product distribution and marketing in the Malaysian market. Collaboration is a fundamental strategy in expanding market access for Micro Enterprises (MSEs) internationally. In the context of exports, collaboration is key to bridging MSEs' limitations in terms of resources, networks, and understanding of foreign markets. According to the business network theory by Hakansson and Snehota (1995), collaboration enables the mutually beneficial exchange of resources and knowledge between business actors. In this regard, MSEs in Nunukan Regency can benefit significantly through well-targeted partnerships, particularly with parties with direct access to the Malaysian market. One of the most effective forms of collaboration is partnerships with local distributors in the destination country. Distributors have a deep understanding of consumer preferences, distribution channels, and local market regulations. Rahman (2020) states that this type of collaboration can help MSEs overcome logistical challenges and accelerate the product marketing process. For MSEs in border areas like Nunukan Regency, local Malaysian distributors play a crucial role as bridges connecting Indonesian products with end consumers in neighboring countries. **Collaboration with the Government and Indonesian Embassies/Trade Attachés:** To open up export opportunities through economic diplomacy and trade networks. This collaboration is also carried out through support from the government and Indonesian representatives abroad, such as the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) and Trade Attachés. This collaboration is part of economic diplomacy aimed at strengthening the position of local products in the global market. According to the economic diplomacy theory of Bayne and Woolcock (2011), the government plays a strategic role in opening market access and facilitating trade relations through bilateral negotiations and the promotion of national products.

Through this approach, MSEs can gain access to market information, export procedures, and trade collaboration opportunities. Participation in international trade exhibitions is another form of strategic collaboration. These activities serve not only as promotional events but also as a means of building direct business networks with potential buyers or business partners. Yusuf (2019) emphasized that trade shows provide exclusive opportunities for MSEs to visually showcase products, gain direct market input, and forge long-term partnerships. For MSEs seeking to penetrate the Malaysian market, exhibitions are a crucial gateway to understanding consumer preferences and competitive dynamics. In addition to official institutions, community-based collaborations and business associations also play a significant role in expanding networks and market access. According to Prasetyo (2016), community networks enable MSEs to share market information, explore joint export opportunities, and gain collective support to overcome trade barriers. In border areas like Nunukan, this collaboration strengthens solidarity among business actors, enabling them to export collectively in the form of business clusters or export cooperatives.

The success of MSE exports cannot depend solely on one party. Synergy between business actors, the government, distributors, and the business community is necessary to create a healthy and efficient trade ecosystem. This approach aligns with the concept of the quadruple helix model, which emphasizes collaboration between government, business, academia, and the community to strengthen innovation and local economic growth. Within this framework,

cooperation becomes the foundation in preparing MSEs to be able to compete sustainably in the Malaysian market. Strong collaboration provides a solution to challenges often faced by MSEs, such as lack of market information, shipping constraints, and administrative barriers. By participating in collaborative networks, MSEs benefit not only in distribution but also in increasing their business capacity. This aligns with Rahman's (2020) view that strategic collaboration contributes to operational efficiency and increased MSE competitiveness internationally.

Participation in International Trade Fairs: Provides opportunities for MSEs to showcase their products to potential buyers and build business networks. Strong collaboration provides a solution to challenges often faced by MSEs, such as lack of market information, shipping constraints, and administrative barriers. By participating in collaborative networks, MSEs benefit not only in distribution but also in increasing their business capacity. This aligns with Rahman's (2020) view that strategic collaboration contributes to operational efficiency and increased MSE competitiveness internationally. Community and Business Association Collaboration: Increases support and information sharing on markets and export opportunities. Collaboration in various forms is a crucial element in ensuring the sustainability of MSE exports to Malaysia. With support from various parties and strengthening cross-border networks, MSEs can overcome structural barriers that often limit expansion into global markets. Therefore, local governments need to continue promoting this type of collaboration to make it an integral part of export promotion strategies. Solid synergy will produce resilient, independent MSEs capable of competing professionally in the international market. According to Rahman (2020) and Prasetyo (2016), this type of collaboration is crucial for overcoming export barriers such as logistics and regulations, as well as expanding cross-border business networks.

Supporting and inhibiting factors in efforts to improve the export promotion strategy for packaged food products to Malaysia

The export promotion strategy for packaged food products to Malaysia is supported by various efforts undertaken by the local government, particularly in assisting Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) to become more competitive in the international market. Various programs have been implemented, such as branding training, facilitating halal certification and distribution permits, and participating in international trade exhibitions. Furthermore, the government is collaborating with overseas trading partners to expand market access for MSEs. Other efforts include utilizing social media and e-commerce as marketing tools and collaborating with distributors in Malaysia to increase product acceptance by local consumers. In terms of regulations, the government has attempted to simplify the licensing process by accelerating digitalization services and providing assistance in processing export permits. However, MSEs face several obstacles in implementing this strategy.

One of the main challenges is a lack of understanding of digital marketing and access to global export platforms (Mirzaye & Mohiuddin, 2025; Spilotro et al., 2025). Many businesses still rely on conventional marketing methods, making it difficult to reach a wider market. Furthermore, limited capital is a hindering factor in increasing product competitiveness, particularly in packaging, which must meet international standards. High digital marketing and distribution costs also pose challenges, requiring a well-thought-out strategy to maximize promotional investments. From a regulatory perspective, the export licensing process remains a barrier for MSEs, particularly in meeting administrative requirements such as a Business Identification Number (NIB), BPOM distribution permit, halal certification, and other export documents. Difficulties in understanding these administrative procedures often lead to delays

in obtaining export permits. Furthermore, meeting the standards and regulations of destination countries, particularly Malaysia, is a challenge for MSEs. Strict standards regarding legality and food safety make the export process more complex. Another challenge faced in export promotion strategies is building trust with overseas buyers. Marketed products must be of consistent quality and comply with international standards. Furthermore, competition with similar products from other countries that are already well-known in Malaysia presents a significant challenge. MSEs also face challenges in maintaining production and supply continuity, as international market demand often requires a stable supply of specific quantities. Limited raw materials and labor are factors that can impact export success. To address these challenges, efforts to improve promotional effectiveness are ongoing, employing various strategies. The government is encouraging MSEs to be more active in utilizing digital platforms, expanding market access through international exhibitions, and providing intensive training on global marketing and negotiating with international buyers. Furthermore, collaboration with business communities in Malaysia is a strategic step in expanding marketing networks. Through these efforts, it is hoped that MSEs can increase their competitiveness and strengthen their position in the export market, particularly in Malaysia.

Efforts to improve export promotion strategies for packaged food products to Malaysia demonstrate various factors that both support and hinder micro-enterprises (MSEs) in Nunukan Regency. This finding, also highlighted by previous research, aligns with the findings of this study, which states that one of the main supporting factors is local government support through certification and export licensing facilitation programs. According to Hidayat (2021), the ease of obtaining halal certification and distribution permits from the Food and Drug Authority (BPOM) plays a crucial role in increasing Malaysian consumer confidence in MSE products. Furthermore, the use of digital technology is also a significant contributing factor. Putri (2020) revealed that e-commerce and social media-based marketing can expand market reach and increase the competitiveness of MSE products in the international market. Collaborating with local distributors in Malaysia also benefits MSEs in penetrating export markets. According to Rahman (2019), collaboration with trading partners in destination countries helps MSEs overcome logistical challenges and understand local consumer preferences (Trupp et al., 2025; Machado Becker et al., 2026; Hindolia et al., 2026).

On the other hand, various inhibiting factors remain, posing challenges to improving export promotion strategies (Shahzad et al., 2025; Kropelnytska et al., 2025; Ulani & Aprirachman, 2025). One such factor is limited access to marketing networks in Malaysia. According to Sari (2022), the lack of MSE involvement in international business networks makes it difficult for their products to compete with established brands in the Malaysian market. Furthermore, high promotion and shipping costs are also major obstacles. Prasetyo (2018) stated that high distribution costs and import taxes in destination countries often reduce the price competitiveness of MSE products compared to products from other countries. Another factor hindering exports is the inconsistency of product standards with Malaysian regulations. Lestari (2017) emphasized that differences in quality standards and labeling between Indonesia and Malaysia often prevent MSE products from passing market selection in that country. Furthermore, MSEs' lack of understanding of effective branding strategies also poses a challenge. Yusuf (2019) found that most MSEs lack a strong marketing concept, making their products less attractive in the international market. A final contributing factor is the imbalance in raw material supply. According to Arifin (2016), MSEs' dependence on fluctuating local raw materials can affect product quality consistency, ultimately impacting export competitiveness.

Conclusion

The implemented export promotion strategy encompasses four main aspects: (1) export certification and licensing, (2) strengthening product branding and packaging, (3) training and capacity building for MSEs, and (4) cross-border strategic collaboration. Halal certification, BPOM distribution permits, and export documents such as Certificates of Origin are the main foundations for facilitating exports. In terms of branding, attractive packaging design, a strong brand image, and adapting to Malaysian consumer preferences have been proven to increase product competitiveness. Training in digital marketing, understanding export regulations, and packaging design plays a crucial role in enhancing the professionalism of MSEs. Furthermore, collaboration with local Malaysian distributors, participation in international trade exhibitions, and collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy and Trade Attaché expand market access and strengthen cross-border business networks. The success of export promotion depends heavily on synergy between parties, as well as adequate policy support and facilities. Supporting factors include government certification facilitation, digital training, and access to international trade exhibitions. However, several challenges remain, such as limited understanding of export regulations, high logistics costs, and competition from foreign products. Therefore, promotional strategies need to be continuously strengthened through product quality improvements, branding innovation, and business network development so that MSEs in Nunukan can be competitive and sustainable in the Malaysian export market.

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