
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF HOME PALM SUGAR INDUSTRY FROM A MASLAHAH REVIEW (CASE STUDY: BU ATIK'S PALM SUGAR IN KUALUH SELATAN DISTRICT, LABURA REGENCY)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the development strategy of the palm sugar home industry owned by Mrs. Atik in Bandar Lama Village, Kualuh Selatan Subdistrict, Labuhanbatu Utara Regency, using the SWOT approach and the Islamic economic concept of *masalah*. The business has been passed down through generations and serves as the family's primary source of income. The research employed interview methods with the business owner and field observations as data collection techniques. SWOT analysis indicates strengths in product quality, producer experience, and low production costs, while weaknesses include limited technology, resources, and lack of brand identity. External opportunities such as rising demand and palm sugar prices offer significant potential, but are challenged by competition, government regulations, and weather dependency. The proposed strategy focuses on leveraging strengths to capture opportunities and addressing internal weaknesses. From the *masalah* perspective, development efforts cover the preservation of life, wealth, and lineage (*dharuriyah*), economic ease (*hajiyah*), and improvement of quality, morality, and social aspects (*tahsiniah*). This research recommends technological upgrades, brand development, human resource training, and the integration of Islamic values to achieve holistic societal benefits.

Keywords : Development Strategy, Home Industry, Palm Sugar, SWOT Analysis, *Maslahah*

INTRODUCTION

Local economic development can be achieved through various existing sectors, one of which is the agricultural sector, which is very common. The palm sugar home industry is one of the products of the agricultural sector. It serves as a primary livelihood for some communities in a region. Palm sugar has significant potential for development, but sometimes this potential is not fully utilized. The sugar palm plant has been utilized in Indonesia for quite some time, but its development as an agro-industrial commodity has taken a while because most of the palm trees used are naturally occurring or have not been cultivated. (Nurhijjah and Kurniasih 2021)

The sugar palm (*Arenga pinnata*) is a type of palm tree found in Indonesia. The sugar palm produces a liquid from the cut fruit bunches known as sap. The chemical composition of sap is 87.25% water, 12.7% carbohydrates, 0.24% ash, 0.2% protein, and 0.02% fat. Fresh palm sap dripping from the bunch has a sweet taste and a distinctive

aroma. It has an acidity level of around 5-6, sucrose >12%, and alcohol. Therefore, the quality of the palm sap is the most important factor determining the quality of the resulting palm sugar. (Hutami et al. 2023)

Therefore, this research uses a case study of Mrs. Atik's palm sugar home industry located in Bandar Lama Village, South Kualuh District, North Labuhanbatu Regency. This business has been running for approximately 15 years and is the family's primary source of income. Palm sugar is produced every two days with a capacity of 40 kg per process. The ingredients required to make palm sugar are palm sap water collected from the palm tree and lime water. After the sap is collected, it is mixed with lime water and cooked for one day. The palm sugar is ready when it begins to thicken. It is then molded using a round container. After being poured into the mold, it must be left to harden or dry. Not all palm sugar produced is successful; some are unsuccessful. A sign of failure is that the palm sugar doesn't harden when molded. However, failed palm sugar can still be re-cooked. Palm sugar products are sold from the production site for Rp 22,000 (approximately US\$1.50) and can reach Rp 25,000 (approximately US\$1.50) in local markets.

Table 1. Monthly Sales Data (July 2023 - April 2025)

Month	Total Production (kg)	Total Sales (Rp)
2023		
July	320	Rp7.040.000
August	640	Rp14.080.000
September	600	Rp13.200.000
October	600	Rp13.200.000
November	600	Rp13.200.000
December	640	Rp14.080.000
2024		
January	600	Rp13.200.000
February	600	Rp13.200.000
March	600	Rp13.200.000
April	600	Rp13.200.000
Mey	640	Rp14.080.000
Juny	600	Rp13.200.000
July	600	Rp13.200.000
August	640	Rp14.080.000
September	600	Rp13.200.000
October	600	Rp13.200.000
November	600	Rp13.200.000
December	640	Rp14.080.000
2025		
January	600	Rp13.200.000
February	560	Rp12.320.000
March	640	Rp14.080.000
April	600	Rp13.200.000

Source: Bu Atik's palm sugar

From interviews conducted by the author, this home industry actually has many advantages, such as long-standing experience, high-quality products, and low production costs. Unfortunately, these advantages have not been fully utilized due to a lack of skilled workers, the lack of digital (online) promotion methods, an under-utilized distribution network, the lack of a brand for the sugar, and the manual production equipment still using jackfruit wood for fuel. Threats from new competitors, government regulations, and fluctuating raw material prices have also not been adequately anticipated, as has its dependence on the weather. Yet, numerous opportunities exist, such as the price of palm sugar, increasing market demand, and opportunities for collaboration and development to create new products. However, these opportunities have not been fully utilized due to small production capacity, a lack of partners, and a lack of research. Therefore, the home industry needs to strengthen its internal capabilities to be better prepared to face challenges and capitalize on existing opportunities.

Previous research by Isnaini (2011) noted that national demand for palm sugar continues to increase, both locally and for export. This opens up significant opportunities for the palm sugar industry, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. According to (Mulyani et al., 2022), a SWOT analysis was used to formulate a strategy for developing a palm sugar business in Weninggalih Village. The results recommended a SO strategy focusing on product quality, raw material availability, and utilizing digital platforms to increase competitiveness and marketing. (Sugiyowati et al., 2015) stated that alternative palm sugar business development strategies support aggressive growth by developing product diversification, strengthening market development, expanding marketing networks, increasing production capacity, and conducting promotions.

Meaning related to palm sugar development: This verse encourages continued efforts to develop the palm sugar business. With a sincere intention to seek Allah's pleasure, Allah will pave the way for success in Surah Al-'Ankabut · Ayat 69

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

walladzîna jâhadû finâ lanahdiyyannahum subulanâ, wa innallâha lama'al-muhsinîn

Meaning: Those who strive earnestly to (seek Our pleasure) We will truly show them Our ways. Indeed, Allah is truly with those who do good.

Maslahah is divided into three, namely: dharuriyyah maslahah, hajiyyah maslahah, and tahsinyyah maslahah. Mashlahah al-Dharuriyyah, namely maslahah related to the basic needs of mankind in this world and the hereafter. There are five such maslahahs, namely; (1) maintaining religion, (2) maintaining the soul, (3) maintaining reason, (4) maintaining offspring, (5) maintaining property. These five maslahahs are called al-mashalih al-khamsah. Mashlahah al-Hajiyyah, namely maslahah needed to perfect the previous basic (fundamental) maslahah in the form of relief to maintain and care for basic human needs or in other words maslahah needed by people in overcoming various difficulties they face. (Hasibuan et al., 2024) For example, in the field of worship, people

who are traveling are given relief in breaking the fast; in the field of mu'amalah, hunting animals and eating good food is permitted. Maslahah al-Tahsiniyah, which is a complementary benefit in the form of freedom that can complement the previous benefit. For example, it is recommended to eat nutritious food, dress nicely, perform sunnah worship as additional practices, and various ways to remove impurities from the human body. (Ummah 2019)

From the explanation above, this research on the Palm Sugar Home Industry Development Strategy can be linked to the review of maslahah, namely: Maslahah Dharuriyah (Basic Needs); Preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*): Providing livelihoods to the community, reducing unemployment, and improving family welfare; Preservation of wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*): Providing productive economic opportunities and managing local resources to increase their economic value; Preservation of offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*): With increased income from this industry, families can meet their children's basic needs, such as education and healthcare. Maslahah Hajiyah (Supplementing Basic Needs) The home industry development strategy provides: Economic relief: Providing a more flexible home-based work alternative, especially for housewives or rural communities. Availability of local products: Palm sugar, as a local agricultural product, is easily accessible and beneficial for both producers and consumers. And Maslahah Tahsiniyah (Supplementing and Aesthetics) The development strategy also includes: Improving product quality: Through innovations in production that are more hygienic, high-quality, and environmentally friendly. Empowering moral and social values: Such as honesty in transactions, fair employee wages, and mutual assistance within the production chain.

The palm sugar development strategy, from a maslahah perspective, is oriented not only toward economic profit but also toward social welfare and Islamic values. In other words, the development of the palm sugar home industry must be designed not only to increase production and income, but also to provide comprehensive benefits to the community and support the objectives of sharia (*maqasid al-syariah*).

RESEARCH METHODS

Data Collection Approach and Method

This research was conducted in Bandar Lama Village, Kualuh Selatan District, North Labuhanbatu Regency. The research took place on April 13-14, 2025. This study employed qualitative methods. Because this research employed qualitative methods, the data collection technique prioritized direct observation in Bandar Lama Village. To complement the observation and interview data, the researcher also read and reviewed documentation related to palm sugar. The data in this study consisted of a series of words or sentences obtained from both interviews and literature reviews, resulting in qualitative research conclusions.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis used in this study was a SWOT analysis, which systematically identifies various factors to formulate a business strategy. The SWOT analysis aims to identify strengths and weaknesses stemming from internal factors, as well as opportunities and threats stemming from external factors. The SWOT analysis process generally consists of three main stages: data collection, analysis, and strategic decision-making. This analysis helps organizations or individuals maximize strengths, minimize weaknesses, capitalize on existing opportunities, and anticipate future threats. To facilitate strategy development, IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) and EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) tables are typically used, which summarize relevant strategic factors. The results of this analysis can then be used to formulate four types of strategies: SO strategies (using strengths to capitalize on opportunities), ST strategies (using strengths to overcome threats), WO strategies (minimizing weaknesses to capitalize on opportunities), and WT strategies (minimizing weaknesses to avoid threats). Although SWOT analysis is very helpful in the strategy development process, this technique also has drawbacks, such as a high degree of subjectivity and a lack of direct linkage to budget planning. Nevertheless, SWOT analysis remains an effective tool for depicting an organization's overall situation and assisting in the development of more focused and realistic plans. (Sasoko and Mahrudi 2023)

In the data reduction stage, irrelevant information is eliminated, and only data directly related to the marketing strategy is analyzed further. Next, the data is presented in descriptive narrative form, tables, and a SWOT matrix to illustrate the company's internal and external conditions. After collecting various data that will impact the sustainability of the palm sugar home industry, the next step is to incorporate this information into strategy formulation. This matrix illustrates the external threats and opportunities they face and is then adjusted based on their strengths and weaknesses.

Table 3. SWOT Development Alternatives in Matrix

Internal Factors Eksternal Factors	Strength (S)	Weakness (W)
Opportunity (O)	Existing strengths are used to fill available opportunities (SO)	Taking advantage of existing opportunities by overcoming weaknesses (WO)
Threat (T)	The strength possessed to overcome the threats faced (ST)	Minimizing weaknesses and avoiding threats (SWOT)

Description:

Strengths (S) = Strengths, namely the strength factors possessed by the company, including the business units within it, including specific competencies within the organization that result in the business unit having a comparative advantage in the market.

Weaknesses (W) = Weaknesses, namely limitations or deficiencies in resources, skills, and capabilities that pose a serious obstacle to satisfactory organizational performance.

Opportunities (O) = Opportunities, namely various environmental situations that are favorable for a business unit.

Threats (T) = Threats, environmental factors that are unfavorable for a business unit.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

a. Internal Factor Analysis

The analysis of strengths and weaknesses is a key factor influencing the development of the palm sugar home industry in Bandar Lama Village, South Kualuh District, Labura Regency.

1. Strengths

a. The quality of palm sugar is long-lasting due to the absence of any additives other than lime water. This increases shelf life and the color becomes brighter.

b. The producer's experience aims to avoid production defects and maintain customer trust. Consistent, high-quality products from experienced producers will increase consumer confidence and strengthen their market position.

c. Low production costs. With low production costs, the difference between costs and selling price (profit) is greater, resulting in increased profits. Producers can sell palm sugar at more affordable prices without sacrificing quality, making it more attractive to consumers and competitive in the market.

2. Weaknesses

a. Technological limitations make it difficult to meet large demand. Due to limited production, home industries with limited technology will have difficulty meeting large orders, especially for export or modern markets.

b. Limited resources can slow business development, reduce competitiveness, and threaten business continuity.

c. Brand image: Without a brand image, palm sugar products will struggle to develop because they lack a strong market identity.

d. Manual production equipment: Manual production equipment limits the scale and quality of production, and reduces the competitiveness of the palm sugar industry in an increasingly competitive market.

Table 4. internal strength factors

S1	Quality of palm sugar products
S2	Manufacturer experience
S3	Low production costs

Tabel 5. Internal factors of weakness

W1	Technological limitations
W2	Technological limitations
W3	Brand image
W4	Manual production tools

b. External Factor Analysis

External factors affecting the development of palm sugar processing businesses consist of the opportunities and threats faced by palm sugar producers.

1. Opportunities

a. High palm sugar prices present a significant opportunity for businesses to increase revenue, expand markets, and sustainably develop their businesses.

b. Increasing demand for palm sugar presents an opportunity for businesses to grow, develop, and enhance product competitiveness in both local and global markets.

c. Collaboration with stakeholders creates significant opportunities for capacity building, quality improvement, and market expansion in the palm sugar industry, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

d. Developing new palm sugar products presents a significant opportunity to expand markets, increase profits, and build more modern and sustainable businesses.

2. Threats

a. Fierce competition poses a serious threat to business continuity, especially if not balanced by innovation, production efficiency, quality improvement, and appropriate marketing strategies.

b. Fluctuations in raw material prices cause instability in production and finances, and increase business risks. To address this, industry players need to establish partnerships with suppliers, maintain reserve stocks for when prices drop, and implement production efficiency measures.

c. Changes in government policy can hamper business continuity and development if not properly anticipated. Therefore, palm sugar industry players need to continuously monitor the latest policy information and communicate with relevant agencies to ensure compliance and readiness for change.

d. Dependence on weather causes palm sugar production to be unstable in terms of quantity, quality, and timing. To address this, business players need to find solutions such as sap storage, artificial drying, closed production facilities, or collaboration between producers to support each other during difficult seasons.

Table 6. Internal Factors Opportunities

O1	Harga gula aren
O2	Peningkatan permintaan
O3	Kerjasama dengan stakeholder
O4	Pengembangan produk baru

Table 7. Internal Threat Factors

T1	Kompetisi yang ketat
T2	Fluktuasi harga bahan baku
T3	Perubahan kebijakan pemerintah
T3	Ketergantungan pada cuaca

1. IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) Matrix

This IFAS matrix uses data obtained from the normalized weighting table for internal factors of palm sugar managers and from the internal factor assessment questionnaire.

Table 8. IFAS Matrix: Palm sugar home industry development strategy from a masalah perspective (case study: Mrs. Atik's palm sugar in Kualuh Selatan District, Labura Regency)

No	Faktor Internal	Bobot	Rating	Skor	Information
Kekuatan (Strengths)					
S1	Kualitas produk gula aren	0.20	4	0.80	High quality and long shelf life
S2	Pengalaman	0.15	4	0.60	Experienced manufacturer,

No	Faktor Internal	Bobot	Rating	Skor	Information
	manufacturer				high confidence
S3	Low production costs	0.15	3	0.45	Efficient, competitive selling prices
Total Strength Score				1.85	
Weaknesses					
W1	Technological limitations	0.15	2	0.30	Limited production, less efficient
W2	Limited resources	0.10	2	0.20	Limited human resources and capital
W3	No brand image	0.10	2	0.20	Less known, hard to compete
W4	Production tools are still manual	0.15	2	0.30	Slow, inefficient for large scale
Total Weakness Score				1.00	
TOTAL IFAS				2.85	

Source: Questionnaire results: Palm sugar home industry development strategy in terms of masalah (case study: Mrs. Atik's palm sugar in Kualuh Selatan District, Labura Regency). (2025)

Total IFAS score = 2.85

Based on the data above, the strengths (Strange) score is the highest for the IFAS matrix, with a total of 1.85 compared to the weaknesses (1.00). Therefore, the strengths (Strange) score can be used as the basis for policy.

1. EFAS Matrix (External Factor Analysis Summary)

This EFAS matrix uses data from the normalized weighting table for external factors for palm sugar managers and data from the questionnaire assessing external factor scores for palm sugar managers.

Table 9. EFAS Matrix: Palm sugar home industry development strategy in terms of masalah (case study: Mrs. Atik's palm sugar in Kualuh Selatan District, Labura Regency)

No	External Factors	Weight	Rating	Score	Information
Opportunities					
O1	High price of palm sugar	0.20	4	0.80	High profit potential
O2	Increasing market demand	0.20	4	0.80	Demand is rising, expansion opportunities
O3	Collaboration with stakeholders	0.10	3	0.30	Potential support and partnerships
O4	New product development	0.10	3	0.30	Product innovation expands the market
Total Chance Score				2.20	
Threats					
T1	Tight competition	0.15	2	0.30	Have to compete with many other manufacturers
T2	Fluctuations in raw material prices	0.10	2	0.20	Impact on production stability and costs
T3	Changes in government policy	0.10	2	0.20	Licensing risks, tax regulations, etc.
T4	Weather dependence	0.05	2	0.10	Production is hampered by bad weather
Total Threat Score				0.80	
TOTAL EFAS				3.00	

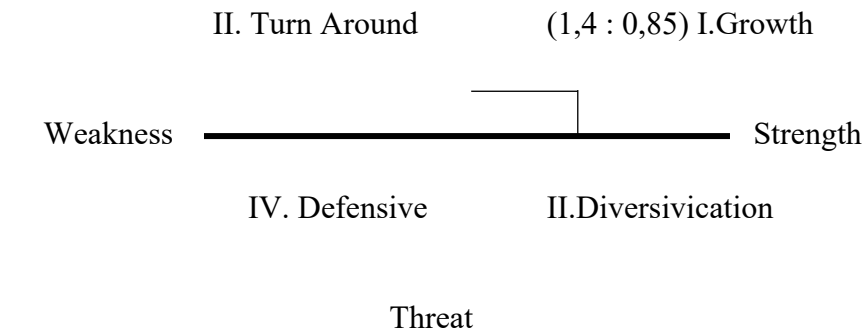
Source: Questionnaire results: Palm sugar home industry development strategy in terms of benefits (case study: Mrs. Atik's palm sugar in Kualuh Selatan District, Labuhanbatu Regency). (2025)

Total EFAS score: 3.00

Based on the data above, the Opportunity score is 2.20, the highest value for the EFAS matrix compared to the Threats factor of 0.80. Therefore, the value that can be used as a basis for policy is the Opportunity score.

DISCUSSION

Mrs. Atik's palm sugar home industry in Kualuh Selatan District, North Labuhanbatu Regency, is an example of a local business based on natural resources with high economic value. This business has several strengths, such as high product quality, extensive production experience, and low production costs, which collectively create potential competitiveness in the market.



Quadrant Explanation

1. Quadrant I (SO – Aggressive)

This position represents the most advantageous position due to its strong strengths and opportunities.

Strategic focus: Market expansion, product innovation, branding, and strategic partnerships.

Example: Changing products to palm sugar and palm syrup to penetrate the modern market.

2. Quadrant II (ST – Diversification)

Strengths are used to address threats.

Strategic focus: Maintaining quality, cost efficiency, and customer loyalty despite competition and price fluctuations.

Example: Maintaining stable prices despite raw material price increases.

3. Quadrant III (WO – Turnaround)

Exploiting external opportunities to overcome internal weaknesses.

Strategic focus: Modernizing equipment, improving human resources, and creating a brand to reach a wider market.

Example: Using modern processing machinery to meet export demand.

4. Quadrant IV (WT – Defensive)

This position seeks to minimize weaknesses and avoid threats.

Strategic focus: Production efficiency, mitigating weather risks, and adjusting policies.

Example: Making a sap reservoir to cope with the rainy season.

INTERNAL	Strength (S)	Weakness (W)
EXTERNAL		
Opportunity (O)	SO Strategy (Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities):	WO Strategy (Minimize weaknesses to take advantage of opportunities):
	1. Expand the market with digital promotions utilizing superior product quality (S1, O2).	1. Modernization of production equipment to increase capacity to meet high demand (W1, O2).
	2. Product diversification (palm sugar, palm syrup) by utilizing low production costs (S3, O4).	2. Build a brand image (branding) to be able to take advantage of collaboration opportunities with stakeholders (W3, O3).
	3. Establish partnerships with stakeholders for wider market penetration (S2, O3).	3. Improve human resources through entrepreneurship training for new product innovation (W2, O4).
Threat (T)	ST Strategy (Use strengths to overcome threats):	WT Strategy (Minimize weaknesses to avoid threats):
	1. Use manufacturer experience to maintain customer loyalty amidst fierce competition (S2, T1).	1. Reduce dependence on weather by creating a closed production house (W1, T4).
	2. Take advantage of low production costs to maintain competitive prices when raw material prices rise (S3, T2).	2. Build a supplier network to stabilize raw material supply (W2, T2).
	3. Develop quality standards to meet new regulations (S1, T3).	3. Conduct market research for adaptation to policy changes (W2, T3).

In the context of development, a SWOT analysis shows that strengths and opportunities are dominant factors that can be optimized through an SO strategy, a strategy that leverages internal strengths to seize external opportunities. This strategy includes improving production quality with simple technology, strengthening branding and digital marketing, training human resources, and diversifying products into processed products such as palm syrup and palm sugar. However, this development must not be solely profit-oriented but must also consider the principles of *maslahah* (beneficial welfare) in Islamic economics.

In terms of *maslahah*, this home industry development strategy fulfills the elements of *maslahah dharuriyyah* (necessary welfare), as it safeguards the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) by providing decent employment and income, safeguards wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) by encouraging the productive use of local resources, and safeguards descendants (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) by meeting basic family needs, including education and healthcare. Furthermore, at the level of *maslahah hajiyyah* (pilgrimage welfare), this business provides economic convenience for rural communities, especially housewives, and provides local products that are beneficial to consumers. Meanwhile, in terms of *tahsiniyah* (social welfare), this business encourages innovation towards more hygienic and environmentally friendly

production quality, while also instilling the values of honesty, fair wages, and mutual cooperation in business activities.

Several studies related to palm sugar business development have been conducted previously. Resmiwati et al. (2011) examined palm sugar business development strategies in Southeast Aceh Regency and found that the SO (Strength-Opportunity) strategy was prioritized, leveraging internal strengths to seize external opportunities. Furthermore, Rachmina (2011) emphasized the crucial role of small businesses in absorbing labor and producing affordable products, thereby improving the welfare of rural communities. Meanwhile, Gurel and Tat (2017) provided a theoretical study on SWOT analysis as a strategic tool in formulating development strategies, considering both internal and external factors.

CONCLUSION

Mrs. Atik's palm sugar home industry demonstrates significant growth potential. Its key strengths lie in high product quality, experienced producers, and low production costs, providing significant competitiveness in the market. However, several internal weaknesses exist, such as limited technology, limited human resources, manual production equipment, and the lack of a strong brand image. Externally, significant opportunities exist, including high palm sugar prices, increasing market demand, potential collaborations with various stakeholders, and the potential for product innovation. Meanwhile, threats such as intense competition, fluctuating raw material prices, changes in government policy, and weather dependency must be strategically addressed. The IFAS and EFAS analyses indicate that the strengths and opportunities factors have the highest scores, suggesting that the most appropriate development strategy is the SO (Strength-Opportunity) strategy, which leverages internal strengths to optimally capture external opportunities. From the perspective of *maslahah* (benefit) in Islamic economics, this strategy is also relevant for safeguarding the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and descendants (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), providing economic convenience (*hajiyyah*), and improving social and moral quality (*tahsiniyah*). Thus, the development of this home industry is not solely oriented towards economic profit, but also towards social welfare and the sustainability of Sharia values.

Suggestion

1. Improve technology and production equipment: The government or the private sector can provide assistance with more modern production equipment to increase efficiency and production capacity.
2. Strengthen branding and digital marketing: It is necessary to create a product identity (brand) and utilize online platforms to reach a wider market.
3. Improve human resource capacity: Training in entrepreneurship, business management, and advanced product processing is needed to better prepare business actors for competition.
4. In addition to molded sugar, the product can be developed into palm sugar or other derivative products to increase sales value.

5. Strategic partnerships: Establishing collaborations with stakeholders such as cooperatives, NGOs, local governments, and universities in the form of mentoring, market research, and access to capital.
6. Adapting to external risks: For example, establishing a palm sap storage system or closed production house to reduce dependence on weather.
7. Integration of Islamic values (masalahah): All business development should continue to consider the values of honesty, business blessings, and the welfare of the community as a whole.

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