

Hedging Energy Security through Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Pursuit of Economic Sovereignty in Azerbaijan-Indonesia Energy Cooperation Post-COP29

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Keywords	Abstract
Infrastructure Diplomacy; COP29 Baku; Economic Sovereignty; Azerbaijan-Indonesia Relations; Waste-to-Energy; Sustainable Energy Transition	In the wake of COP29 in Baku, the geopolitical landscape of energy has transitioned toward a "hybrid" cooperation model that balances fossil fuel reliability with green innovation. This study analyzes the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Indonesia (2024–2026), examining how infrastructure diplomacy serves as a mechanism for economic sovereignty. Amidst a 2026 global oil surplus and a 2.5 mb/d supply increase buffer, the research identifies a significant pivot toward sustainable infrastructure. The findings highlight the "Baku Legacy": a Joint Task Force on Green Energy acting as a "special vehicle" to bypass bureaucratic hurdles in the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) sector. Data validates that while the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline remains a critical artery for Indonesia's oil stability—mitigating the \$6/bbl price spikes seen in early 2026—the cooperation has expanded into "Pragmatic-Progressive" ESG standards. By integrating Neorealist and Constructivist frameworks, the paper concludes that this bilateral synergy allows both nations to hedge against global volatility and supply chain shocks. This "Middle-Power Standard" offers a balanced alternative to stringent Western mandates, securing strategic autonomy within the South-South green transition.

INTRODUCTION

The global energy geopolitical landscape following COP29 in Baku has undergone a fundamental transformation toward a cooperation model that harmonizes the reliability of fossil fuels with green innovation. Within this context, infrastructure diplomacy has emerged as a strategic instrument for middle-power nations to safeguard economic sovereignty amidst global fragmentation (Abdullahi et al., 2025). Under President Prabowo Subianto's Asta Cita vision, Indonesia has positioned national self-sufficiency and energy security as paramount priorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs RI, 2025). Azerbaijan, bolstered by its sophisticated extraction technologies and strategic position within the Caucasus energy corridor, has emerged not merely as a conventional trading partner but as a pivotal architect in Indonesia's strategic infrastructure development (Putera & Khairunnisa, 2023).

Historically, this bilateral relationship has been reinforced by mutual support for territorial sovereignty within multilateral forums (Tamami, 2021). However, entering the 2024–2026 period, this collaboration has pivoted from raw commodity transactions toward deep-seated capital and technological integration. Data from the SOCAR Research Center (2025) indicate that Azerbaijan's involvement in Indonesia's refining sectors and pipeline distribution remains a critical artery for domestic fuel stability, capable of reducing price

volatility by 0.15 points. Concurrently, both nations are expanding into the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) sector through a Joint Task Force on Green Energy—a concrete mechanism designed to bypass bureaucratic impediments and achieve sustainable energy transition targets.

Despite the accelerated development offered by such infrastructure investments, this phenomenon introduces inherent risks of economic dependence (Dang & Pheng, 2015) Infrastructure investments in developing economies. According to the theory of asymmetric interdependence, rigid, long-term physical investments such as the Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model employed by Azerbaijan can precipitate structural path dependencies that constrain the host country's foreign policy autonomy (Huseynov & Ali, 2024). This creates a strategic dilemma for Indonesia's Bebas Aktif (Independent and Active) foreign policy: the extent to which reliance on Azerbaijan's funding strategies facilitates national objectives without compromising diplomatic maneuverability on the international stage.

Beyond technical dimensions, quality management and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards have become imperative in maintaining the credibility of these investments (Yusifov & Rzayev, 2025). Furthermore, public diplomacy instruments, facilitated by student mobility and cultural exchange, serve as soft power anchors that bolster the legitimacy of physical projects within the public sphere (Putera & Khairunnisa, 2023). Consequently, this study aims to dissect Azerbaijan's investment strategies in Indonesia's energy and mining sectors while analyzing the resulting implications for economic sovereignty and the trajectory of Indonesia's foreign policy in the face of increasingly dynamic geopolitical challenges (Al Putra, Akbar, & Sumarman, 2025; Melzatia & Zahri, 2024; Setiawan, 2025).

The global energy geopolitical landscape post-COP29 in Baku has undergone a fundamental transformation toward a “hybrid” cooperation model that harmonizes fossil fuel reliability with green innovation (Rachman, 2024). Within this context, infrastructure diplomacy has emerged as a strategic instrument for middle-power nations to safeguard economic sovereignty amidst global fragmentation (Abdullahi et al., 2025). This diplomatic evolution is inextricably linked to the fiscal health of resource-rich states, where volatile oil prices often catalyze structural shifts in national asset management. In Azerbaijan, the fluctuating global market has reignited the urgency of privatization, leading to the transfer of strategic state enterprises—including the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) and Azerenergy—to the Azerbaijan Investment Holding for restructuring and enhanced investor stimulation (Ibadoglu, 2021). Under President Prabowo Subianto's *Asta Cita* vision, Indonesia has positioned national self-sufficiency and energy security as paramount priorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs RI, 2025). Azerbaijan, bolstered by its sophisticated extraction technologies and its strategic position within the Caucasus energy corridor, has emerged not merely as a conventional trading partner but as a pivotal architect in Indonesia's strategic infrastructure development (Putera & Khairunnisa, 2023). However, the effectiveness of such bilateral engagements is heavily contingent on the fiscal policy frameworks of the participating states. Empirical evidence suggests that in resource-dependent economies like Azerbaijan, government spending maintains a long-term positive association with economic growth; however, the optimization of such spending becomes increasingly crucial as oil production volumes face projected declines (Kalbiyev & Seyfullali, 2024).

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2024–2026 period, this collaboration has pivoted from raw commodity transactions toward deep-seated capital and technological integration. Data from the SOCAR Research Center (2025) indicate that Azerbaijan's involvement in Indonesia's refining sectors remains a critical artery for domestic fuel stability, capable of reducing price volatility by 0.15 points. This cooperation now extends into climate diplomacy, addressing the “pledge-implementation gap” by fostering shared environmental commitments through multilevel partnerships (Al Derabani, 2024).

Despite the accelerated development offered by such infrastructure investments, this phenomenon introduces inherent risks of economic dependence. Rigid, long-term physical investments—such as the Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model—can precipitate structural path dependencies that constrain the host country's foreign policy autonomy (Huseynov & Ali, 2024). This creates a strategic dilemma for Indonesia's *Bebas Aktif* (Independent and Active) foreign policy, particularly when navigating equity divides between the Global North and South regarding “ecological debt” and technology transfer (Al Derabani, 2024). Consequently, this study aims to dissect Azerbaijan's investment strategies in Indonesia's energy and mining sectors while analyzing the resulting implications for economic sovereignty and the trajectory of Indonesia's foreign policy in an increasingly dynamic geopolitical and fiscal climate.

The novelty of this research is fourfold. First, this study is among the first to analyze Azerbaijan–Indonesia energy cooperation as a strategic case of “middle-power hedging” in the post-COP29 era, where middle powers use infrastructure diplomacy to maintain strategic autonomy between great power blocs. Second, the research develops the concept of “hybrid energy cooperation”—a model that simultaneously leverages fossil fuel reliability (through BTC pipeline integration) and green innovation (through WtE sector development)—as a replicable framework for other middle-power partnerships. Third, this study introduces the “Baku Legacy” concept, operationalized as a Joint Task Force on Green Energy functioning as a “special-purpose vehicle” to bypass bureaucratic hurdles, demonstrating how administrative innovation can accelerate infrastructure diplomacy outcomes. Fourth, the research identifies the emergence of a “Middle-Power Standard” in ESG criteria, offering a third pathway between high-stringency Western mandates (often perceived as “green protectionism”) and low-standard external investments that ignore environmental impacts, thereby contributing to the literature on South-South cooperation in sustainable development.

The purpose of this study is to dissect Azerbaijan's investment strategies in Indonesia's energy and mining sectors while analyzing the resulting implications for economic sovereignty and the trajectory of Indonesia's foreign policy in the face of increasingly dynamic geopolitical challenges. The contribution of this research is threefold: theoretically, it integrates Neorealist and Constructivist frameworks to explain how infrastructure diplomacy operates as a hedging mechanism; methodologically, it demonstrates the value of strategic triangulation (primary interviews, secondary document analysis, and IEA market data) for analyzing contemporary infrastructure diplomacy; and practically, it provides policy recommendations for middle-power nations seeking to balance energy security with green transition goals. The specific objectives of this research are: (1) to analyze the strategic infrastructure investments made by Azerbaijan in Indonesia's energy sector; (2) to evaluate how these investments affect Indonesia's economic sovereignty and foreign policy autonomy; (3) to examine the role of the

Joint Task Force on Green Energy in facilitating WtE infrastructure development; and (4) to assess the emergence of “Middle-Power Standards” in ESG criteria. The benefits of this research include providing an evidence-based framework for Indonesia's foreign policy formulation, offering lessons for other middle-power nations navigating the energy transition, and contributing to the academic literature on infrastructure diplomacy and South-South cooperation.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative-analytical approach with a case study design to investigate the strategic infrastructure diplomacy between Indonesia and Azerbaijan. To ensure high-level academic rigor, the study utilizes a theoretical triangulation of Neorealism and Constructivism. Neorealism is applied to analyze national security and "Asta Cita" self-sufficiency goals, while Constructivism evaluates the "Baku Legacy" and the evolution of shared Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) norms.

The research method used in this study employs a qualitative-analytical approach centered on the "Strategic Hedging" framework. The study was conducted between November 2024 and March 2026, capturing the immediate geopolitical shifts following COP29 in Baku. The spatial scope is focused on the bilateral diplomatic corridor, specifically analyzing the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline logistics and Indonesia's domestic energy hubs (refining and Waste-to-Energy sectors).

This study adopts a qualitative research design centered on a case study approach to evaluate the operationalization of infrastructure diplomacy between Azerbaijan and Indonesia. Following the methodological rigor of Hendra et al. (2025), data were gathered through a triangulation of primary and secondary sources to ensure empirical validity. Primary data were obtained through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key diplomatic and energy stakeholders, including H.E. Berlian Helmy (Indonesian Ambassador), Azerbaijani consular officials, and advisors from the Energy Shift Institute/IEA. These sessions focused on uncovering recurring themes related to the "Baku Legacy" and the strategic bypass of bureaucratic hurdles. Secondary data collection involved a systematic document analysis of official government publications, sectoral policy documents (2020–2025), and annual reports from the SOCAR Research Center and IESR (2026), mirroring the evidence-gathering structure utilized in assessing Azerbaijan's state support mechanisms (OECD/EBRD, 2023).

The collected data were processed using thematic analysis to identify strategic patterns in the transition toward "hybrid" energy cooperation. Drawing from the "Pragmatic-Progressive" framework, the research evaluated key variables including environmental sustainability, technological integration in the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) sector, and the effectiveness of the Joint Task Force on Green Energy as a "special vehicle" for economic sovereignty. To mitigate potential bias inherent in administrative data, the study cross-checked official statistics from the State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan against independent assessments by the World Bank and EU4Business (2025). This descriptive and analytical approach allows for a balanced evaluation of how the Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model impacts Indonesia's "Independent and Active" (Bebas Aktif) foreign policy, specifically

analyzing whether such rigid infrastructure investments precipitate structural path-dependencies or bolster strategic autonomy.

To reduce potential bias and present a balanced account, this study employs triangulation across government documents, independent evaluations, and academic literature, a technique validated in recent studies of Azerbaijani entrepreneurship and fiscal policy (OECD/EBRD, 2023; Kalbiyev & Seyfullali, 2024). Limitations include a reliance on reported administrative data, which may be subject to reporting biases; however, these constraints are mitigated by framing the findings within Neorealist and Constructivist theoretical lenses. This methodological approach provides a robust basis for assessing how infrastructure diplomacy serves as a mechanism for strategic autonomy in the South-South green transition.

The study was conducted between November 2024 and March 2026, capturing the immediate geopolitical shifts following COP29 in Baku. The spatial scope is focused on the bilateral diplomatic corridor, specifically analyzing the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline logistics and Indonesia's domestic energy hubs (refining and Waste-to-Energy sectors) influenced by Azerbaijani capital and technology.

Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with H.E. Berlian Helmy and energy advisors. Secondary data analysis utilized the IEA Oil Market Report (January 2026) and SOCAR production data. Analytical tools include thematic coding of diplomatic Communiqués and comparative trend analysis of OPEC+ production quotas versus actual supply. The analysis of Azerbaijan's 0.46 mb/d supply stability (as of Dec 2025) served as the baseline for assessing its reliability as a strategic partner for Indonesia's energy security.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The "Baku Legacy": Infrastructure Diplomacy and the Hybrid Energy Model

The research findings indicate that the post-COP29 period has solidified a "hybrid" cooperation model between Azerbaijan and Indonesia. This model is characterized by a dual-track strategy: maintaining the stability of conventional fossil fuel supply chains while simultaneously integrating green technology. A primary scientific finding is the emergence of Infrastructure Diplomacy as a tool for "Middle-Power Hedging."

Unlike traditional trade based on simple commodity exchange, the 2024–2026 partnership utilizes deep-seated capital integration. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline remains the "critical artery" for Indonesia. According to data from the SOCAR Research Center (2025), Azerbaijani crude oil supplies have successfully reduced Indonesian domestic fuel price volatility by 0.15 points. This stability is not merely a market outcome but a result of strategic state-led coordination that bypasses traditional spot-market fluctuations. The "Baku Legacy" is most visible through the Joint Task Force on Green Energy. Interviews with H.E. Berlian Helmy and Azerbaijani officials reveal that this task force acts as a "special vehicle"—a diplomatic and administrative fast-track designed to circumvent the bureaucratic "middle-income trap" hurdles in Indonesia. Scientifically, this represents a shift from Neorealist survival (securing oil) to Constructivist norm-building (shared ESG standards).

Recent IEA data (2026) validates this hedging strategy; while global oil demand growth is normalizing at 930 kb/d, the growth is driven entirely by non-OECD countries, placing Indonesia in direct competition with other emerging economies for dwindling supply increments. Azerbaijan's integration into Indonesia's refining sector is particularly timely, as

global refinery crude throughput is forecast to average 84.6 mb/d in 2026. Although refining margins slumped in late 2025 due to weakened middle distillate cracks, the Azerbaijan-Indonesia partnership focuses on long-term "petrochemical feedstocks"—a sector the IEA identifies as a primary driver for demand recovery in 2026. This alignment ensures that Indonesian refineries remain viable even as global gasoline demand growth slows.

Table 1. Global Energy Market Context for Azerbaijan-Indonesia Cooperation (2026 Forecast)

Indicator	Value / Trend	Strategic Implication for Indonesia
Global Oil Supply	108.7 mb/d	Necessity of BTC pipeline as a "critical artery."
Demand Growth (Non-OECD)	930 kb/d	Increasing competition for energy among emerging markets.
Benchmark Price (Dec 2025)	\$62.64/bbl	Period of lower prices used to hedge via infrastructure.
Refinery Throughput	84.6 mb/d	Shift toward petrochemical feedstock integration.
Inventory Trends	+1.3 mb/d average	Importance of Azerbaijan's onshore storage technology.

Source: Processed from IEA Oil Market Report (2026) and SOCAR Research Center.

Waste-to-Energy (WtE) and the DBOT Structural Analysis

A significant finding in the renewable sector is the focus on Waste-to-Energy (WtE) infrastructure. Azerbaijan's investment in Indonesian WtE projects utilizes the Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model. The scientific trend observed here shows that Azerbaijan is exporting its "ASAN Service" governance logic—efficiency and digitalization—into physical energy infrastructure. The use of the DBOT model, however, validates the hypothesis regarding Asymmetric Interdependence. While it provides Indonesia with immediate technological infusion and capital, it creates a "path-dependency" where Indonesian energy hubs become structurally aligned with Azerbaijani technical specifications. This is a "Pragmatic-Progressive" compromise; Indonesia gains the 75 GW renewable capacity targeted by the "Asta Cita" vision, but at the cost of long-term operational reliance on Azerbaijani expertise.

Economic Sovereignty and the "Middle-Power Standard"

The research identifies the emergence of a "Middle-Power Standard" in ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria. Historically, Indonesia faced a dichotomy between high-stringency Western mandates (often perceived as "green protectionism") and low-standard external investments that ignored environmental impact. The Azerbaijan-Indonesia synergy offers a third way. This is scientifically significant because it demonstrates that South-South cooperation can produce "Strategic Autonomy." By aligning with Azerbaijan—a nation that similarly manages a transition from a petro-state to a green hub—Indonesia avoids the "ecological debt" trap mentioned by Al Derabani (2024). "The bilateral synergy allows both nations to hedge against global volatility. It is not just about energy; it is about creating a diplomatic shield against supply chain shocks." (Interview with IEA Advisor, 2026).

Earlier studies by Putera & Khairunnisa (2023) focused on soft power and cultural exchange. This research advances that narrative by proving that Public Diplomacy (such as the 200+ public service centers modeled after Azerbaijan's ASAN) serves as the "trust-anchor" for larger energy deals. The findings answer the research hypothesis: infrastructure diplomacy does bolster economic sovereignty, but only when shielded by a specialized administrative body (the Joint Task Force) that prevents the "dilution" of strategic goals by local bureaucratic interests. The data from IESR (2026) suggests that this model has allowed Indonesia to maintain its Bebas Aktif (Independent and Active) stance by diversifying its energy dependence away from traditional superpower blocs, utilizing Azerbaijan as a strategic "swing partner" in the global energy transition.

The "Buffer Zone" Diplomacy: Navigating 2026 Volatility

Table 2 The "Buffer Zone" Diplomacy: Navigating 2026 Volatility

Country	Nov 2025 Supply	Dec 2025 Supply	Dec vs Target	Dec 2025 Implied Target	Sustainable Capacity	Eff Spare Cap vs Dec
Algeria	0.96	0.91	-0.06	0.97	0.99	0.08
Congo	0.27	0.25	-0.03	0.28	0.27	0.02
Equatorial Guinea	0.04	0.06	-0.01	0.07	0.06	0
Gabon	0.22	0.24	0.07	0.18	0.22	0
Iraq	4.47	4.34	0.19	4.15	4.87	0.53
Kuwait	2.6	2.54	-0.04	2.58	2.88	0.34
Nigeria	1.44	1.43	-0.07	1.5	1.42	0
Saudi Arabia	9.87	9.7	-0.4	10.1	12.11	2.41
UAE	3.64	3.64	-0.24	3.4	4.28	0.64
Total OPEC-9	23.51	23.12	-0.11	23.23	27.1	4.01
Iran	3.41	3.41	-	-	3.8	-
Libya	1.25	1.3	-	-	1.28	0
Venezuela	0.99	0.99	-	-	1	0.01
Total OPEC	29.16	28.82	-	-	33.18	4.02
Azerbaijan	0.46	0.46	-0.09	0.55	0.48	0.02
Kazakhstan	1.7	1.5	0.06	1.44	1.8	0.3
Mexico	1.42	1.4	-	-	1.5	0.1
Oman	0.81	0.82	0.01	0.8	0.8	0
Russia	9.0	9.56	-0.02	9.57	9.4	-
Others	0.76	0.73	-0.14	0.87	0.86	0.13
Total Non-OPEC	14.15	14.47	-0.16	13.24	14.84	0.54
OPEC+ (Nov 2022 deal)	36.25	36.19	-0.27	36.47	40.43	4.45
Total OPEC+	43.32	43.29	-	-	48.01	4.56

The research finds that Azerbaijan-Indonesia cooperation in early 2026 functioned as a "Geopolitical Buffer." While global markets faced turbulence due to Iranian loading drops and Venezuelan export slumps (falling to 300 kb/d in January 2026), the bilateral relationship remained insulated. Azerbaijan's consistent production at 0.46 mb/d, despite being slightly below its implied target, provided a reliable source for Indonesian refineries. As shown in the

IEA data, while traditional heavyweights like Saudi Arabia and Russia fluctuated, Azerbaijan's role in the "Non-OPEC" total of 14.47 mb/d represents a strategic niche for Indonesia. This infrastructure diplomacy allows Indonesia to bypass the "US blockade" risks affecting other suppliers. Scientifically, this validates the Neorealist pursuit of energy security; by locking in Azerbaijani supply, Indonesia mitigates the impact of the \$16/bbl year-on-year price fluctuations.

About transitioning to Waste-to-Energy (WtE) and Green Sovereignty, The "Baku Legacy" is evidenced by the shift toward WtE projects. With global oil demand growth slowing to 930 kb/d in 2026, both nations recognize that fossil fuel dominance is transitioning. The Joint Task Force has successfully implemented a Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model in three Indonesian provinces. This model utilizes Azerbaijani technical expertise to bypass local bureaucratic "bottlenecks," ensuring that Indonesia meets its COP29 carbon reduction targets without sacrificing economic growth. The analysis reveals that while there is growing adoption of these green concepts, the "Middle-Power Standard" created by Azerbaijan and Indonesia offers a unique regulatory framework. Unlike Western "Green Protectionism," this partnership focuses on technological transfer and local capacity building, allowing Indonesia to maintain its Bebas Aktif (Independent and Active) foreign policy while securing a sustainable energy future.

CONCLUSION

The study finds that Azerbaijan–Indonesia energy cooperation functions as a strategic hedge against the geopolitical turbulence of 2026 by leveraging infrastructure diplomacy to create a protective “buffer zone” for Indonesia’s domestic energy market, with the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline—one of the region’s most critical energy corridors for global supply—playing a central role in stabilizing supply and reducing fuel price volatility. It further demonstrates that the institutionalization of the “Baku Legacy” through a hybrid energy model, combining fossil fuel reliability with Waste-to-Energy (WtE) innovation via the Joint Task Force on Green Energy, enables middle powers to maintain economic sovereignty while preserving Indonesia’s Bebas Aktif foreign policy stance during a temporary window of favorable oil prices and supply normalization. Overall, the cooperation illustrates how timely infrastructure investments can secure energy resilience ahead of anticipated supply tightening in late 2026; however, future research should critically examine the long-term fiscal sustainability and dependency risks of the Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model, particularly in relation to Indonesia’s 2030 net-zero commitments and evolving global energy market constraints.

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