

## **Administrative Reform in Indonesia: How Far is The Citizens Online Complaints-Handling System (LAPOR!) About to Reach The Open Government Agenda?**

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### **Abstract**

*Indonesia is one of the most prominent countries that have a strong interest in implementing open government agendas. In 2011, the Indonesian government along with seven other country leaders took the initiative to form a global network movement called Open Government Partnership (OGP) as a platform in making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. To connect the international agendas with national bureaucratic reforms agenda, the Indonesian government also establish the movement called Open Government Indonesia (OGI). Under the national public complaints management system, LAPOR! was established as the flagship of the open government movement to encourage a "no wrong door policy" guaranteeing the right of the people to file any complaint to be channeled to the authorized public service provider. The purpose of this paper is to assess how far the LAPOR! is being implemented to support open government agenda. The topic will be analyzed using Governance approach, given that Open Government movement is a new and more efficient way of doing governance. Three main dimensions will be the main focus of the discussion, namely; public participation, collaboration, and transparency. This research is conducted by using a qualitative descriptive method. Data are collected through official documents or publications, and other various written sources including journals, news, articles related to the topic of discussion. The findings of this research reveal that the implementation of LAPOR! is still facing challenges. There are still some challenges that need to be addressed.*

**Keywords:** *collaboration, governance, public complaints, public participation, transparency,*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the democratized era, there is a strong need for the government to involve citizen participation in public services. The conventional model of "all about government " has been left and replaced by the new one that involves the cooperation (Tjiptoherijanto 2006) of all societies. This is marked by the

shifting paradigm, from "government" to "governance". While "government" refers to the legal authorities and coercive power, "governance" refers to a new direction for collective action. Along with the advancement of technology in this period, the utilization of ICT should be used wisely to support the involvement of citizen aspirations in the decision-making process. Therefore, public sector organizations are now

required to promote a democratic public service in order to create more effective governance.

The term "governance" means how governments and other social organization interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decision are taken in a complex world (Graham et al, 2003). Governance is the institutional capacity of public organizations to provide public and other goods demanded by a country's citizens or the representatives thereof in an effective, transparent, impartial, and accountable manner, subject to resource constraints (Katsamuka, 2000). While the outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government, it is rather a matter of a difference in processes (Stoker, 1998).

As the growing needs for many countries to promote better governance, public administrations around the world have widely embarked open government initiatives to redefine their relationship with citizens and with each other during the last few years (Gasco, 2015). Some of them have even joined efforts and have taken part in networks such as the Open Government Partnership, which is launched in 2011, to provide an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open,

accountable, and responsive to citizens (Gasco, 2015). The open government also can among other things be seen as a way to strengthen democracy through greater transparency, participation, and collaboration (Hansson, 2014). It is a new and more efficient way for governments to govern and for citizens to exercise their citizenship; it is a new and improved way of doing governance.

Indonesia is one of the most prominent countries that have a strong interest in implementing open government agendas. In 2011, the Indonesian government along with seven other country leaders took the initiative to form a global network movement called Open Government Partnership (OGP) as a platform in making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. To connect the international agendas with national open government reforms, the Indonesian government also establish the movement called Open Government Indonesia (OGI).

The Indonesia Open Government movement (OGI) is aimed at accelerating the achievement of national targets and priorities, by realizing a clean, effective, democratic, and reliable governance. It is a joint government movement and the acceleration of improving public services in Indonesia

as already mandated by Law no. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure (KIP) and Law no. 25 of 2009 on Public Service.

One of the most leading innovation programs that have been generated by the Indonesia open government movement is called LAPOR!. It is an integrated online complaint service which provides an easy-access platform for aspirations and complains. LAPOR! (means LAPOR! In English) was initiated by the Presidential Unit of Development Supervision and Control (UKP-PPP) in order to increase citizens participation in the policy-making process.

Under the national public complaints management system, LAPOR! was established to encourage a "no wrong door policy" guaranteeing the right of the people to file any complaint to be channeled to the authorized public service provider. People in Indonesia are now able to submit any aspiration or complaint reports on LAPOR! through various media including on its official website, SMS, and also mobile app whenever they wanted. The report is then verified in advance by the administrator and then forwarded to the relevant agency in order to solve.

The key feature that gives the public the ease to aspire, LAPOR! becomes

the pioneer of national integrated public complaints handling systems in Indonesia. At the international level, LAPOR! also known as one of the world's best initiatives presented at the Open Government Partnership Summit 2013 in London. With this kind of achievement, LAPOR! at least has been tested in the context of innovation to integrate various elements on improving public services by the open government initiatives.

Various studies have been conducted to explain the benefit of the program. Research conducted by Mahendra et. al, reveals that LAPOR! has now become a great hope that can make citizens happy because they get better public services based on their complaints by using an easy and rapid system (Mahendra, Pratiwi, & Prawesti, 2014). In line with that, Siregar et.al explained that at the national level, LAPOR! has established a system that handles citizens' complaints while supporting government agencies to increase their capacity. Their subnational cases reveal that the implementation and utilization of complaint-handling systems are only effective when used as part of efforts to enhance governance initiatives. (Siregar, Usmani, Kumaralalita, Nufaisa, & Putri, 2017)

On the other hand, LAPOR! also still have various shortcomings in order to create better public complaint handling. Research conducted by Public Interest Research and Advocacy Center (PIRAC) in 2014 reveals that a significant barrier in utilizing complaint-handling systems is the lack of civil society organizations and leaders pushing for openness and transparency in government (Siregar et al., 2017). To complement the existing discussion, this paper will analyze further about how LAPOR! is being implemented to support open government agenda. The topic will be analyzed using the Governance approach, given that the Open Government movement is a new and more efficient way of doing governance. Reminding that LAPOR! is the flagship program of the Open Government movement, and there are still shortcomings in its implementation, therefore, the results of this study will be very useful in providing the recommendation for future program improvement.

## **METHOD**

This research is conducted by using a qualitative descriptive method. Data are collected through official documents and publications that are accessible on

the official pages of the LAPOR! ([lapor.go.id](http://lapor.go.id) or [blog.lapor.go.id](http://blog.lapor.go.id)) and official pages of the Indonesian government open movement ([opengovindonesia.org](http://opengovindonesia.org)). In addition, data collection are also obtained through other various written sources including journals, articles, and also news related to the topic of discussion.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

This aspect will be analyzed through three stages ladder of participation maturity in e-government according to the United Nations. The first stage is giving information, which refers to the relationship between government and citizens. In this stage, there is a one-way relationship between government and citizens where government plays an active role in producing and disseminating information for use by citizens, such as through static fact websites, mobile application or SMS (Macintosh, 2004; OECD, 2013). In terms of applications and services, that enable users as "spectators" who can read the information in the context of complaint services. It also has the characteristics of the establishment of policies and national rules that accommodate the implementation of

media usage for purposes of participation and information disclosure.

In the context of the online complaint-handling system through LAPOR, it can be identified that there are features that support the provision of information to the public easily, simply, and quickly. Both standards and interactive media types that contain Web 2.0 has been adopted, such as social media-based and SMS-based services to the extent to which inputs, opinions and /or polling can be facilitated (Sadat, 2014). People can submit reports on LAPOR! through various media including on its official website, <https://www.lapor.go.id/>, SMS to 1708 and also the mobile app. With this feature, LAPOR not only enables users of "spectators" who can read the information in the context of complaint services but also provide space for the public to be able to interact in two directions with decision makers. This two-way interaction can be accessed effortlessly with a registered account in the LAPOR application.

A two-way interaction, as well as mentioned as one of the most significant characteristics in phase one of the e-participation maturity stages, means that government encourages active interaction from citizens in online discussions where government issues,

sets of questions, manages the processes and invites citizens to contribute their opinions. There are users who become critics and joiners, who also interact and take part with other users, review, comment and contribute something through the system. Considerable citizens feel that LAPOR! facilitates them to be actively involved in governmental activities and provides a good channel to connect with government.

With these key features, LAPOR! can be considered to have been in the second stage in the ladder of public participation, namely consultation. The service and application have been able to create community participation in certain topics in the policy-making process. Not only facilitating the complainer but also LAPOR! provides public forums (Mahendra, Pratiwi, & Prawesti, 2014). There is a menu that facilitates public forums called Policy Opinion. In this menu, people can give their opinions related to the topic of discussion. Various cases have been discussed in the menu, such as the implementation curriculum, national health insurance programs, etc.

In terms of applications and services, LAPOR! also periodically provides much information for people through the website, and some social media like

Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Twitter. This allows the public to be able to access the necessary information related to public complaints anytime and anywhere. In February 2018, LAPOR! has 190 subscribers, on Youtube, 6,148 followers on Instagram, 48,300 followers on Twitter, and 10,185 likes on Facebook. When compared to the total population of Indonesia of 262 million people, maybe this statistic might look like an unimpressive number. Indeed, this identifies that there is still widespread dissemination of information. But in, LAPOR! itself has grown rapidly.

From its establishment in 2011, LAPOR! has grown rapidly from the statistic published in April 2015, there are 292,547 registered users of LAPOR!, with the average 821 reports per day (Izzati, 2016). There are thousands of new users registered in LAPOR! every month (Pengelola LAPOR!, 2017). On December 2017, the number of reports coming in LAPOR! reached 5923 reports. In the following month, the number increased to 6717 reports. This number is certainly very promising considering that social media users in Indonesia continue to increase every year. Demographically, the majority of reporters came from Central Java Province with 649 reports, followed by West Java Provinces with 545 reports,

and DKI Jakarta with 502 reports. Based on statistics, the number of reports spread is still uneven from all regions in Indonesia.

As per February 2018, most LAPOR! service users are coming from Java Island with a total of 1,605 reports from all province. These numbers are very large when compared to other regions, especially regions in eastern Indonesia. Other regions such as provinces on Sumatera Islands have a total of 523 reports, whilst provinces on Kalimantan Island that only reached a total of 196 reports. At the same time, provinces on Sulawesi have only a total of 156 reports, whilst provinces of Nusa Tenggara only have a total of 72 reports. The fewest reports came from Papua provinces, which only reached a total of 15 reports.

In terms of policy and regulations, as in the consultation phase, LAPOR has a strong legal basis as the national pioneer of integrated online complaints handling system that is aimed at improving public participation. This is an important matter that guarantees a two-way interaction between the government and a citizen. With adequate policies, regulations, legislation, and guidelines set to support LAPOR! implementation, open

communication will be more easily accommodated by the government.

### **Transparency**

Transparency means open, easy and accessible to all parties in need and provided adequately and easily understood. A transparent government, that is, a government that is accountable and that delivers information to its citizens about its strategies, plans, and performance. The nature and scope of transparency include the usefulness of the information and the timing of the release of documents. The premise underlying these studies is that of transparency yields to accountability (Gasco, 2015).

LAPOR! provides the space of transparency and interaction to oversee the entire report. In this case, ICT utilization is carried out to encourage transparency in public complaints-handling. Citizen is able to submit reports on LAPOR! through various media including on its official website, <https://www.lapor.go.id/>, SMS to 1708 and also the mobile app. The report is then verified in advance by the LAPOR! administrator for clarity and completeness, and then forwarded to the relevant agency no later than 3 working days after reporting. LAPOR!

will publish every report that has been forwarded while notifying the complainant. The relevant agency is given no later than 5 working days to conduct internal coordination and follow-up formulation. If there is a follow-up formula, the agency shall inform the reporter on the follow-up page of the complainant. Closure of the reports is deemed complete if there has been a follow up from the agency on the report, and has been running 10 working days after the follow-up is done without any reply from the complainant or the reporting administrator of LAPOR! on the follow-up page.

Besides reporting the progress of the report status to the reporters, LAPOR! also provides information that is open to the public regarding overall complaint statistics. There are various documents that can be downloaded on the official webpage, such as monthly and weekly reports, legal bases, research publications, press conferences and various reporting activities that can be accessed and downloaded on the official website. By regularly publishing the complaints handling process, transparency in managing public complaints has been carried out through LAPOR!. It is a one way of improving public services in building a transparent, participatory, and

accountable public service system, as well as an increasing public trust

### **Collaboration**

Until January 2018, LAPOR! has been integrated with 34 ministries, 24 provinces, 94 regencies, 33 municipal government, 149 local government, 128 states and Kopertis, 116 BUMN, and 131 RI Representative overseas. This is a distinct achievement because Indonesia has never before had a community complaint handling platform that is connected with various stakeholders. Of course, this should facilitate the handling of complaints. However, until now there are still problems in the settlement of complaints. In fact, the performance response of LAPOR! is still hampered by the high number of complaints that have not been resolved or have not received a response from the relevant agencies. The management board of LAPOR! admit that until now, they still face some difficulties when it comes to the follow-up stage (Izzati, 2016). A number of the existing studies has revealed that low responsiveness seems to be the main issue in the implementation of LAPOR! (Abdillah, Nurajijah, & Nawawi, 2016; Izzati, 2016; Sadat, 2014b; Siregar, Usmani, Kumaralalita, Nufaisa, & Putri,

2017). People often get disappointed because of the lack of response given by the authorized institutions to solve the problems they report. And it also takes a long time to get a response to the problem that was complained. There is even citizen who got an undesirable outcome, such as being mistreated by the related institution due to being a whistleblower (Sadat, 2014b).

As per February 2018, the percentage of completed report is about 11.76%. Another 11.6% is the approved ones, while 19.4% is the stage of no follow-up at all. The other 15,32% is still on the process, and the rest 35.95% is the deleted ones because they do not meet the standards. In this case, the minimum number of reports resolved certainly has an impact on overall complaints handling performance. A shared willingness is needed so that the public complaints handling can be carried out thoroughly.

The low level of response from other agencies in resolving complaints is certainly beyond the authority of LAPOR. In handling complaints, LAPOR is only tasked with providing an accessible platform to accommodate complaints or problems, channel complaints to other authorized institutions, follow up on follow-up complaints handling, and encourage other agencies to respond



more quickly. The LAPOR administrator does not have the authority to order other agencies to respond or resolve problems. There is a need for a strong commitment to cooperation with other agencies in handling a public complaint. This obviously may affect service quality, user satisfaction, and even overall participation. As evidence, the complaint on public services is still high, the response of agencies has still complained, some citizens argue that LAPOR! is still not a good solution for the need to be heard and consulted in governmental matters

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the three dimensions of governance, the implementation of LAPOR! is still at a moderate success. In the aspect of public participation, LAPOR! is still at the consultation phase, which characterizes by the enablement of two-way interactions between citizen and decision maker related to the policy-making process. There are users who become critics and joiners, who also interact and take part with other users, review, comment and contribute something through the system. In terms of policy and regulations, as in the consultation phase, LAPOR has a

strong legal basis as the national pioneer of integrated online complaints handling system that is aimed at improving public participation. This is an important matter that guarantees a two-way interaction between the government and a citizen.

In the aspect of transparency, it is identified that LAPOR! has realized the transparency aspect in its management well. Periodically, LAPOR! make statistics as a report to the community so that the handling of community complaints is managed transparently to build public trust. There are various documents that can be downloaded on the page, such as monthly and weekly reports, legal bases, research publications, press conferences, and various reporting activities! others. LAPOR! also played an important role in receiving and distributing and following up on community complaints regarding the performance of public services. LAPOR! will also provide a report on the complaint status of the community whether it is completed, in the processor have not received a response from the relevant agencies.

While on the collaboration aspect, low responsiveness seems to be the main issue that can lead to problems in stakeholder collaboration in handling complaints. This may affect the overall

service quality, user satisfaction, and event overall participation. As evidence, the complaint on public services is still high, the response of agencies has still complained, some citizens argue that LAPOR! is still not a good solution for the need to be heard and consulted in governmental matters.

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