

Implementation of Good Governance in Reporting Financial Accountability Letter of Bawaslu North Sumatra

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the implementation of the principles of good governance in the reporting of the 2024 Election Financial Accountability Letter (SPJ) by the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) of North Sumatra Province. The main focus of the study includes the extent to which the principles of transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, and rule of law have been applied in the SPJ reporting process. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method, data collection is carried out through in-depth interviews, documentation, and observation of reporting practices in the Bawaslu environment. The results showed that Bawaslu North Sumatra Province has tried to meet good governance standards, especially in the aspects of accountability and transparency through the use of a digital reporting system and the preparation of documents in accordance with the provisions. However, there are still some obstacles such as limited human resources, lack of technical training, and suboptimal public participation. This research recommends strengthening technical regulations, increasing human resource capacity, and involving civil society as strategies to strengthen accountability and transparency in the financial management of future elections.

Keywords: good governance, financial statements, Bawaslu, accountability, transparency.

1. Introduction

General elections (elections) are the main pillar in a democratic system that serves as a means of people's participation in determining the direction of government. To organize elections that are honest, fair and have integrity, a large amount of state budget support is required. Therefore, the management and reporting of election budgets must be carried out in a transparent and accountable manner in order to be accountable to the public.

One form of financial accountability in elections is through the preparation of financial accountability reports (SPJ) by organizing institutions, including the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu). SPJ is not only administrative evidence, but also an instrument of public accountability that reflects the integrity and professionalism of the institution in managing public funds. SPJ reporting in accordance with the principles of good governance includes aspects of transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, and the rule of law.

Bawaslu as an election supervisory institution has a strategic role not only in ensuring honest and fair elections, but also in maintaining the integrity of financial management related to its duties and functions. In the midst of the complexity of the 2024 Election, it is important to evaluate the extent to which Bawaslu North Sumatra Province has applied the principles of good governance in reporting financial SPJ. This is important to assess the

effectiveness of the existing reporting system, as well as to identify challenges and opportunities in strengthening public accountability at the regional level.

Inaccuracies in the preparation and reporting of SPJ can have an impact on weak public trust and potentially lead to budget misuse (Law No. 17 of 2003). In the context of election supervision, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) not only has the task of overseeing the election stages, but also plays an important role in ensuring that the management of the budget used in election supervision is carried out in accordance with the principles of good state financial governance. Bawaslu Regulation No. 5 of 2022 explicitly authorizes Bawaslu to oversee the implementation of elections, including the use and reporting of budgets by related parties (Perbawaslu No. 5 of 2022).

The principles of good governance are an important framework in realizing clean, accountable and efficient financial governance. These principles include transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and law enforcement (UNDP, 2005). Two key principles that are relevant in the context of the reporting of election financial accounts are transparency, which is openness in the management and delivery of financial information to the public, and accountability, which is clarity of responsibility for every expenditure and activity financed by the state.

However, in practice, the implementation of good governance principles in the reporting of election finance SPJ by Bawaslu still faces a number of challenges. Among these are limited human resources, the lack of an integrated technology-based reporting system, and the lack of public participation in the monitoring process. This shows the need to evaluate and strengthen the financial reporting system to be more in line with good governance standards. Based on this background, this study aims to examine the implementation of good governance principles in the reporting of the 2024 Election financial report by the Election Supervisory Agency of North Sumatra Province. The focus of the analysis includes the suitability of regulations, technical reporting procedures, and the involvement of related Apparatus in the process of reporting and supervising the election budget.

2. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. The purpose of this approach is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of good governance principles in the process of reporting the 2024 election financial accountability letter (SPJ) by the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) of North Sumatra Province. This method is appropriate because the main focus is not on hypothesis testing, but rather on the description and interpretation of complex socio-political phenomena (Moleong, L. J., 2017).

The theory of good governance is the main conceptual basis. According to UNDP, good governance includes the principles of transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness and rule of law (UNDP, 1997). In the context of public financial reporting, the theory of public accountability is also used. This theory states that public institutions, including electoral management and oversight bodies, have a moral and administrative responsibility to explain and account for any use of public funds to the public. By combining these two theories, this study assesses the extent to which the reporting of the 2024 election financial statements by the Election Supervisory Body of North Sumatra Province fulfills the principles of good governance and public accountability.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Conformity of SPJ Reporting Practices with Transparency and Accountability Principles

The reporting of financial accountability reports (SPJ) in the organization of elections is a concrete manifestation of the implementation of the principles of good governance, especially transparency and accountability. In practice, this conformity can be seen from the aspects of regulations, procedures, and technical implementation adopted by election management institutions such as Bawaslu.

Transparency refers to openness in decision-making processes and the availability of information that is accessible to the public. In the context of SPJ, transparency is reflected in:

- a) Periodic publication of election financial reports, both through the institution's official website and reports to the DPR, BPK, and the public (Law No. 14/2008)
- b) Preparation of SPJ supported by real transaction evidence, such as receipts, attendance lists, duty letters, and other supporting documents that are open to audit (BPK, 2020).
- c) Implementation of information technology-based reporting systems, such as Bawaslu's use of the e-SPJ application, which improves accessibility and efficiency in financial reporting.

Accountability is the obligation of public agencies to explain and account for their actions, use of funds, and performance results to stakeholders. In the practice of reporting SPJ Election, accountability is reflected in:

- a. Financial management standards based on laws and regulations, such as Law No. 17 of 2003 concerning State Finance and Bawaslu Regulation No. 2 of 2017.
- b. A regular examination by the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) of the Election Financial Statements submitted by Bawaslu and KPU, which contains findings, recommendations, and sanctions if there are discrepancies.
- c. Personal and institutional responsibility, where financial management officials are responsible for the correctness and completeness of SPJ documents, in accordance with the principle of responsibility center in public sector accounting (Mardiasmo, 2009).

Despite the legal framework and technical mechanisms that support transparency and accountability, the implementation of SPJ reporting on the ground still faces a number of challenges, such as:

- a. Differences in technical understanding between the center and regions in preparing SPJ.
- b. Lack of competent human resources in public financial governance in some regions.
- c. Delays in submitting reports and supporting documents, which hampers the audit and supervision process.

However, the results of the BPK evaluation show that most election management entities have shown significant improvements in financial management and reporting in the 2019 Election compared to previous years, especially in terms of adherence to procedures. With a supporting legal framework, a standardized reporting system, and tiered supervision, the practice of SPJ reporting by Bawaslu shows real efforts towards implementing transparency and accountability. Although there is still room for improvement, the current policy direction and implementation mechanism are quite in accordance with the spirit of good governance.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with a number of structural officials and financial reporting staff at Bawaslu North Sumatra Province, it was found that in general the SPJ reporting mechanism had referred to the technical guidelines set by Bawaslu RI. The use of digital-based financial reporting application systems such as SIPOI and SIPJ shows efforts to increase transparency and accountability. All financial transactions are well recorded and documented, and can be traced by auditors and internal supervisors of regional Bawaslu (Interview Results).

However, obstacles were still found in the consistency of reporting implementation at the district/city level. Some implementers in the regions admitted that they had difficulty understanding the changing regulations and limited human resources in operating the digital reporting system to the fullest. This shows that the application of the principle of transparency has not been fully equitable at all levels of the North Sumatra Bawaslu's institutional structure.

In addition, periodic financial reporting is not fully socialized to the public. Although reports are prepared in a standardized format, not all reports are openly published in the institution's official media, limiting the space for public participation and control.

3.2 Participation and Responsiveness in the Election 2024 Financial Statement Reporting Process

In the context of reporting the Election Financial Accountability Letter (SPJ), good governance principles such as participation and responsiveness become an important foundation in creating transparent, accountable, and public interest-oriented financial governance. Bawaslu as an election supervisory institution plays a strategic role, not only in overseeing the election process in general, but also in ensuring that financial management and reporting are carried out in accordance with the principles of good governance.

The principle of participation requires the active involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society, media, academics, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in various stages of public financial management, from planning, implementation, to reporting. In practice, public participation in SPJ reporting by Bawaslu is still relatively low. Although there are several initiatives such as community involvement in monitoring campaign funds and information disclosure through Bawaslu's official website, the space for participation in evaluating and verifying SPJ reports is still limited and not well structured (Bawaslu RI, 2020). One form of participation that has begun to be

implemented is the submission of complaints or aspirations from the public against alleged irregularities in the election budget.

However, this mechanism has not been supported by an effective and responsive system in following up public reports, especially at the regional level. In addition, limited financial literacy among the public is also an obstacle in encouraging active public participation in assessing Bawaslu's SPJ report (Fitriani, 2021).

On the other hand, the principle of responsiveness refers to the extent to which the institution is able to respond to the needs, complaints, and input from the public quickly and accurately. In this case, Bawaslu has demonstrated a commitment to become a responsive institution through the development of an information technology-based financial reporting system, such as the use of the e-SPJ application. This system simplifies the reporting process, speeds up response time, and provides easy access for the public to monitor the institution's financial reporting.

Bawaslu's responsiveness is also reflected in policy evaluations and updates based on the results of internal audits and recommendations from external oversight institutions such as the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK). For example, after the findings of discrepancies in budget management in the previous elections, Bawaslu revised the financial reporting guidelines and increased the capacity of human resources through technical training in the regions (BPK RI, 2020). However, this responsiveness still faces challenges in its implementation, especially at the provincial and district/city levels. Budget constraints, limited competent personnel in the field of financial administration, and the slow handling of complaints from the public are indicators that the principle of responsiveness has not been fully internalized in the work culture of institutions at all levels.

Therefore, to optimize the implementation of the principles of participation and responsiveness in the reporting of election finance SPJ, Bawaslu needs to make a number of improvements. Among these are increasing public literacy regarding election finance supervision, building interactive communication channels that are more open to the public, and strengthening institutional capacity at the regional level to be able to respond to reports and input quickly and accurately. Thus, the implementation of the principles of participation and responsiveness not only strengthens Bawaslu's legitimacy as a professional and integrity supervisory institution, but also becomes a strategic step in creating transparent and accountable election finance governance before the public.

The principles of participation and responsiveness play an important role in ensuring the sustainable implementation of good governance, particularly in the context of transparent and accountable public budget management. Participation refers to the involvement of various parties in decision-making and monitoring processes, while responsiveness relates to the ability of public institutions to respond to the needs and aspirations of the community and ensure compliance with established procedures.

In the context of the reporting of the Election Financial Accountability Letter (SPJ) by Bawaslu North Sumatra Province, participation can be seen in two dimensions: internal participation and external participation. Internal participation includes the involvement of all Bawaslu work units at the provincial and district/city levels in the

process of planning, implementing and reporting on budget use. Each work unit in Bawaslu is required to input budget and realization data into the Accountability Information System (SIPJ) which is integrated with the central Bawaslu. This provides space for all parties involved to actively participate in budget monitoring from the beginning to the end of election activities (Technical Report of Bawaslu North Sumatra Province, 2024).

Meanwhile, external participation includes the involvement of civil society, the media, and audit institutions in monitoring and providing input on budget use. Bawaslu North Sumatra Province routinely organizes public forums and coordination meetings with external stakeholders such as the General Election Commission (KPU), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the media to discuss issues related to transparency and accountability in the use of the election budget. This initiative aims to open access to information as widely as possible to the public and strengthen community participation in election monitoring.

Bawaslu's responsiveness can be seen from how this institution responds to any problems or findings that arise in reporting the use of the budget. Every SPJ report received by the central Bawaslu will be followed up with an in-depth evaluation to ensure that the use of funds is in accordance with applicable regulations. The audit and internal supervision teams work together to respond to reports or complaints from the public regarding alleged misuse of the budget. In addition, Bawaslu also has a mechanism to respond to suggestions and criticisms provided by external stakeholders, both through formal and non-formal channels (Bawaslu RI, 2024).

However, in implementing participation and responsiveness, there are several challenges that still need to be improved. One of them is the limitation in disseminating information to the wider community, especially those in remote areas or less familiar with digital technology. Although Bawaslu has developed a SIPJ application that allows direct monitoring of budget use reports, not all levels of society or civil society organizations have sufficient access to be directly involved in such monitoring. Therefore, it is important for Bawaslu to expand information distribution methods, for example through local media or direct community outreach activities.

In addition, Bawaslu's level of responsiveness to the problems faced by work units in the regions also needs to be improved. Some work units at the district/city level still experience difficulties in accessing and utilizing the electronic reporting system effectively. This leads to delays in reporting which can reduce the accuracy and timeliness of the submission of election finance SPJs. Capacity building of human resources in the regions and regular training on the use of the reporting system is needed to overcome this.

To strengthen the implementation of the principles of participation and responsiveness in the reporting of election finance SPJ, Bawaslu needs to take the following steps: First, expanding access to information to the public, both through digital platforms and face-to-face meetings in the regions. Second, improve the technical capacity and understanding of work units in the regions on reporting procedures and the use of the SIPJ application. Third, strengthen relationships with the media and NGOs to create a broader external monitoring network. Fourth, introducing more effective

feedback mechanisms for the public to enable them to play a more active role in the election budget oversight process. As such, while there have been some initiatives that reflect the principles of participation and responsiveness, major challenges remain, particularly in improving access and engagement of all parties in SPJ reporting. As such, sustained efforts need to be made to optimize these two principles to ensure that the 2024 Election budget can be managed in a more transparent, accountable and responsive manner to the needs of the community.

3.2 Reporting Effectiveness and Efficiency

The effectiveness and efficiency of financial accountability reporting (SPJ) are two important aspects in realizing the principles of good governance, especially in the management of public budgets at the stages of organizing elections. Effectiveness is measured by the extent to which reporting objectives are achieved, both in terms of timeliness, accuracy of information, and the fulfillment of supporting documents in accordance with the provisions. Meanwhile, efficiency is related to the optimal use of resources (human, time, and costs) in the reporting process (Mardiasmo, 2018).

In the context of Bawaslu North Sumatra Province in the 2024 Election, the effectiveness of SPJ reporting showed relatively good achievements. Most work units at the district/city level were able to submit reports according to the deadline set by Bawaslu RI.

This is due to increased technical reporting capacity through tiered training since the end of 2023, as well as the use of digital reporting applications such as SIPJ (Accountability Information System) which is directly integrated with the central government.

However, the effectiveness of this reporting has not been fully equitable. There are still some districts/cities that experience delays in submitting reports due to technical constraints, such as limited internet access, device damage, and limited administrative staff who understand the reporting system. In some regions, the reporting operator concurrently performs other duties, resulting in less than optimal concentration on report preparation. This had an impact on the revision of reports and requests for clarification by the provincial Bawaslu and external auditors (North Sumatra Bawaslu 1st Quarterly SPJ Evaluation Report 2024).

In terms of efficiency, the administrative workload of SPJ reporting is quite high and takes up a lot of Bawaslu apparatus time, especially when approaching the end of the reporting period. The long bureaucratic process, starting from the preparation of supporting documents to internal verification, requires a lot of effort and time. Reliance on manual formats in several stages of reporting also adds to the workload, although digital systems have begun to be adopted. In addition, the absence of special budgeting for reporting team honorariums in some districts/cities has decreased work motivation, which has an impact on the quality of reporting.

Efficiency efforts are also hampered by the lack of standardization in reporting procedures between regions. For example, differences in perceptions regarding the format of documents proving activities and electronic signatures caused delays in

document collection. Therefore, in the future, more operational reporting guidelines are needed and responsive to field conditions, including the use of technology that can accelerate the document verification process and data integration between levels of Bawaslu's structure. Thus, the effectiveness of SPJ reporting by North Sumatra Bawaslu in the 2024 Election can be categorized as quite good, but its efficiency still needs to be improved through strengthening human resource capacity, simplifying the bureaucratic flow of reporting, and optimizing adaptive information technology systems.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the implementation of good governance principles in the reporting of the 2024 Election financial SPJ in Bawaslu North Sumatra Province, it can be concluded that the principles of good governance, especially transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness, have been implemented well, although there are still several challenges that need to be overcome to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of financial reporting.

The reporting of financial SPJ by Bawaslu North Sumatra Province has shown a good level of transparency through the use of financial information systems such as SIPJ which allows open and clear access to information to the public. In addition, accountability in reporting can be seen from the suitability of financial reports with applicable regulations, as well as Bawaslu's commitment to presenting valid and timely data. However, several obstacles related to the delivery of comprehensive information to the public still need to be improved.

Participation in financial reporting can be seen from the involvement of various parties, both internal Bawaslu and external, in the process of monitoring the use of the election budget. The community, media, and independent institutions play an active role in monitoring and providing input on the submitted financial reports. Bawaslu's responsiveness in responding to reporting constraints, as well as adaptation to the electronic reporting system, also shows a strong commitment to improving the quality of financial reporting. The Financial Management Information System (SIPJ) implemented by Bawaslu is one of the solutions to improve transparency, accountability and efficiency in financial reporting. SIPJ helps in facilitating the input, verification, and evaluation of financial reports at the provincial to district / city levels. Although there have been innovations, this system needs to be continuously updated to ensure that all data entered is in accordance with applicable regulations. Some of the obstacles faced in the implementation of SPJ financial reporting are limited human resources, lack of technical training related to the use of the system, and there are still obstacles in socializing to external parties regarding access and use of financial information. In addition, there are still challenges in increasing public awareness and participation in overseeing the use of the election budget. Overall, the implementation of good governance principles in the reporting of the Election 2024 financial SPJ in Bawaslu North Sumatra Province is quite good, but still requires further improvement and evaluation, especially related to increasing community and other stakeholder participation, as well as strengthening a more efficient and transparent financial reporting system.

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