

Riau Province's land and forest governance: The tendency of budget information transparency among Riau's 12 regencies

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Abstract: Information transparency is a basic principle of good governance that few studies in the literature have thoroughly examined. Riau Province in particular has a high record of land and forest conflicts that needs urgent response, yet environmental policies have mostly been scrutinized for its resource extraction and regulation aspects, not their aspect of information transparency. Low proactive disclosure of information from local governments is a recurring issue in Riau Province, so FITRA Riau initiated the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) to cover the Riau Province and 12 regencies/cities. To address this research gap of governmental public bodies' information transparency, this study conducted the novel substantive approach critical review to see the extent of local government's transparency regarding their budgeting for one of Riau's most prevalent issues, namely land and forest governance (TKHL). From March to September 2019, this study used a triangulation of data collected from information access tests, IKIP evaluation, and focus group discussion involving the Riau Information Commission, the Information Management and Documentation Officers (PPID) of the 12 regencies, and the Governor of Riau Province. After analyzing the four aspects of regulation, institution, budget, and TKHL information, results determined that the most open region in Riau Province is Indragiri Hulu, and the least open region is Kuantan Singingi. Information transparency is still limited in procedural terms, in which all regions have more or less fulfilled the administrative regulation demands but the substance of the public information across all aspects is too generic to truly inform the public of the regions' TKHL.

Keywords: information transparency; budget transparency; land and forest governance; Riau Province; 12 regencies/cities; Riau information commission

1. Introduction

Transparency is one of the basic principles of good governance. Information transparency is a necessity that must be carried out by public bodies. Exposing relevant technical information to the broadest extent encourages the increase of trust and participation of citizens in the planning and supervision of government policies (Raybould et al., 2020). The government commits to encourage public bodies to be open and actively examines policy-related matters (Komang Ariyanto, 2023; Yandra, Setiawan, et al., 2020; Yandra, Utami, et al., 2020). Public participation has also been regulated in detail through Government Regulation (PP) number 45 of 2017 concerning public participation in local governments (provincial/regency/city). Several aspects of participation are regulated in the regulation, such as participation in planning and budgeting, drafting of regulations, asset managers, and public

services. The primary key in increasing participation in all aspects of the PP is openness of information.

In the United States, Bearfield and Bowman (2017) found that the information disclosed by local governments was not affected by the size of cities. While local governments in large cities were spurred by political competition and local governments in small cities were spurred by available resources and administrative professionalism, US cities in general are more likely to publish information about their finance and budgeting. US municipalities are less likely to be transparent if their mayors are male, have a large number of consecutive terms in office and have less financial autonomy (Tavares and Cruz, 2017). In other developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Sweden and the Netherlands, Safarov (2019) indicates that government transparency and information openness may depend on the decentralization of government. The more decentralized, the government the increased likelihood of transparency with budget information. Sweden, with its highly decentralized government, has the longest history of transparency in governance, dating back to 1766. The Netherlands has two centuries in being transparent with their budget uses, showing the public that their control is limited to taxes despite having larger autonomy as a decentralized government. UK's freedom of information is only constitutionalized in 2000 and their local authorities are less decentralized and have neither constitutional protection nor autonomy to taxes, but UK has published nearly 40,000 datasets in the central data portal and prioritizes the improvement of data quality with the involvement of stakeholders and feedback mechanisms.

In the case of Indonesia's government, decentralized since the establishment of Law (UU) No. 22 in 1999, the local governments are obliged to provide public information services (Fitiawan and Nasiwan, 2023; Setiawan et al., 2018). In particular, UU No. 14 in 2018 regarding Public Information Disclosure (KIP) explicitly requires public bodies to provide public information services both requested and without being asked (proactive disclosure) to facilitate the community to attain the right of public information. UU KIP also provides guarantees to citizens of the right to public information which is a human right as regulated in article 28F of the 1945 Constitution of The Republic of Indonesia. In fact, it provides instruments for resolving public information disputes through the Information Commission (KI).

The problem lies in the fact that proactive disclosure of budget information by the local government in Riau Province is relatively low. There are many regions at the district/city level that provide scarce information on their budgeting on their government information websites. Community engagement can be observed and measured (Dharmiasih, 2020), but how can the local community effectively participate in the decision-making of land and forest governance if they are provided with the necessary information by official channels? Thus, Researcher the Indonesian Forum for Budget Transparency (FITRA) of Riau Province calls for a website-based approach to provide an instrument that pushes the realization of good governance based on budget planning, implementation, and reporting. With the status quo of hazardous environmental decline across Riau, low levels of government information distribution cannot remain a widespread issue, especially on crucial

matters involving land and forest governance (Cannon, 2020; Davis et al., 2018).

In Riau Province, Indonesia, a significant environmental crisis is evident through the extensive forest and land degradation, further complicated by corrupt practices and inadequate governmental reporting. This region, accounting for 50% of its land as forests, both for production and protection, and known as the “lungs of Indonesia,” faces intricate environmental challenges. These include an uncontrolled deforestation rate for 27 years, making Riau the province with the seventh-largest deforested area in Indonesia, with a staggering loss of 4,033,025 hectares by 2015. Moreover, Riau has been plagued by frequent forest and land fires, with 61,280 fire hotspots recorded from 2011 to 2018, affecting 17,035 hectares. The province also struggles with low implementation of social forestry, covering only 83,928.54 hectares, just 5.96% of the allocated 1,407,630 hectares. Compounding these issues are the challenges associated with the Hydrological Unity of Peat (KHG) due to industrial, forestry, and plantation activities, and problems stemming from mining, plantations, and land use conflicts. These complex environmental issues highlight the need for transparent forest and land governance in Riau, to facilitate public oversight and effective evaluation of governmental actions, especially in the proactive disclosure of budget information crucial for community involvement in environmental decision-making.

To measure the application of principles on public information disclosure by local government bodies, the Indonesia Center for Environmental Law (ICEL) and FITRA Riau initiated and implemented an instrument for measuring public information disclosure called the Public Information Disclosure Index (IKIP). This public information disclosure index is carried out in Riau Province which covers both the province and 12 regencies/cities in Riau. This study aims to assess the extent to which information disclosure practices are carried out by local government bodies. It based on the main assessment components, namely the regulation of information carried out by the Information Management and Documentation Officers (PPID), as well as the substantive part of the information which includes the budget and information services that relate to forest governance and land.

In addition to the institutional assessment, which is an administrative evaluation of the development of information service systems, the IKIP instrument also uses direct testing of some information relating to budgets of Land and Forest Governance (In Indonesian: Tata Kelola Hutan dan Lahan/TKHL). The instrument assesses the extent to which the public can access information services in the land and forest sectors. Budget information follows statutory provisions that declare them open, and which are strengthened by the decisions of an information commission. While TKHL information is a strategic issue in Riau, further attention is needed to improve governance, one of which is to encourage disclosure in the sector.

To date, few studies gauge public opinion’s impact on public policies (Agustina et al., 2023; Burstein, 2020), and even fewer try to determine the public’s engagement on certain policies quantitatively. This current study bridges this gap by critically reviewing the transparency and openness of a certain public policy (the forest moratorium) of forest and land governance. This research is intended to provide crucial input to local governments, especially in Riau Province and the Riau Information Commission in improving the performance of information disclosure.

Specifically for the Information Commission, this study provides additional context regarding the measurement of performance on regional information disclosure as measured by administrative approaches and assessment methods with access to more substantive information.

2. Theory/calculation

Forests and land are very important entities in the sustainability of human life for the realization of a disaster-free environment. Therefore, forest governance must be open to actual and factual budget information. According to Kristiansen (2006), it is further stated that Government Budget Transparency in its management needs to pay attention to, namely: (1) availability and access to documents; (2) process openness; (3) regulatory framework; (4) clarity and completeness of Information. If the theory is implemented with a good purpose, then of course it will not be a problem, because forest and land budget management can be implemented openly. However, in the context of this research, the application of the budget transparency theory can also illustrate the low political will of the government in implementing budget openness so that transparency tends to be seen as a slogan but in practice it does not, even though regional heads with “power” in public bodies should have a strong commitment to realize transparency as a principle of good local governance. To create a budget transparency system for forest and land governance (TKHL) that can barricade and justify the reluctance of local governments, civil society support is very important. This is relevant to the opinion of Sedmihradská (2015) on how budget policies are fragmented so that commitments to transparency in the form of policy statements have no impact. Ott et al. (2019) stated that it is necessary to motivate citizens to demand local governments to offer greater budget transparency, such as sharing of document information, access, mechanisms, and other budget rules, which are still considered something that needs to be kept secret.

Critical examination of TKHL’s performance is very rarely studied scientifically because it is still considered taboo and “risky” to be discussed, especially with the phenomenon of a very strong oligarchic system in the leadership structure of public bodies (Suci et al., 2020). Government officials must be willing to openly and honestly provide information needed by the public, namely the availability of adequate information in every process of drafting and implementing public policies as well as access to information that is ready, easily accessible, freely obtained and on time (Solihin, 2021). However, the budget management system adopted by the majority of local public bodies, especially in forest and land governance, is very ineffective. Thus, a closed system occurs as the group that runs the system is still covered by the distorted authority of one another in a higher public body. Land and Forest Governance (TKHL) was only appointed in the research literature in 2011. That is when the Indonesian government gave Presidential Instruction Number 10/2011 concerning the postponement of new licenses and improvements in the management of primary natural forests and peatlands as a form of cooperation between Indonesia and Norway (Haeda et al., 2020).

The delay in granting the permit was revised in Indonesian Presidential Instruction No. 6/2013 concerning Postponement of Granting of New Permits and

Improving Governance of Primary Natural Forests and Peatlands (Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 6 Tahun 2013 Tentang Penundaan Pemberian Izin Baru Dan Penyempurnaan Tata Kelola Hutan Alam Primer Dan Lahan Gambut, 2013). Rahman et al. (2013) later studied the Land and Forest Governance Index (LFGI) which ICEL and FITRA was intended as a “tool to measure district and forest governance in detail and specifically, diagnosing the most important deficiencies to be addressed, and compare between regions so that exemplary practice can be an example. This index can also be done in the following years to measure the development of TKHL for each district’. Over time, it turns out that TKHL is more popular with the community as a “forest moratorium” (Affif and Ibie, 2011). According to Prayitno et al. (2013), the delay or moratorium was done due to industrial activities that damage long-term ecology. Thus, to be able to design mitigation scenarios for environmental issues such as climate change, FITRA Riau analyses the land and forest sector budget. There is also a FITRA policy that focuses on the forestry, mining and plantation sectors which have an extensive link to the TKHL issue.

To oversee the TKHL budget, Setapak which is funded by the United Kingdom Climate Change Unit (UKCCU) also conducts a TKHL study that has a priority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Indonesia (Prayitno et al., 2013). However, Arizona (2013) found that the law relating to forestry has internal inconsistencies and still maintains old forestry assumptions and conceptions that are not in line with the spirit of the times that prioritizes human rights. However, advanced changes are indeed being planned and implemented, such as the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) strategy that implements natural resource management in five areas, including TKHL (Ginoga et al., 2012; Wibowo et al., 2013; Wicaksono and Yurista, 2013). Policies on natural resource management or land and forest governance, as a form of state recognition of community rights and access, continue to be rolled out even though it is still not perfect (Yuntho et al., 2013).

Then, Santosa and Quina (2014) wrote TKHL as a reform movement in a democratic country. The possibility of this renewal is in line for to subsidence or land surface movement on peatlands (Kurnain, 2014). According to Wahyunto and Dariah (2014), land degradation in Indonesia and the situation where Indonesia does not have a definition yet, mapping methodology, and integrated degraded land management policies are a big incentive to make a One Map Policy Movement, which is a reference, one database, one procedure/protocol, and one geoportal. The policy can likely bridge the relationship between service quality and forest management (Ruyen et al., 2014), and all parties have strong incentives due to worsening climate change (Hendrati and Hadiyan, 2014). Unfortunately, the fact is that the policy of delaying the issuance of new licenses and improving the management of primary natural forests and peatlands does not reduce the number of new licenses issued during the moratorium period enacted (Muhdar, 2015; Muhdar et al., 2015). It can be proven by the continued issuance of industrial plantation forest permits, permits for lease-to-use forest areas for mines, and the massive release of forest areas for plantations (Jaya et al., 2015).

Because of this, transparency in land and forest management by the government

and related parties is needed so that individuals in the community can see and become more involved in TKHL (Winata and Sinaga, 2019), especially non-governmental organizations (Ardhian et al., 2016). Systematic monitoring and evaluation are needed to measure the performance of TKHL policies, including REDD+ strategies (Berliani et al., 2016; Mardiyah and Tarmizi, 2016). Internal supervision must be strengthened (Rama and Amin, 2017; Tohom, 2016) to prevent environmental crime efforts (Suryadi et al., 2017).

In the last five years, TKHL has become a topic that is raised by researchers who focus on particular regions because of the lack of understanding from the Regional Government (executive and legislative) about the importance of the global environment. Suryadi et al. (2017) in Sumatra, Herawati (2017) in Kalimantan, and Hadiyan et al. (2017) on both islands. In Riau Province, there were Rama and Amin (2017) and Pratama (2020), while Sanudin et al. (2016) examined TKHL in Lampung Province. Eryan (2020) in South Sulawesi, Roslinda et al. (2020) in Pontianak. Of course, the existence of minimal literature does not reflect the reality of local government efforts in TKHL. Documentation is still necessary and must be done to achieve policy transparency. Thus, this study contributes by conducting a critical review of the TKHL budget issue.

3. Material and method

3.1. Study Site and materials

This study aims to critically review the transparency of the government's budget information regarding the land and forest governance (TKHL), specifically assessing Riau Province and its 12 regencies/cities' compliance with the obligations stipulated in the Law of Public Information Disclosure (KIP) Article 7. This study recruited at least one person from each regency/city to volunteer to act as Public Information Applicants and other communities from every area to try to access the information. The researchers and all volunteers conducted an information access test from March to May 2019 (three months), which tries to find and access all regencies' official budget information service websites.

3.2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing both ordinal and nominal measurement scales. Data collected are systematically categorized and classified, either in equivalent or distinct positional categories, thus establishing interrelatedness among them. The primary emphasis of budget measurement lies in assessing information accessibility and transparency aspects (Kristiansen et al., 2009; Nugraheni and Khaerunisa, 2016). The researchers adopt the Likert scale approach (Joshi et al., 2015; Muna et al., 2023) to evaluate the tendencies of the Riau provincial government towards budget openness in the context of forest and land governance. The assessment of transparency is conducted based on the four dimensions of ideal budget transparency as identified by Kristiansen (2006). These dimensions include the regulatory framework guaranteeing transparency, the availability and accessibility of budget information, the clarity and

comprehensiveness of this information, and the openness of the budgetary process. The data collection process encompasses three stages. The first stage involves conducting in-depth interviews aimed at gathering both secondary and primary data pertinent to the institutional facets of public information service provision in public bodies. The research primarily focuses on the Riau Provincial Government and 12 Districts and Cities within Riau. The second stage entails Tracking of Official Government Websites. This method examines the extent to which public bodies, specifically Local Governments, proactively disseminate information via web-based media in Riau Province and its 12 constituent Districts and Cities, all of which possess dedicated websites for local government information dissemination. The third stage, the Information Access Test, measures the efficacy of public information services, particularly focusing on the availability and assimilation of budget and environmental management information at the local level. Researchers implement this access test in accordance with the Public Information Disclosure Law (UU KIP), by directly requesting information that forms the core of the IKIP measurement and which is not available through website tracking results.

3.3. Analysis

Following Kristiansen's (2006) four criteria of information openness, this study first evaluated the regulation aspect by seeing whether each regency/city have a website and whether they contain five key information that must be published as per Pemandagri Number 1 of 2017 about Guidelines for Public Information Services within the Ministry of Home Affairs. These are (1) Information Management and Documentation Organizational Structure; (2) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for public information services, SOP for resolving information disputes, SOP for Information Consequence Testing, SOP for Compiling Public Information Lists (DIP), SOP for handling Objections to Public Information; (3) Public Information Service Room (RPID); (4) Documentation Information Service System (SPID) which is, in this case, the availability of a special website used to publish information; (5) Information and Documentation Service Report.

Second, the study evaluated the institutional aspect using three indicators, namely infrastructure, information services and information management. The first indicator, infrastructure, is the extent to which the government are committed to meeting, developing and innovating facilities and the infrastructure supporting public information services, which can be measured from the availability of the following things: Letter of Statement (Surat Keterangan/SK) PPID, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), SK DIP, PPID website, Perbup/Pergub regarding Information Service Guidelines, Easy-to-access Information Room and Special Information Services Officer. The second indicator, information services, is how information services are carried out to the public information applicants. This indicator can be measured from the availability of the following things: Special Receipt Sheet, Requests are responded by letter/telephone, Timeliness of Request Services (1–10 days), Electronic Information Request Services, published Public Information Waiter Reports, SK DIP which is published on the website and SOPs published on the website. The third indicator, information management, is the PPID's activity in

managing public information which includes storing, documenting and publishing information. This indicator can be measured from how PPID: conducts Information Storage and Documentation Activities from PPID Assistants, documents all information in the form of Local Government Organization (Organisasi Pemerintah Daerah/OPD) contained in DIP, provides Information in the form of Soft Copy by PPID, and publishes information to the website.

Each indicator had different weights: infrastructure (weight: 40), information services (weight: 40) and information management (weight: 20). To obtain the index on this aspect, the formula is:

$$X = (0.4 \times A) + (0.4 \times B) + (0.4 \times C) \tag{1}$$

Equation (1):

- X: Index of Institutional Aspect;
- A: Infrastructure Indicator Score;
- B: Information Service Indicator Score;
- C: Information Management Indicator Score.

Third, this study measured the budget aspect by the amount of information that includes planning, implementing and reporting budget accountability documents. The value is divided into five categories: 100 means the PPID is highly proactive in giving information on the budget, 85 means information is provided within 10 working days, 75 means information is provided after 10–17 working days, 50 means information is given after objection, and less than 50 means the information is lacking.

$$Y = \frac{\Sigma Total Score}{Number\ of\ accessed\ information} \tag{2}$$

Equation (2):

- Y: Index of Budget Aspect.

Fourth, this study measures the availability and accessibility of land and forest governance (TKHL) information by the amount of information that covers the planning, implementing and reporting budget accountability of TKHL documents. The value is divided into five categories: 100 means the PPID is highly proactive in giving information on the budget of TKHL, 85 means information is provided within 10 working days, 75 means information is provided after 10–17 working days, 50 means information is given after objection, and less than 50 means the information is lacking.

$$Z = \frac{\Sigma Total Score}{Number\ of\ accessed\ information} \tag{3}$$

Equation (3):

- Z : Index of Land and Forest Governance Aspect.

The final value of the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) instrument was gathered from calculating the composite value of three aspects, e.g., Institutional aspect (weight: 30), budget aspect (weight: 35) and TKHL aspect (weight: 35). The regulation aspect is not calculated with a formula, but evaluated by seeing whether or not the necessary information exists and is accessible.

$$IKIP = (0.3 \times X) + (0.35 \times Y) + (0.35 \times Z) \tag{4}$$

Equation (4):

IKIP: Public Information Openness Index;

X: Institutional aspect (Result of Equation (1));

Y: Budget aspect (Result of Equation (2));

Z: TKHL aspect (Result of Equation (3)).

The value is divided into five categories: 0–20 means the IKIP is “not open”, 21–40 means “less open”, 41–60 means “fairly open”, and 61–80 means “open” and 80–100 means “very open” in being transparent with the information.

The results of the IKIP measurement are the substantive results gathered by the researchers and volunteers. These results are discussed and confirmed in the final step, the focus group discussion (FGD) which aims to see how far they fulfill their purpose as public bodies based on the provisions of Law 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure and as standardized by PERKI Number 1 of 2010 concerning Public Information Service Standards (SLIP). Conducted on 23 September 2019, the FGD involved the Governor of Riau Province, Syamsuar, M.Si., the Head of Riau’s Badan Pengelola Keuangan dan Aset Daerah (BPKAD) Service, Secretary of Riau’s Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (LHK) Service), and 12 Information Management and Documentation Officers (Pejabat Pengelola Informasi dan Dokumentasi/PPID) who represents their respective regencies in Riau Province, as well as other stakeholders. The FGD entitled Riau Open Government Forum discussed the performance of information disclosure in Riau Province from various perspectives. Starting from the perspective of the local government as a public body that is the locus of this research, down to the details that the information commission, academics and civil society are concerned with the issue of public information disclosure.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Result

In this study, the researchers, volunteer researchers and public information applicants worked together to try to access and request information regarding the budgeting of land and forest governance conducted in Riau Province and the 12 regencies/cities. The results are later explored through the focus group discussion session to provide an overall evaluation of the critical four aspects of budget transparency as developed by Kristiansen (2006), namely the regulation guaranteeing transparency, the availability and accessibility of information, the clarity and completeness of information, and the openness of the process.

4.1.1. Aspect of information’s regulation

This study found Riau Province and all the 12 regencies/cities have accessible websites maintained by their respective Information Management and Documentation Officers (**Table 1**).

As a means of publication and information services, the website is one of the media information that is often used by local governments in presenting information on public services. This study found only eight regions including Riau Province were equipped with a Governor or Regent Regulations on Guidelines for Public Information Services, while the other five regions are not yet equipped with regional

regulations at the level of regional.

Table 1. Links of PPID websites.

Areas	PPID Websites
Riau Province	https://ppid.riau.go.id/
Pekanbaru City	https://pekanbarukotappid.kpu.go.id/
Kab. Siak	https://ppid.siakkab.go.id/
Kab. Pelalawan	http://ppid.pelalawankab.go.id/
Kab. Kampar	https://ppid.kamparkab.go.id/
Kab. Bengkalis	https://ppid.bengkaliskab.go.id/
Dumai City	https://ppid.dumaikota.go.id/
Kab. Rokan Hilir	https://rokanhilirkabppid.kpu.go.id/
Kab. Rokan Hulu	https://ppid.rokanhulukab.go.id/
Kab. Kepulauan Meranti	http://ppid.merantikab.go.id/
Kab. Indragiri Hilir	https://ppid.inhilkab.go.id/
Kab. Indragiri Hulu	https://ppid.inhukab.go.id/
Kab. Kuantan Singingi	https://ppid.kuansing.go.id/

4.1.2. Aspect of information’s institution

Evaluation of PPID’s information infrastructure

In each website, the PPID stated their purpose in accordance with the Decree of the Governor/Regent of each area. As stipulated in the Permendagri Number 3 of 2017 concerning the Public Information List (DIP), PPID must also have special service rooms that makes up their infrastructure.

This study found that only six regions have “very good” infrastructure supporting information disclosure, namely Riau Province, Kab. Siak, Kab. Indragiri Hulu, Kab. Bengkalis, Kab. Indragiri Hilir and Pekanbaru City. Three regions have relatively low infrastructure values, namely Dumai City, Kab. Kampar and Kab. Rokan Hulu. These three regions also have missing DIP, including Kab. Kampar.

Evaluation of PPID’s information services

This study found that some regions have developed electronic-based information services as a means of requesting, but the websites do not provide or accelerate information services. Only 62% of areas have developed facilities that allows information requests through electronic systems, in which the public information applicants do not have to come to the service room. These areas are Riau Province, Kab. Siak, Kab. Indragiri Hulu, Kab. Bengkalis, Kab. Indragiri Hilir and Pekanbaru City. Some regions’ websites were found to not provide a direct channel for information, which includes Kab. Rokan Hulu, Kab. Rokan Hilir, Kab. Pelalawan and Kab. Kepulauan Meranti (38%).

In addition, only four areas, i.e., Riau Province, Kab. Indagiri Hulu, Kab. Bengkalis and Kab. Siak, have published PPID reports through their website information channels while the other eight regions have not published any reports. Some regions do not have good information services, such as not responding to the application letter submitted through either a reply letter or telephone. There are even

PPID who refuse requests for information with unclear reasons. Majority of PPID do not provide information to applicants within 10–17 working days, while only 2 PPIDs who responded and provided the requested information directly to the applicant within 10–17 working days.

Evaluation of PPID’s information management

The management of information means the act of proactively documenting, storing and publishing information via the website. Six regions were found to not have the initiative to publish information through the PPID website or any other official local government websites. The management of information that were carried out by other regions, on the other hand, is also far from adequate. PPID is still “weak” in storing and documenting information owned by the OPD. Archiving at the PPID regional level is “not good”, and as a result, not all PPID in regencies/cities have archived older information. Documenting seems to only be carried out at the time of handling requests. Furthermore, while most of the areas have the stipulated DIP, they do not archive all of the documents of each OPD. Only 3 areas have included information possessed by all OPDs in DIP, namely Kab. Kepulauan Meranti, Kab. Pelalawan, Kab. Indragiri Hulu. Meanwhile, all other areas only partially provided a Listed Public Information.

Values of institutional aspect’s three indicators

Figures 1 and 2 illustrated the values of each area in terms of the three indicators, i.e., infrastructure, services, and management according to Equation (1).

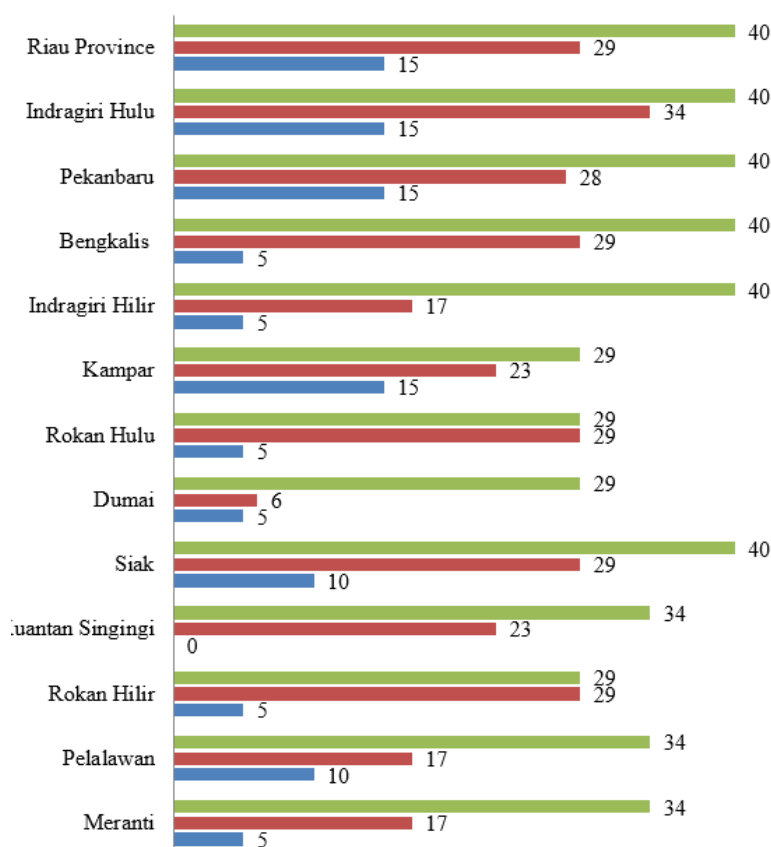


Figure 1. Scores of the three indicators of institutional aspect.

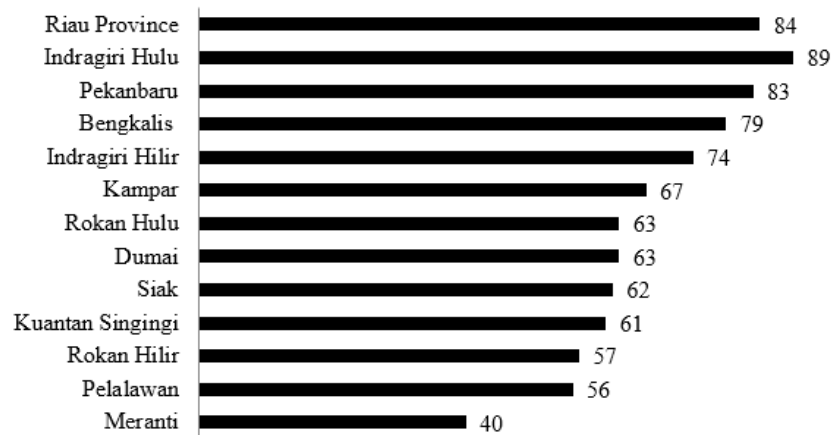


Figure 2. Institutional aspect of public information services.

In our exploration of the budget information transparency in Riau Province, we uncovered significant disparities across its districts. The Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) scores, a pivotal measure in our study, revealed a spectrum of transparency levels, with Kab. Indragiri Hulu standing out as the most transparent district with a score of 73.6. In stark contrast, Dumai City and the Riau Province were categorized as “less open”, indicating a more reserved approach in sharing budget information related to land and forest governance. This divergence was even more pronounced when considering the eight districts that were marked as “not open” at all. This gradient of transparency across the districts provides a compelling narrative about the varied approaches to governance and public information dissemination within the province.

Our analysis delves into the factors contributing to these varied levels of transparency. Administrative efficiency, technological infrastructure, and the degree of public demand for transparency appear to be key determinants. Districts with higher IKIP scores, like Kab. Indragiri Hulu, demonstrate a more robust infrastructure for information dissemination and a proactive stance in governance policies, reflecting a commitment to transparency and public engagement. In contrast, lower-scoring districts might be grappling with challenges in administrative processes or lack the necessary technological support to facilitate open information sharing. These findings align with broader national trends, highlighting regional disparities in governance transparency that are not unique to Riau Province but indicative of a larger pattern across the country.

The implications of these transparency levels for governance are profound. Districts with higher transparency are likely to benefit from more effective governance, as openness fosters accountability, public trust, and informed decision-making. This is crucial in the context of land and forest governance, where transparency can significantly impact resource management and policy implementation. Conversely, districts with lower transparency scores face the challenge of bridging the gap to improve governance quality. To this end, we recommend the adoption of more robust information technologies and proactive public engagement strategies in these districts. Additionally, policy reforms aimed at increasing administrative transparency and accountability are essential. Looking

ahead, further research is needed to directly link the impact of budget transparency on specific governance outcomes, and comparative studies with other provinces could offer valuable insights for policy and practice.

4.1.3. Aspect of PPID's budget

In terms of budget commitments, all areas have a budget allocated to finance the activities of carrying out public information services, such as PPID socialization, PPID management, and other forms of activity. This study tracked the website and directly requested the PPID to disclose their public budget information, and gathered 35 documents (**Table 2**).

Table 2. List of accessed budget information of PPID in Riau Province and 12 regencies/cities.

No	Document
1	Medium-term Development Plan (Latest)
2	2017 Local Government Work Plan (RKPD)
3	Local Government Work Plan (RKPD) 2018
4	Local Government Work Plan (RKPD) 2019
5	OPD Strategic Plan Education Office
6	OPD Renstra of the Health Service
7	OPD Strategic Plan
8	Public Works OPD Strategic Plan
9	OPD Strategic Plan Office/Agency for the Empowerment of Women and Children
10	Social Service OPD Strategic Plan
11	Regional Regulations and Appendix concerning 2016 APBD
12	Regional Regulation Documents and Appendix About 2017 Regional Budget
13	Regional Regulation Documents and Appendix About 2018 APBD
14	Regional Regulation Documents and Appendix About APBD 2019
15	P 2017 Regional Budget Documents
16	APBD Documents P Year 2018
17	2016 APBD Plan Documents
18	2017 APBD Plan Documents
19	APBD Plan Document for 2018
20	APBD Plan Document for 2019
21	PERKADA OUTLINE OF 2016 APBD
22	Regional Regulation on Regional Budget Revision in 2017
23	Regional Regulation on Regional Budget Revision in 2018
24	Regional Regulation on Regional Budget Revision in 2019
25	2016 APBD Change Plans
26	2017 APBD Change Plans
27	2018 APBD Amendment Plan Document
28	General Plan for Procurement of Goods and Services (RUP-PBJ)
29	A contract for Procurement of Goods and Services (1 or 2 Examples Only)

Table 2. (Continued).

No	Document
30	Regional Regulation on Accountability for the 2018 Regional Budget
31	Local Government Financial Report (LKPD) Audited TA. 2016
32	Local Government Financial Report (LKPD) Audited TA. 2017
33	2017 Government Accountability Report (LKPJ)
34	2018 Government Responsibility Statement Report (LKPJ)
35	Government Agency Performance Accountability Report (LAKIP) Provincial/District/City Government in 2018

Riau Province and Kab. Indragiri Hulu are two areas that are “very proactive”. Of the 35 budget documents, 31 of them were disclosed in Riau’s website, while Kab. Indragiri Hulu only provided 20. As for other areas, **Figure 3** shows that majority of the areas only have one information that can accessed. Three areas, i.e., Kab. Rokan Hilir, Kab. Rokan Hulu and Kab. Kuantan Singingi, provided no budget information at all.

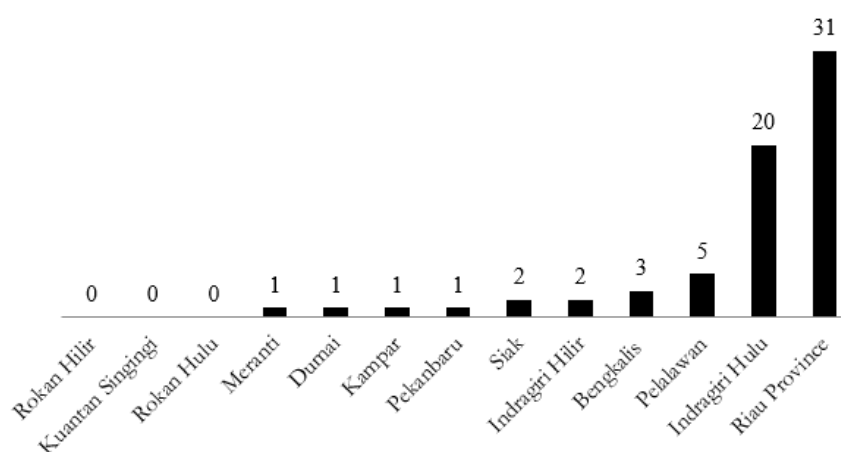


Figure 3. Proactiveness in publishing budget information of PPID in every area.

There is only one region that responds to fans providing information when directly accessed to the PPID and providing information within 10–17 working days, the Region is Indragiri Hulu. This regency, in addition to proactively publishing information, also provided the requested budget information at a relatively fast time. Whereas Kab. Siak, Kab. Rohil, Kab. Bengkalis and Dumai City only provided budget information after objections were filed by requests for information. However, not all information requested were obtained.

Aside from not being proactive, six areas (Kab. Kampar, Kab. Kepulauan Meranti, Kab. Rokan Hilir, Kab. Rokan Hulu and Pekanbaru City) also did not provide information to the applicants when asked. None of the information relating to contract documents for Riau Province and all 12 Regencies/Cities can be accessed by the public either through the website tracking or on the public information access test. Local Government Financial Report (LKPD) Audited TA. 2016–2017 which became the assessment sector, showed that of 13 regions, none of the regions had published this information either proactively or when requested. This

LKPD document tends to be closed by all regions. Overall, after calculating the results with Equation (2), the level of proactive disclosure of budgeting is “very low”.

4.1.4. Aspect of PPID’s land and forest governance (TKHL)

This study managed to access multiple information on TKHL disclosed by the government. A total of 19 information was recovered from the regional authorities while 33 types of information on TKHL were successfully accessed from the provincial government as can be seen in **Table 3**.

Table 3. List of accessed TKHL information of PPID in the provincial and regional level.

No	Documents from Province	Documents from Regencies/Cities
1	IUPHHK—HA & HT Company	AMDAL/UPL/UKL Plantation Companies in all Regencies
2	RKU IUPHHK—HA & HT Company	Plantation IUP (IUP-P & IUP-B) District/City authority
3	RKU IUPHHK—HA & HTI Company	Plantation Business Permit (HGU)
4	Company RKL-RPL	Report on the business development of plantation companies
5	Forestry Company AMDAL Document	Monitoring report of plantation companies
6	Plantation IUP (IUP-P & IUP-B) Authority of Riau Province	Report on Development and Evaluation of Oil Palm Plantation Business
7	Riau Plantation Business Permit (HGU) Document	IMB of Oil Palm Plantations in all Regencies/Cities
8	Timber Utilization Permit Document (IPK)	Decree on the recommendation for approval of forestry company IUPHHK award by Regent/Mayor
9	Document of IMB of Palm Oil Plantations in Riau	Recommendation for plantation business permit issued by the head of the region (regent)
10	Forest area lease-to-use permit (IPPKH) document and permit to release forest area	Business Location Permit (SITU) for district/city palm oil mills
11	Work Contact Documents between Oil and Gas Companies in Riau Province	List of Galian C Mining Business License in Regency/City
12	IMB Documents of Mining Companies in Riau Province	Strategic Environmental Assessment (KLHS) of the RTRW and its Annexes
13	Tora Realization Data (retribution and rehabilitation)	Strategic Plan (Renstra) of Regency/City Environment and Plantation Office
14	Allocation Data in Riau	Recommendation for Group C Mining Material Mining Permit by the Regional Head
15	Information on CSR (corporate social responsibility) of all Oil and Gas Companies in Riau Province	List of Business/Industrial Actors that have a Liquid Waste Disposal License
16	List of addresses and profile of oil and gas company under the auspices of SKK Sumbagut in the Work Area in Riau Province	List of Business/Industrial Actors that have a Liquid Waste Utilization Permit for (Land Application)
17	Post Mining Activity Documents	MAP of Hazardous Areas
18	Riau Oil Production Data for the last three years 2016-2018	Information on CSR (corporate social responsibility) funds for all plantation companies in Inhu Regency
19	SLIP Payment Document for Forestry PSDA	Map of District and Village Administration
20	Strategic Environmental Assessment Document (KLHS)	
21	Decree on the recommendation for the approval of IUPHHK forestry companies in Riau	
22	Budget Plan and Realization of Handling of Land and Forest Fires	
23	Reference document Technical verification Social forestry submission	

Table 3. (Continued).

No	Documents from Province	Documents from Regencies/Cities
24	Riau Social Forestry Budget Plan and Realization	
25	List of licensed social forestry areas complete with permit holders and social forestry schemes	
26	Post mining reclamation plan document	
27	Document on plantation business development report	
28	Plantation company compliance monitoring report document	
29	Documents on reports on the implementation of mining business activities	
30	Document monitoring report on the obedience of the company	
31	Document of results of forest area inventory of regencies in Riau	
32	Land and Forest Rehabilitation Management Plan Document in Riau Province	
33	Reports and data on burning land in Riau Province	

Figure 4 shows that the overall availability and accessibility to information relevant to TKHL are “very low”. The areas that fulfilled the information requests were Riau Province, Kab. Indragiri Hulu, Kab. Siak, Kab. Bengkalis and Dumai City, although the information they provided were also still incomplete. Other areas only provided 1-18 documents, while six areas (i.e., Pekanbaru City, Kab. Kepulauan Meranti, Kab. Indragiri Hilir, Kab. Rokan Hulu and Kab. Rokan Hilir) did not disclose any information on TKHL.

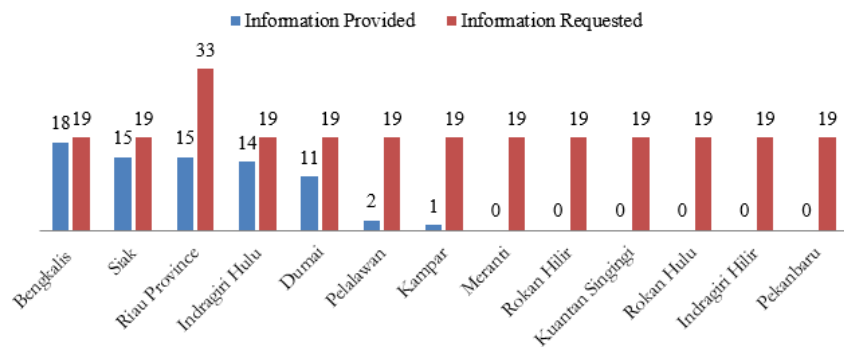


Figure 4. Comparison of the amount of information provided with the requested information.

The assessment of the TKLH aspect according to Equation (3) found it in the category of “fairly open”, with an interval score of 40–60. As can be seen on **Figure 5**, Kab. Indragiri Hulu has the highest index score of 51, which means that it is “sufficiently open” in terms of disclosing information on TKHL to the public. Kab. Bengkalis and Kab. Siak followed with scores of 46 and 41 respectively. This study obtained more TKHL information on both regencies than Kab. Indragiri Hulu, but the ease of access was lower because the provision of all information was given after the applicant filed an objection while Kab. Indragiri Hulu provided the information within 10 working days. Other areas such as Dumai City and Riau Province are “less open”, while the remaining eight areas are “not open” at all regarding their budget on

TKHL.

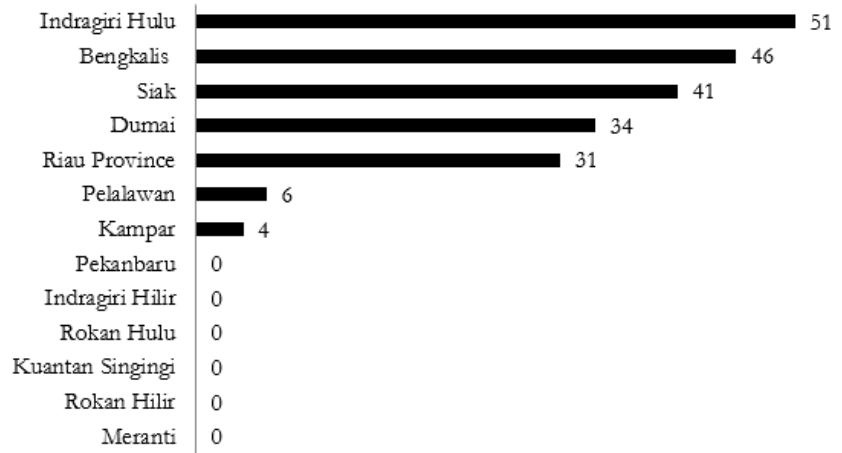


Figure 5. Index of information openness of land and forest governance.

4.1.5. Substantive results of public information openness index (IKIP)

The results of the three aspects (while the aspect of regulation is based on whether the relevant information was available and accessible or not) were calculated to obtain the overall picture of the transparency of the Riau Province and its 12 regencies/cities' budget information for land and forest governance. The results of the IKIP formula (Equation (4)) are presented in **Figure 6**.

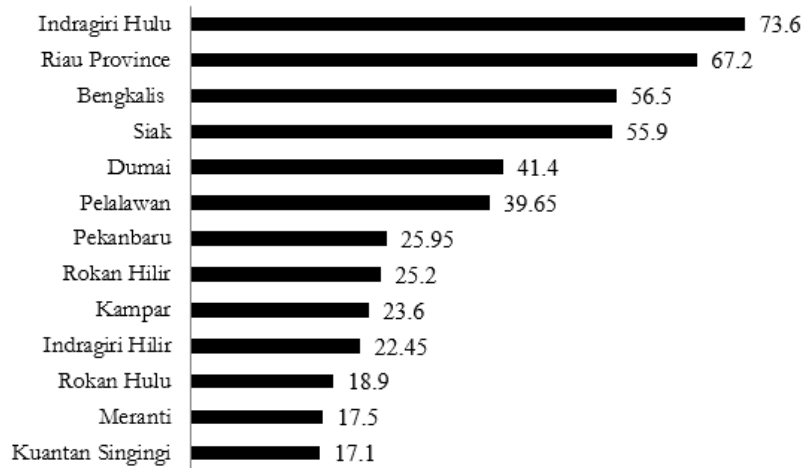


Figure 6. The values of the public information openness index (IKIP) of Riau Province and the 12 regencies/cities.

This study revealed that the most open area is Kab. Indragiri Hulu which has an index value of 73.6. This regency is the one that has consistently been proactive to disclose information and relatively quick in providing information upon request. After categorizing each area's values, it seems that no area can be considered to be "very open" with disclosing information. Only Riau Province and one of its regencies, namely Kab. Indragiri Hulu, is categorized as "open". Majority, however, are "not open" in publishing and providing public information.

4.1.6. Perspectives from the local government and stakeholders

This study conducted the information access test in three months, from March to May 2019. The following three months were spent to examine the completeness and clarity of information, discuss the openness of the information accessing process and calculating the Public Information Openness Index for each area. Afterwards, the researchers carried out a focus group discussion involving the local government and stakeholders on September 2019 to confirm and explore the results of the calculations. This study obtained perspectives from multiple parties that exposes the existing gaps in Riau Province's budget information transparency.

Perspectives of the local government

Governor of Riau, Syamsuar, M.Si. recognizes that the performance of information disclosure is actually as described in the results of this study. The public agencies are aware of the weak performance of public services to date and the more closed public information is, the more suspicious the public will be of the government, particularly on finance. Closing financial information is also based on the fact that many people use information disclosure instruments to take negative actions, such as extortion, threats to public bodies, and interfere with the performance of public bodies.

Local governments are of the view that public information is defined as only information published by the relevant public agency. Even though PPIDs must publish the document as part of the duties and functions of the government, because they were not the one who issued it, the PPIDs chose not to provide it because it was considered not within their authority. Moreover, some information related to TKHL is not under the control of public bodies. It seems that HGU documents and Forestry IUPs are not issued by regional governments but by central government agencies such as the National Land Agency (BPN) and the Ministry of Forestry. Therefore, the region does not control the document.

The government is of the view that providing information after the issuance of a decision from the information commission on the basis of an information dispute is better, because there is clarity and orders from the information commission so that bureaucrats or staff serving information do not hesitate to provide information and it is easy to convey it to the leadership.

Equipment or tools in information services such as service SOPs, List of Public Information (DIP), is considered only to fulfill statutory obligations. Not all local governments use these tools or equipment as guidelines in information services. The final decision is given or not, depending on the leadership decision. Meanwhile, the leadership does not understand the information disclosure law, thereby, the decision of the PPID leader or superior is only in accordance with his belief, not on the basis of the provisions of the law.

Perspectives of the Riau information commission (KI)

Most of the public information disputes that are submitted to KI are due to public bodies' unresponsive to information requests. There is omission or neglect their responsibilities to respond and this condition shows that public agencies do not understand or do not carry out their information service duties properly. Their unresponsiveness prompted information disputes submitted to KI. The law states that

an applicant can file an information dispute because (1) it is not responded to, (2) because it is not satisfied with the information provided (3) because the information provided is not in accordance with what was requested, (4) because the fees requested by the public are too expensive or unreasonable. What happened was that most of the disputes were due to the first reason, namely that public bodies did not respond to requests for information, so KI is also of the view that the performance of public bodies in information services is still poor.

In the context of information disclosure related to TKHL such as licensing (HGU, IUP, Amdal), there are two problems that are often found in the information dispute process. The regional government reasoned that the documents requested by the applicant are not available to the public and because poor documentation meant they have no control of the information. KI Riau cited an experience in disputes regarding HGUs issued under 2000; it was requested from the Riau Province Plantation Service (because HGUs issued are under the authority of the province, located in two regencies in one province). After checking through the dispute mechanism in place (public agency archive room), the document was not found. Other reasons are that public bodies do not understand the mechanism of information services, and there is no permission from the leadership to provide information.

KI delivered the final point that public information disclosure in the financial sector (APBD) and TKHL sector is needed by emphasizing the concerning situation of how Riau Province is an area with a high level of corruption. Based on the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission, Riau is one of the regions with a high level of corruption in Indonesia, and is included in the three most corrupt regions out of 34 provinces in Indonesia. Corruption that occurs in Riau is in two main sectors, namely related to finance (procurement of goods and services) and corruption in the licensing sector (management of natural resources). Openness in both sectors is, therefore, very important to do. So far, the information disputes filed at the Information Commission are mostly related to the information (Budget and Natural Resources).

Perspectives of academics and civil society

The results of the information disclosure index show that there are two regions with information disclosure performance in the category of “open” areas, namely Indragiri Hulu Regency and Riau Province, while other regions get scores in the sufficient category, namely Kab. Bengkalis, Dumai, Siak, and but other areas are in the category of less and very closed. This means that not all regions in Riau are open to public information, even though there are still information disputes in obtaining information, both budget information of land and forest governance information. The public is aware that budget is allocated for activities such as PPID socialization, PPID management, and other forms of activity. However, despite having an allocated budget, the academics and civil society saw that PPIDs have yet to push for the improvement of public information services.

A majority of the raised concerns were related to the results of the calculation of IKIP. Although one more issue was voiced during the FGD, which is the fact that there are areas that provide information in the form of hard copy or papers that burdens the public information applicant to provide funds to duplicate the documents

in question. The PPID reasoned that the documents provided from the PPID Assistant were paper documents.

4.2. Discussion

To summarize the results, this study found that the four aspects of regulation, institutional, budget, and TKHL transparency of public information in the 12 regions of Riau Province are still very low, with one exception of Kab. Indragiri Hulu being the most proactive in disclosing and providing information yet still not very open with public information disclosure. This overall assessment of this novel substantive evaluation is agreed upon by the representatives of the regencies/cities (PPIDs) as well as the governor of Riau Province in the focus group discussion, who reasoned that the current condition is due to the information requested is actually not controlled by the public bodies. Moreover, the issue of availability and access to related information is also due to missing documentation.

A few areas do proactively publish budget information on the government/PPID websites, making it easier for the public to get information without having to come to the information service room. Although, the information on TKHL is still very minimal, because only a small amount of information requested directly is provided in accordance with service procedures and some of them were given after objections were filed. Although, all regions have PPID information services, they are not functioning properly. There is no publication of proactive information and they are not willing to provide or make it difficult when requests for information are made directly to PPID. Two key findings of this study are: (1) despite having allocated a budget, no PPID of any area has not pushed for improvement in political information services, and (2) despite the relative fulfilment of administrative transparency, there is no regional government in carrying out services and information management properly.

There are several factors that influence the low information disclosure of public bodies in Riau. First, low awareness of state administration towards public information disclosure. This awareness is manifested as still limited knowledge of public bodies about openness. In fact, openness seems to be considered as a hindrance to public services, thus not all government information can be accessed by the public. In addition, there is also a thought that keeping information secret needs to be done so that the public does not interfere with the government's performance. Thus, the availability and accessibility of information is low.

Second, the low understanding and knowledge of public information disclosure. There is an assumption that the information to be served is only information published by public bodies. Meanwhile, information that is controlled because of its duties and functions does not become an obligation to be published. This is against the definition of public information in UU KIP Number 14 of 2008 in which public information is information that is created, stored, received, managed by public bodies, so "public information" is and should not be however it is interpreted by public bodies. Thus, the openness of process is low.

Third, the management of government data management is bad, not all public information is controlled because it is not archived properly. Information tends to be

controlled by ASN personnel who are not properly archived in one government information archive. So that the rotation or mutation of officials has an impact on the loss of government records. Thus, the clarity and completeness of information is low.

Last but not least, the information service system has not been running well, although the results of the index study have shown that the average area in Riau has a public information service system in accordance with the provisions of the legislation, the system has not been run well, the SOPs while provided are not implemented, there is only the accumulation of documents in one information room yet no information management. Thus, the regulation guaranteeing transparency is low.

In the UU KIP Number 14 of 2008, the term “information” lies in the category of periodic and automatic, meaning that local governments should publish information in this category regularly without going through a request for information. The unfortunate fact is that after tracking the government’s website, no single region publishes periodic and crucial information, such as budget documents, government performance documents and other information in accordance with Articles 9, 10, 11 of the KIP Law. For comparison, the local governments in the United States are more open because of community demands (Bearfield and Bowman, 2017), but the local governments in Riau province in particular are less transparent despite high community demands for openness. Tavares and Cruz (2017) found that lower rates of transparency of US local governments are best predicted by the average age of the municipal population and unemployment rate, so aspects related to people who supports government/public bodies are recommended to be taken into account in future investigations of Riau local government transparency. Local governments must make the performance of public information disclosure in government performance indicators and continuous evaluation is carried out as part of the bureaucratic reform agenda.

A previous investigation on Riau Province’s public transparency contradicted the findings of this study. According to Handayani et al. (2019), Riau Province is actually given the award of openness performance by the Information Commission of Riau (KI Riau). The study measured Riau Province’s Community Management Space Area (WKM) and Law Enforcement and Environmental Protection and indicated that there is an increase on Riau Province’s transparency, participation and accountability aspects from 2016. However, this previous study only measured the transparency based solely on the institutional aspect, whereas this current study has covered four different aspects. While the substance of information disclosed has indeed increased, it seems that the performance of information disclosure in Riau is still only on the administrative aspect. The added information was only documents that fulfilled the demands of laws and regulations that oblige regions to provide information service facilities. All regions in Riau Province have PPIDs, have SOPs, have Service Rooms, and so on, yet these documents contained only general information with thin substance. The websites the regional leaders used to publish this information have not functioned optimally in public information services in documenting, managing and publishing information. Compared to the local government leaders in the United Kingdom who prioritizes improving the data they disclose to the public (Safarov, 2019), the local government leaders in the 12 regions

of Riau Province have only fulfilled the bare minimum of administrative procedural obligation to fulfil Law Number 14 Year 2018 regarding Public Information Disclosure (KIP), and does not proactively publish information through the government website to give the public their right for this type of information.

As mandated by good governance, transparency policy must be a strategy for mainstreaming information disclosure. On the practical side, the effort of being more active at disclosing information online is hoped to encourage public bodies to follow the trend of leveraging Internet. The development of technology should have to be seen as an opportunity to be used by local governments in improving their openness by improving the performance of active information publication. However, what happens is the opposite; the electronic means that are owned only contain general descriptions of government profiles with the occasional reporting on media activities. Such a minimum of information given to the public is hindering the efforts of concerned parties in Riau province and regions efforts to maintain the land and forest (Rahman et al., 2013). It is especially urgent considering that Riau Province is recorded in 2018 to have the highest—by a far margin—land conflicts out of other provinces in Indonesia (Affandi et al., 2021; Handayani et al., 2019). Findings from the FGD echoed Rahman and Prihatini (2019) who stated that political parties and public bodies have not achieved their maximum potential in using digital media to disseminate information despite the fact that half of Indonesian national population using the Internet. These investigators similarly found that the quality of most political websites is subpar and have no relationship with financial resources. The results of this study cemented the status quo of how Indonesian public bodies are currently weak in politic canalization. Particularly in the matter of land and forest governance, the public bodies and the public alike must create and perform decisions that will solve the prominent land and forest conflicts. Public bodies must have the commitment to disclose information and follow it with adequate budget allocation to support the acceleration of the performance of information disclosure, thus local governments need to allocate an annual budget sourced from the APBD to support the performance of public information services in their respective regions.

Transparency in information disclosure still tends to be partial for certain groups, so when tracking related forest and land management budget documents on public agency websites it is found that many public bodies do not provide access to public services so that requests for budget data are still far from open access. Looking further from the aspect of budget transparency in TKHL, the weak performance of public agency disclosure is also influenced by the lack of political will to reform the governance of government organizations. As things in financial information are considered taboo, the culture of being reluctant to be conveyed to the public becomes a habit and is difficult to change. This problem is not in line with the mandate of reform in Indonesia, especially in TKHL where transparency indicators are an integral part of good governance. Ideally, public bodies as formal subjects in forest and land management should be able to organize, display and manage information related to TKHL on the official website so that transparency and access to budget information are no longer fragmented from public rights so that disputes over TKHL budget information are no longer an instrument for taking negative actions, such as extortion, threats to public bodies, which will interfere with the

performance of public bodies. Furthermore, public bodies as formal objects in TKHL must be able to adapt to changes and needs that occur in forests and land while still paying attention to past, present and future conditions of possible developments.

Therefore, findings of our study illuminate the intricate landscape of transparency in public information across the 12 regions of Riau Province. In summary, our assessment indicates that transparency in the aspects of regulation, institutional practices, budget allocation, and information related to land and forest governance (TKHL) remains remarkably low. The standout exception in this scenario is Kab. Indragiri Hulu, which exhibits a relatively proactive approach to disclosing and providing information, although it does not yet qualify as “very open” in terms of public information disclosure. These findings, endorsed by representatives of the regencies/cities (PPIDs) and the governor of Riau Province during focus group discussions, underscore the notion that the current limitations in information disclosure stem from the nature of the requested information, which is not entirely within the purview of public bodies. Additionally, the challenge of information availability and access is compounded by inadequate documentation practices.

A crucial aspect of our study highlights the proactive publication of budget information on government/PPID websites by a few regions, facilitating public access without the need for physical visits to information service rooms. However, the disclosure of TKHL-related information remains minimal, with only a limited amount of information provided following established service procedures, and some of it being made available only after objections were raised. Despite the presence of PPID information services in all regions, their functionality leaves much to be desired. There is a conspicuous absence of proactive information dissemination, and requests for information made directly to PPID often face challenges, such as reluctance or difficulty in obtaining the requested information. Two key findings emerge from this study: (1) despite budget allocations, no PPID in any area has made substantial improvements in political information services, and (2) despite a relatively satisfactory level of administrative transparency, no regional government effectively manages information and services.

A deep dive into the reasons behind these challenges reveals several contributing factors. Firstly, there is a pervasive lack of awareness within the state administration regarding public information disclosure. This manifests as limited knowledge among public bodies about transparency, with openness sometimes viewed as an impediment to efficient public service delivery. Secondly, there exists a misconception that only information published by public bodies is subject to disclosure, overlooking the fact that information controlled due to duties and functions must also be accessible. This misinterpretation hampers the transparency of processes. Thirdly, poor government data management further exacerbates the issue, as not all public information is adequately archived, resulting in information being controlled by individual officers rather than being properly cataloged. Finally, despite having the legal framework in place, the information service system has not been effectively implemented, with SOPs often going unenforced and information merely accumulating in information rooms, rather than being actively managed and disseminated. These factors collectively contribute to the overall low level of

information disclosure by public bodies in Riau Province.

To address these challenges and enhance transparency in public information disclosure, several recommendations emerge. Firstly, transparency policies should be strategically employed as a mainstream strategy for information disclosure. Actively disclosing information online can encourage public bodies to embrace technology as a means of improving transparency. However, the current practice of offering only minimal information hinders the efforts of stakeholders in Riau Province to effectively manage land and forest resources. It is especially critical given that the province has faced a disproportionately high number of land conflicts. Public bodies should commit to information disclosure and allocate an annual budget from the APBD to support the acceleration of information disclosure performance. The issue of partial transparency should be rectified to ensure open access to budget data, thus eliminating potential negative actions like extortion and threats. Moreover, public bodies involved in land and forest management should adapt to changing needs while considering past, present, and future conditions to foster transparency and accountability.

The findings highlight, a comprehensive evaluation of transparency across various aspects of public information in Riau Province reveals a nuanced landscape marked by challenges and opportunities. Addressing the identified issues and embracing a culture of openness can pave the way for improved governance, enhanced public trust, and more effective management of land and forest resources in the region. Looking to the future, the path to improved transparency in Riau Province lies in embracing openness as a core strategy for governance. Public bodies should proactively disclose information related to land and forest governance, fostering accountability and public trust. This approach should be supported by budget allocations from the APBD to enhance information disclosure performance. Moreover, it's crucial to integrate transparency indicators into good governance practices. Public bodies must not only meet legal obligations but also prioritize the quality and depth of information provided. Regular performance evaluations and adaptation to changing needs are essential for ensuring transparency remains a fundamental aspect of governance in Riau Province, contributing to better land and forest management and addressing pressing challenges such as land conflicts and environmental concerns.

5. Conclusion

In this study focused on Riau Province, Indonesia, we have illuminated a critical aspect of environmental governance: the indispensable role of transparency in land and forest management. Our research, conducted in partnership with FITRA Riau and various local governmental bodies, employed a pioneering methodology to evaluate the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP). This approach has revealed a concerning landscape of opacity in public information disclosure, with only Kab. Indragiri Hulu and Riau Province itself showing any significant level of transparency. This finding is not just a reflection of the local administrative culture but signals a much broader issue with far-reaching implications. It points to a systemic failure in upholding transparency as a key element of good governance, which is essential for

sustainable environmental stewardship and the well-being of communities.

The urgency of addressing this issue cannot be overstated. Transparency in environmental governance is not merely a bureaucratic ideal but a practical necessity for ensuring responsible stewardship of natural resources and for fostering public trust in governmental institutions. The lack of openness uncovered in our study has profound implications for environmental policy, particularly in a region where land and forest resources are integral to ecological balance and human livelihood. Looking ahead, there is a pressing need for more expansive and nuanced research in this area. Future studies should aim to extend beyond Riau Province, comparing transparency levels across different regions to paint a more comprehensive picture of governance practices in Indonesia. Additionally, there is a significant gap in understanding the root causes behind the low levels of transparency observed. In-depth investigations into administrative processes, political dynamics, and cultural attitudes towards information disclosure are needed to unravel these complexities.

Moreover, it is critical to explore how this lack of transparency impacts the formulation and implementation of environmental policies. Does it lead to inefficiencies, or worse, to policies that fail to protect the environment effectively? Can enhanced transparency lead to more informed and sustainable policy decisions? These questions are central to understanding the full impact of our findings. Another promising avenue for future research lies in examining the potential of digital technologies to improve transparency. In an increasingly connected world, digital platforms offer novel opportunities for enhancing public access to information and for fostering greater engagement between citizens and governmental bodies. Investigating these possibilities could yield valuable insights into modernizing governance practices. Finally, understanding the relationship between transparency, public participation, and policy-making is crucial. How does the level of openness influence public engagement in decision-making processes, especially in environmental and land use matters? Addressing these questions will not only provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of governance but will also help in formulating strategies to enhance public involvement in environmental stewardship.

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