

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BUDGET OVERSIGHT: A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN THE NTT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

This study evaluates the dynamics of public participation in budget oversight in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province from 2021 to 2025, focusing on the effectiveness of public information disclosure as an instrument of social control. Through an in-depth analysis of the Public Information Disclosure Index (IKIP) and *social audit activities* conducted by civil society organizations, this study found a positive correlation between the institutional strengthening of the Information and Documentation Management Officer (PPID) and the intensity of public oversight. Although the NTT Provincial Government successfully achieved the "Informative" predicate with a score of 93.30 in 2025, substantive challenges remain, such as security risks for journalists, low budget literacy, and economic barriers in remote areas. The results show that the availability of budget information (periodic information) has triggered concrete action from civil society groups such as the NTT APPeK Workshop in monitoring infrastructure projects and village funds. However, transforming information into an effective tool of social control requires the institutionalization of more systematic public consultations and stronger legal protection for *whistleblowers*. This study concludes that administrative transparency in NTT has reached a stage of maturity, but meaningful public participation still requires policy intervention to overcome socio-political barriers on the ground.

Keywords *Public Information Disclosure, Community Participation, Budget Oversight, East Nusa Tenggara, Social Audit, Public Accountability.*

Introduction

Modern democracy places information transparency as a key pillar in realizing clean and accountable governance. In Indonesia, this transformation is legally affirmed through Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure (UU KIP), which mandates every public agency to provide the broadest possible access to information for the public. In the regional context, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province faces unique challenges in implementing this mandate. As a province with archipelagic characteristics, high fiscal disparities, and persistent poverty challenges, oversight of regional fund management is crucial to ensure that every rupiah of the budget has a real impact on the welfare of its citizens. During the 2021-2025 period, the NTT Provincial Government has demonstrated significant evolution in its efforts to open access to budget information. Information transparency is no longer merely an administrative obligation but has become fundamental to building public trust. However, a fundamental question arises: whether the availability of budget data on digital portals truly translates into public oversight. In accountability theory, transparency is a prerequisite, but active participation is the primary driver of social control. The phenomenon in NTT demonstrates a disparity between the steadily increasing Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) score and the real challenges on the ground. On the one hand, local governments are gaining national recognition as informative public bodies. On the other hand, reports of intimidation against journalists and social activists attempting to access sensitive information continue to emerge. This indicates that the legal and political environment in NTT still harbors resistance to critical and in-depth oversight. This research aims to examine the extent to which public information, particularly

regarding the Regional Budget (APBD), is used as an instrument of social control. The research focuses on the role of civil society organizations and communities in conducting *social audits* —a participatory oversight process that verifies the alignment between budget planning and implementation on the ground. By analyzing empirical data from 2021 to 2025, this study seeks to identify factors that encourage and hinder the NTT community in monitoring their regional funds. The urgency of this research lies in the need to evaluate the effectiveness of transparency instruments in reducing the potential for budget irregularities. In East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), where village funds and basic infrastructure development projects are the backbone of the economy, participatory oversight can be an early detection of budget malpractice. Through a review of the performance of the Public Information and Communications Agency (PPID), the evaluation results of the Information Commission, and the track record of civil advocacy, this report will present a comprehensive analysis of the roadmap for information transparency in Flobamora.

Method

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a case study method to explore the relationship between public information disclosure and public participation in budget oversight in NTT Province. The analysis focuses on government units under the NTT Provincial Government and their interactions with civil society organizations between 2021 and 2025.

Research Design and Data Sources

This analysis is based on secondary data collected from official reports from the Central Information Commission (KIP), the results of the 2021-2025 monitoring and evaluation (Monev) of public information disclosure, and documentation from social audit reports from non-governmental organizations. The primary data sources include:

- 1. **Public Information Disclosure Index (IKIP) Report:** Provides numerical scores and qualitative analysis on three main dimensions: Physical/Political Environment, Economic Environment, and Legal Environment.
- 2. **Results of Public Agency Monitoring and Evaluation:** Provides details of the compliance value of the NTT Provincial Government's PPID in providing information periodically, at all times, and immediately.
- 3. **NTT APPeK Workshop Advocacy Documentation:** Includes reports on the results of social audits on goods and services procurement projects, educational infrastructure development, and distribution of social assistance.
- 4. **Regional Regulations:** Analyzing the NTT Governor's Regulation (Pergub) Number 30 of 2021 and decisions related to the Public Information List (DIP).

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Data was collected through documentation studies and content analysis of information authority publications. The data analysis technique involved several stages:

- 1. **Data Triangulation:** Comparing administrative scores for information transparency with factual reports of obstacles in the field, such as cases of violence against journalists or geographical constraints.
- 2. **Trend Analysis:** Mapping fluctuations in IKIP NTT scores from 2021 to 2025 to identify periods of significant progress or decline.
- 3. **Causal Mapping Analysis:** Linking the availability of budget information (independent variable) with the frequency and quality of social audits conducted by civil society organizations (dependent variable).

This study also evaluates the impact of changes to the IKIP assessment methodology in 2024-2025, which introduces the role of an *Expert Council* to provide a more objective picture of the state of openness in the regions. This is crucial to ensure that increases or decreases in scores truly reflect substantive reality, not merely administrative requirements.

Method Components	Detailed Description
Time span	2021 - 2025 (Implementation and Evaluation Period)
Location	East Nusa Tenggara Province (Provincial and Selected Regency Levels)
Participation Indicators	Frequency of information requests, social audit reports, participation in Musrenbang, and reporting of violations (<i>whistleblowing</i>)
Analysis Framework	<i>Agency Theory</i> (Government-Citizen Relations) and <i>Social Contract Theory</i>

Method

Development of Monitoring Indicators

To measure the extent to which information is used for social control, this study adopted the indicators used in the 2021-2025 IKIP assessment. These indicators are divided into three strategic areas:

1. Physical and Political Environment

This indicator measures the freedom to seek information without fear, access to information dissemination, and public participation in public policymaking. Emphasis is placed on "Public Literacy on the Right to Information Transparency" as a prerequisite for the social audit. Scores in this dimension reflect whether the political climate in NTT supports citizens to be critical of the use of regional budgets.

2. Economic Environment

This dimension examines the costs required for the public to obtain budget information and the efficient governance of public information. The research focuses on whether economic barriers (duplication costs, transportation to government offices) hinder poor communities in NTT from conducting oversight.

3. Legal Environment

This study analyzes the government's compliance with the Public Information Disclosure Law, the existence of derivative regulations at the regional level (such as gubernatorial regulations), and the guarantee of legal protection for information requesters. The importance of the "Consequence Test" in determining exempt information is analyzed as a tool to prevent the misuse of state secrecy to cover up budget corruption. The analytical model used aims to answer whether the availability of information (*supply side*) automatically creates oversight (*demand side*). This study distinguishes between "Administrative Participation" (filling out government questionnaires) and "Substantive Participation" (field audits and legal reporting). Using data from the APPeK Workshop, a mapping of projects that have been successfully socially audited was conducted based on data obtained from the NTT PPID portal.

Results and Discussion

Dynamics of Public Information Disclosure in NTT 2021-2025

The journey of information disclosure in NTT Province over the past five years has shown a transformative trajectory. In 2021, the implementation of information disclosure was still in the post-pandemic consolidation stage, with the national score falling in the "Moderate" category (71.37). During this period, NTT is still refining the PPID structure in various OPDs to ensure that budget data flows can be accessed digitally. Entering 2022, collective awareness has increased within the NTT bureaucracy. The provincial IKIP score has begun to climb to 76.02. This improvement is driven by strengthening local regulations, particularly through NTT Gubernatorial Regulation No. 30 of 2021, which provides operational guidelines for public information services. 2023 was a golden year for information transparency in NTT, with the province achieving 8th place nationally with a score of 80.08, falling into the "Good" category. This success places NTT as one of the few provinces outside Java that is able to penetrate this category. In 2024 and 2025, this performance was maintained despite changes to the national assessment methodology, which adopted a more stringent approach. In 2024, NTT achieved a score of 94.30, and in 2025, the NTT Provincial Government achieved a score of 93.30, with the predicate "Informative." This achievement places NTT in 15th position nationally in the Provincial Government category.

Table 1. Results of the Public Information Disclosure Index Portrait for 2021-2025

Year	IKIP/NTT Monitoring and Evaluation Score	National Ranking	Category/Predicate
2021	71.37 (National)	-	Currently
2022	76.02	-	Currently
2023	80.08	8	Good
2024	94.30	17	Informative
2025	93.30	15	Informative

Source: Processed results

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This consistent improvement in scores indicates that procedurally, the government has created more open doors for the public. However, a closer analysis reveals that high scores in the legal and physical-political environment are often not accompanied by equivalent protections for users on the ground.

Budget Information Access Mechanism: The Strategic Role of PPID

The NTT Provincial Government's Main PPID, under the auspices of the Communication and Informatics Agency, serves as the nerve center for budget information dissemination. Through the official portal, the public can access important documents such as the Draft Revised Regional Budget (APBD), the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), and expenditure realization reports.

Based on NTT Governor Regulation Number 30 of 2021, there is a classification of information that greatly supports budget oversight .

1. **Periodic Information:** Includes financial plans, audited financial statements, and public agency profiles. This information must be uploaded no later than every six months.
2. **Information at All Times:** Includes a list of public information, service procedures, and procurement contract documents for goods and services.
3. **Objection Procedure:** The public is given a channel to submit objections if their information request is rejected, with a maximum dispute resolution time of 100 working days.

The integration of this system with the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) has improved service efficiency. In 2024, NTT achieved a "Very Good" rating in the SPBE evaluation with an index of 3.83, ranking sixth nationally in the Level I Region category. This simplifies the synchronization of budget data between planning at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) and publication on the PPID portal, thereby minimizing the risk of data manipulation midstream.

Implementation of Social Audit by Civil Society Organizations

One of the key findings of this study is that the availability of budget information on government portals has become a primary resource for civil society organizations to conduct independent oversight. The NTT APPEK workshop became a central actor in the *social audit movement* in Bumi Flobamora during 2021-2025.

Social Audit Case for Procurement of Goods and Services

In October 2023, the APPEK Workshop presented the results of a social audit of three strategic projects in Kupang Regency: the Teres irrigation development, the construction of a dam in Oeltua Village, and the distribution of disaster relief in Seroja. This audit not only examined documents on the table, but also conducted physical verification to ensure material specifications matched the published budget. Some of the findings of this social audit include:

1. **Mismatch of Needs:** At some points, planning for procurement of goods and services does not involve the local community in depth, so that the facilities built do not provide optimal benefits.
2. **Gaps in Transparency of Allowance Funds:** The publication of education allowance funds in NTT was found to still have gaps, where the public finds it difficult to monitor distribution at a macro level in one of the largest budget items in the education sector.
3. **School Renovation Issues:** In April 2025, issues were identified in a Rp 30.8 billion school renovation project. These monitoring findings served as the basis for advocacy for improvements to inclusive and disaster-safe educational infrastructure.

Table 2. KIP Perspective, Findings of Non-Transparent Work

Audit Object Project	Location	Key Findings	Civil Recommendation
Terrace Irrigation & Oeltua Dam	Kupang Regency	Less participatory planning	Institutionalization of public consultation at every stage
Seroja Assistance	NTT	Distribution accuracy issues	Strengthening the role of APIP through <i>Probity Audit</i>
School Renovation (Rp. 30.8 billion)	NTT	Physical quality & inclusivity	Establishment of a public service monitoring agency
Regional Health Laboratory & Community Health Center	Kupang Regency	Potential for corruption in PBJ	Legal reporting to the High Prosecutor's Office

Transforming Information into Legal Action

Public budget oversight in NTT has shifted from mere criticism to law enforcement. The APPeK workshop reported its monitoring findings on the construction of the Labkesda and the Naibonat Community Health Center to the NTT High Prosecutor's Office. Specifically, in the case of the construction of the Besmarak Elementary School (SDI) and Oelii Elementary School (SDI), the public audit results led to the naming of suspects. This phenomenon shows that public information disclosure is an effective tool for reducing information asymmetry between the bureaucracy and citizens, while simultaneously strengthening vertical accountability.

Substantive Obstacles to Participatory Supervision

Although technical instruments are available, this study identified four main barriers that limit the widespread use of information as social control in NTT:

1. Security Risks and Intimidation (The Chilling Effect)

IKIP 2024 data recorded several incidents that violated the principle of transparency. In Belu Regency, a journalist's house was burned, while in Sikka, journalists were prohibited from reporting by public officials. The case of the criminalization of journalists in Malacca after requesting budget data shows that "freedom to seek information" in NTT remains case-specific and fraught with risks for those dealing with local authorities. The still repressive political environment at the local level has discouraged the general public from conducting open budget oversight.

2. Literacy and Economic Gap

Low public literacy regarding the right to open information is a crucial barrier. Most NTT residents understand their right to know, but they don't understand the technical mechanisms for using budget data for audits. Furthermore, low economic levels make budget oversight perceived as an additional burden rather than a right. Communities prioritize meeting basic needs amidst difficult access and unequal educational facilities.

3. Fiscal and Geographical Disparities

There is a wide fiscal disparity in NTT, with districts like South Central Timor (TTS), Kupang, and Sikka receiving significantly larger budgets than other districts like Central Sumba. Regions with large budgets tend to receive greater scrutiny from the media and NGOs, while smaller and more remote areas often escape scrutiny due to limited digital infrastructure and public platforms reaching the 3T (frontier and outermost) regions.

4. Bureaucratic Resistance (Transitional Gap)

The emergence of a "transition gap," where the failures of the old system are often used to discredit the new, more transparent system, has created a public misconception that bureaucratic reform has failed, even though the information system is technically better. Meanwhile, the Information Commission still faces challenges in consistently enforcing compliance with public bodies, particularly regarding the "round-the-clock" nature of information requirements.

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Causal Relationship: Information vs Activism

The analysis shows that the availability of budget information (the independent variable) in NTT does not automatically encourage all levels of society (the dependent variable) to actively engage in oversight. Instead, this information is more effectively converted into action by "intermediary groups" *such as* journalists and professional NGOs. The general public tends to be passive unless the budget is directly related to their basic rights, such as village funds or social assistance. However, the existence of organizations like Bengkel APPEK, which disseminates information through journalism training for community facilitators (October 2025), is beginning to bridge this gap. The "Inclusive Pramusrenbang" activity in Oelpuah in 2025 demonstrated that when residents are provided with relevant information and technical assistance, they are able to oversee development proposals all the way through to the Village Government Work Plan (RKPDs).

Implications for the Future of Openness in NTT

The 2025 IKIP results, which showed a 9.22-point decline in the national score, signal that the challenges of information transparency in the future will be even greater. For NTT, maintaining its "Informative" status amid changing global assessment standards requires corrective measures:

1. **Institutionalization of Public Consultation:** As recommended by the APPEK Workshop social audit, budget oversight should not only occur downstream, but should be institutionalized from the planning stage of procurement of goods and services.
2. **Whistleblower Protection:** Strengthening the regulatory framework to ensure the security of information applicants and witnesses of budget irregularities is a top priority to achieve the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045.
3. **Information Inclusivity:** Ensuring access for groups with disabilities and residents in 3T areas so that budget information truly becomes a tool of empowerment for vulnerable groups.

Conclusion

This study concludes that public information disclosure in the NTT Provincial Government during the 2021-2025 period has achieved significant administrative progress, but its use as an instrument of social control still faces substantive obstacles. The availability of budget information through a robust PPID portal, supported by regional regulations (Pergub 30/2021), has successfully reduced information asymmetry, particularly for civil society organizations. Organizations like the NTT APPEK Workshop have demonstrated that public information can be used as the basis for effective *social audits*, detecting irregularities in infrastructure projects and encouraging law enforcement against budget malpractice. The success of this participation has had a tangible impact on public accountability at the local level, including in the management of village funds and procurement of goods and services. However, widespread public participation is still hampered by a climate of fear resulting from intimidation of information activists, low budget literacy, and a digital infrastructure gap in remote areas. Without guarantees of protection for the public conducting oversight, information transparency in NTT is at risk of becoming merely "procedural transparency" without impacting on profound governance changes. The main recommendations of this study are the need to institutionalize participatory oversight within the bureaucratic structure, strengthen the role of the Public Apparatus Empowerment Agency (APIP) in collaborating with civil society, and expand budget literacy programs for grassroots citizens. With better integration between digital information systems and civil rights protection, public information disclosure in NTT can truly function as an instrument of social control that accelerates the realization of clean, transparent, and public-interest governance.

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