

Community Participation in the Belitung Aspiration and Complaint Channel (BESADU) Program in Realizing Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency

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Received: October 23, 2023 | Revised: October 29, 2025 | Accepted: November 30, 2025



<https://doi.org/10.31629/juan.v13i2.6354>

ABSTRACT

Community participation plays a vital role in determining the success of government programs and development planning, particularly in regions implementing smart city policies such as West Belitung Regency. Smart Governance, as one of the main dimensions of Smart City, aims to enhance the quality, transparency, and efficiency of public administration. This study focuses on the Belitung Aspiration and Complaint Channel (BESADU) Program an innovative initiative designed by the Regent and Deputy Regent of West Belitung to collect and respond to public aspirations and complaints regarding public services, bureaucratic management, and policy implementation. The objective of this study is to analyze the level and form of community participation in the BESADU program as an effort to realize Smart Governance. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through interviews, observation, documentation, and triangulation of data sources involving ten community respondents. The results indicate that community participation in the BESADU program is reflected in four indicators: intensive communication, conducive socio-economic-political-cultural climate, opportunities for participation, and freedom of creativity and initiative. The findings show that while the program has improved public service responsiveness and citizen engagement, there remain challenges such as the lack of system integration in complaint monitoring and uneven follow-up by local government units. The study concludes that by utilizing technology and fostering direct and digital-based socialization, the BESADU program has contributed significantly to building a transparent, responsive, and collaborative governance system aligned with the principles of Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency.

Keyword: Community Participation, BESADU Program, Smart Governance



INTRODUCTION

Community participation plays a crucial role in determining the success of development planning or programs within a given area. Without community involvement, programs cannot run effectively, as public engagement is essential to ensure that development initiatives are properly implemented (Kaiser, 2024; Muñoz-Hermoso et al., 2025). For development to progress as expected, active participation from the community is needed in all stages of the

process (Chan et al., 2025; Park et al., 2025). West Belitung Regency is one of the regions implementing a smart city policy.

However, several major challenges have emerged in developing West Belitung Regency as a Smart City, which are categorized into five key issues: community welfare, human resource quality, governance, economic competitiveness, and environmental sustainability. This Masterplan is expected to serve as a regional guide for implementing smart city-based development over the next five years, with periodic reviews conducted annually to align with evolving needs, regulations, and government policies (Hofmeyr, 2025; Mutiara et al., 2018; Tomor et al., 2019).

The objectives of West Belitung Regency Regulation No. 39 of 2022 concerning the Smart City Masterplan include: creating effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable public services and bureaucracy; enhancing regional competitiveness through smart tourism areas and strong local identity with distinctive Belitung products on local, national, and international scales; creating a livable environment supported by public infrastructure that promotes health and community well-being; establishing a creative, community-based socio-technical ecosystem with strong learning culture; and realizing environmentally friendly, clean, resilient, and sustainable governance.

The research focuses on the Smart Governance dimension, which emphasizes intelligent administration and decision-making processes. Smart Governance, as one of the key dimensions of Smart City, influences policy implementation through efficient, transparent, and innovative bureaucratic mechanisms (Zhao & Zou, 2025; Zhong et al., 2025). It reflects a transformation from traditional bureaucratic models to more effective, communicative, and continuously improving systems. The local government's role is central in ensuring that these governance mechanisms function optimally in driving smart city development (Bolívar & Meijer, 2016; Nastjuk et al., 2022).

Realization of Smart Governance is driven by three indicators: public service, efficient bureaucratic management, and policy efficiency. In West Belitung Regency, the BESADU (Belitung Saluran Aspirasi dan Pengaduan) program serves as a public complaint and feedback platform that can be accessed online anytime and anywhere. While BESADU facilitates easier communication between citizens and the government, the system still requires further development. It also depends on collaboration with other stakeholders whose roles and responsibilities are crucial to achieving optimal outcomes.



Figure 1. BESADU Program, 2025

Source: <https://kominfo.belitung.go.id/government-public-relations-gpr/>

Complaints submitted through BESADU are monitored for follow-up actions; however, many government offices (OPDs) fail to report their responses to the Department of Communication and Information Technology (Diskominfo). Based on data from the BESADU website, as of April 6, 2023, there were 1,290 submitted complaints, of which only 853 were addressed indicating a completion rate of just 66%. This means that 34% of complaints remain unresolved. The lack of integration in monitoring and reporting systems prevents Diskominfo from fully tracking complaint resolutions.

Key identified problems include: (1) low public participation in using the BESADU platform, with only 58 complaints received in the past four months; (2) low follow-up rates

from government agencies regarding complaints submitted through BESADU; and (3) the absence of an integrated monitoring and reporting system that limits Diskominfo's ability to ensure accountability in complaint handling. The urgency of this research lies in the need to strengthen the effectiveness of Smart Governance implementation in West Belitung Regency through enhanced community participation and improved inter-agency coordination.

Investigating the performance of the BESADU program provides crucial insights into the challenges of digital governance at the local level, particularly in fostering accountability, responsiveness, and citizen trust. The research will contribute to policy recommendations that support a more integrated, participatory, and sustainable model of Smart Governance as a foundation for future smart city development in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the implementation of the Smart Governance dimension within the Smart City program of West Belitung Regency. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen to enable a comprehensive understanding of governance practices, stakeholder collaboration, and public participation in the BESADU (Belitung Saluran Aspirasi dan Pengaduan) program. This approach allows the researcher to explore deeply how local institutions, digital platforms, and community actors interact in realizing smart governance. Through this method, the study aims to describe factual conditions and interpret social meanings behind the performance and challenges of policy implementation in the region (Creswell & Poth, 2016)

The research location is West Belitung Regency, which was purposively selected because it is one of the pilot regions implementing the Smart City initiative in Indonesia. The site is relevant due to its active use of the BESADU platform and the existence of local regulations such as the Regent Regulation No. 39 of 2022 on the Smart City Masterplan. The study focuses on understanding how Smart Governance is manifested through the digital complaint system, inter-agency coordination, and community participation. This contextual approach ensures that the analysis reflects the real policy environment, organizational culture, and the socio-technical dynamics shaping the governance process in West Belitung.

Data in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including officials from the Department of Communication and Information Technology (Diskominfo), relevant government agencies (OPD), community leaders, and users of the BESADU program. Meanwhile, secondary data are obtained from policy documents, Smart City Masterplan reports, official website data, and publications related to Smart Governance. The use of both data sources provides a comprehensive perspective on how policy design, implementation, and community interaction contribute to the effectiveness of smart city governance (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques include interviews, documentation, and observation, followed by data analysis using the interactive model which involves three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out to filter relevant information, while data display organizes the findings into thematic categories based on Smart Governance indicators such as public service, bureaucratic management, and policy efficiency. Conclusions are drawn through pattern identification and comparison with existing theories. The research validity is ensured through triangulation of sources and methods to maintain consistency and reliability in interpreting the findings (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To facilitate the discussion, this research applies the theory of participation proposed by Holil (1980) as cited in Normina (2016) to address the problems analyzed in this study. The theory highlights four (4) main indicators that are applied in the Department of Communication and Informatics (DISKOMINFO) of West Belitung Regency within the Belitung

Channel of Aspirations and Complaints Program (BESADU): (a) Intensive Communication, (b) Socio-Economic, Political, and Cultural Climate, (c) Opportunity to Participate, and (d) Freedom to Create and Take Initiative. These four indicators serve as analytical tools to understand how community participation is formed and strengthened in realizing Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency.

1. The Service Process of the Belitung Channel of Aspirations and Complaints Program (BESADU)

The BESADU program can be accessed through several communication channels provided to facilitate the public in delivering their aspirations and complaints, which are later coordinated by the BESADU Team to relevant agencies. These channels include social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, as well as WhatsApp, SMS, the official website, and telephone services. This variety of communication options allows citizens to easily submit feedback and complaints from different locations and at any time, making the process more inclusive and efficient.

After citizens submit their complaints through these available platforms, the BESADU Team is responsible for coordinating and forwarding the reports to the Regent and Deputy Regent of West Belitung. From there, the leadership directs the reports to the appropriate regional apparatus (OPD) responsible for handling the specific issues raised. This structured flow ensures that each complaint reaches the correct institution, facilitating timely follow-up and accountability across departments involved in the complaint-handling process.

The Department of Communication and Informatics has also established a clear and systematic workflow that defines responsibilities for every staff member. This structure ensures that each official performs their assigned duties effectively and in accordance with established procedures (Pereira et al., 2018). As a result, the coordination mechanism creates a responsive, transparent, and reliable system for managing public complaints, reflecting one of the key principles of Smart Governance implementation in West Belitung Regency.

2. Community Participation in the Belitung Channel of Aspirations and Complaints Program (BESADU)

The Department of Communication and Informatics of West Belitung Regency operates in the field of public communication, information technology, cryptography, and government statistics. As an agency indirectly interacting with the public, the enhancement of service quality becomes crucial. In this context, community participation plays a vital role in providing feedback on service quality both in the form of aspirations and complaints (Sucupira Furtado et al., 2023; Yin & Song, 2023).

To realize Smart Governance, it is essential to integrate public service complaint management into a digital system. The BESADU program, accessible via <https://besadu.belitung.go.id> serves as an online platform that enables citizens to express aspirations and submit complaints safely and conveniently. The public becomes aware of BESADU through radio broadcasts, banners, billboards, and other outdoor media. In May 2023, 27 complaints were reported, while in June 2023 the number decreased to 14, indicating that improvements in public service quality may have reduced the need for complaints.

By utilizing innovative and creative technologies, the local government is able to enhance online administrative services, ensure transparency, and build a monitoring system that responds to citizens' needs, thereby fostering effective Smart Governance (Liu & Qi, 2022). Each complaint submitted by the community becomes a reference for improving future public services both in administrative matters and in the provision of goods and services (Demirel & Mülazımoğlu, 2022; Jurado-Zambrano et al., 2022). The ultimate goal of BESADU is to continuously improve the quality of governance and service delivery. Efforts to enhance public participation in BESADU are analyzed based on the four indicators of community participation according to Holil (1980) in Normina (2016):

- a. **Intensive Communication** – This indicator refers to the interaction between the community, the Department of Communication and Informatics, and other regional apparatus within the BESADU program. The department provides multiple online communication channels, allowing citizens to submit complaints from a distance. The BESADU Team acts as administrators and coordinators, forwarding complaints to relevant agencies. Public outreach is carried out through direct socialization, social media, outdoor media such as banners and billboards, and electronic media such as the Local Public Broadcasting Institution (LPPL) Radio Suara Praja. These efforts significantly improve public engagement in the BESADU program and demonstrate the realization of Smart Governance.
- b. **Socio-Economic, Political, and Cultural Climate** – The success of BESADU is also influenced by the socio-economic and cultural context of West Belitung. The region's social climate is highly conducive its people are tolerant, cooperative, and socially aware. Economically, the regency's key sectors such as industry, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries show strong performance, while transport and warehousing also exhibit significant growth. Politically, the citizens uphold democratic values, preferring consensus-based solutions. The BESADU program aligns well with the local culture of openness, honesty, and collective cooperation. By leveraging technological innovations within this cultural framework, Smart Governance can be realized more effectively.
- c. **Opportunity to Participate** – Based on research findings and interviews, public participation in BESADU is crucial for the success of Smart Governance. Data show that public participation increased in May 2023 with 27 complaints but decreased to 14 in June 2023. This fluctuation illustrates the community's dynamic engagement with public services. The private sector also contributes, especially when technical problems arise with internet networks. However, public complaint handling among government organizations is still fragmented many agencies manage complaints separately without proper coordination, leading to duplication and neglected cases (Scholl & Scholl, 2014). This condition highlights the importance of system integration to ensure effective complaint management.
- d. **Freedom to Create and Take Initiative** – The people of West Belitung have the freedom to express aspirations, take initiative, and file complaints regarding public services provided by Diskominfo, local agencies, and private actors. The BESADU Team continues to promote public engagement through regular outreach, aiming to maximize citizen participation. By giving citizens freedom and opportunity to voice concerns, the government can identify service issues more quickly and address them efficiently, which strengthens the overall performance of Smart Governance in the region (Brouwers et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025).

3. Efforts to Improve Community Participation in the BESADU Program

The Department of Communication and Informatics of West Belitung Regency is responsible for implementing government functions related to communication, informatics, cryptography, and statistics. Each division within the department operates under clearly defined policies to ensure high-quality service delivery. The department continuously develops accountable, transparent, and credible public policies to improve efficiency and deliver positive social impacts, thereby advancing smart and responsive governance. To ensure that complaint management is simple, fast, and coordinated, a BESADU Coordination and Administration Team has been established, comprising supervisors, coordinators, administrators, and liaisons from related regional apparatus.

Several strategic efforts have been made to increase public participation, including on-the-road outreach, radio broadcasts, and public awareness campaigns through banners and billboards displayed across government offices, private institutions, sub-districts, and community spaces. The department has also provided a dedicated mobile phone operated by the BESADU admin, equipped with WhatsApp for faster communication with designated agency liaisons. This innovation accelerates complaint responses and improves coordination.

As a result, communities have experienced tangible benefits from the BESADU program such as improved road conditions and more responsive services. Constructive feedback from citizens has become a valuable input for government institutions to identify service gaps and continuously improve the effectiveness of the BESADU program as a model of participatory Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency.

In addition, the Department of Communication and Informatics continues to strengthen institutional collaboration and community engagement to ensure the sustainability of the BESADU program. Regular evaluations and coordination meetings are conducted to monitor the progress of complaint handling and to identify obstacles faced by each agency involved. The department also plans to enhance the integration of the BESADU system with other public service applications to create a unified digital ecosystem for citizen services. Training sessions and capacity-building programs are being prepared for both government officials and community representatives to improve digital literacy, responsiveness, and data management skills. Through these continuous improvements, the BESADU program is expected to evolve not only as a complaint-handling mechanism but also as a strategic communication platform that strengthens transparency, accountability, and citizen trust in local governance.

4. Evaluation of Policy Integration and Technological Readiness

An additional finding from this study emphasizes that the success of Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency also depends heavily on policy integration and technological readiness. The current system shows a gap between digital innovation and institutional adaptation. While the BESADU platform has enabled faster communication between citizens and government, the absence of a centralized and integrated monitoring system has limited the ability of the Department of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo) to track complaint follow-ups comprehensively.

Moreover, several regional agencies still manage complaints separately, leading to duplication of tasks or unresolved issues. Technological infrastructure, such as stable internet connectivity and system interoperability among OPDs, remains a crucial challenge. Strengthening technological capacity and ensuring that all regional institutions adopt standardized digital procedures are necessary steps toward optimizing Smart Governance implementation.

the BESADU program has laid a strong foundation for digital participatory governance in West Belitung Regency. The combination of citizen engagement, digital transformation, and public service innovation has created a more transparent and interactive governance model. However, to achieve a fully mature Smart Governance ecosystem, continuous policy refinement, improved inter-agency coordination, and enhanced community digital literacy are needed. Through these improvements, the BESADU program can evolve into an exemplary model of Smart Governance that promotes inclusivity, accountability, and sustainable collaboration between government and society.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Belitung Channel of Aspirations and Complaints (BESADU) program in West Belitung Regency reflects a significant step toward realizing the concept of Smart Governance within the broader framework of Smart City development. Through the integration of technology in public service management, the government has created a more transparent and accessible platform that enables citizens to voice their aspirations, complaints, and feedback directly. This system strengthens participatory governance by ensuring that public voices are acknowledged and translated into administrative actions.

However, the study reveals that despite notable progress, several challenges remain in optimizing the implementation of Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency. Public participation in the BESADU program is still relatively low due to limited awareness, insufficient

integration among government agencies, and inconsistencies in complaint follow-up mechanisms. Many reports are not adequately processed or communicated back to the public, resulting in reduced citizen engagement. Additionally, the lack of a unified monitoring system across departments hampers effective coordination and transparency. These issues highlight the need for capacity-building among civil servants, enhanced inter-agency collaboration, and continuous technological improvements to ensure that BESADU operates effectively as a dynamic public service platform.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that strengthening Smart Governance in West Belitung Regency requires not only technological innovation but also institutional reform and community empowerment. The active involvement of citizens, coupled with efficient and transparent government practices, forms the foundation for sustainable development and inclusive governance. Future efforts should focus on improving the socio-technical ecosystem through consistent public outreach, the integration of monitoring systems, and the expansion of community digital literacy. By enhancing these aspects, the BESADU program can evolve into a model of participatory governance that not only resolves public complaints efficiently but also fosters long-term collaboration between government and society, paving the way for a truly smart and responsive local government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks are extended to Mr. Mohammad Iqbal, S.T., Head of the Department of Communication and Informatics of West Belitung Regency; Mr. Fithrorozi, S.Kom., M.E., Head of the Division of Public Communication and Information; Mrs. Upik Sumarti, S.S.; and Mrs. Erlina Setyowati Handayani, A.Md. for their assistance and provision of data during this research. Sincere appreciation is also conveyed to the community members who willingly participated as informants, whose valuable contributions greatly supported the smooth implementation of this study.

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