

Challenge and Solution of Election Supervisory Agency in Enforcing E-Voting Law for Transparent and Efficient Election

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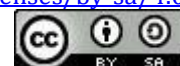
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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: 07-01-2026 Approved: 25-02-2026 Published: 06-03-2026	<p>Background: General elections constitute a fundamental democratic mechanism through which citizens exercise their right to choose government representatives; however, voter participation in Indonesia remains relatively low, as evidenced by persistently high Golongan Putih (Golput) rates from 2004 to 2024. This condition reflects ongoing public distrust in the electoral system, driven by perceptions of fraud, limited transparency, and dissatisfaction with the performance of elected leaders, which in turn threatens democratic legitimacy and political stability.</p> <p>Objective: This study proposes the adoption of an electronic voting system utilizing smart cards and multi-touchscreen technology as a potential solution to address these challenges.</p> <p>Method: The proposal draws on successful implementations in countries such as India and Brazil, as well as pilot experiences in Jembrana, Bali.</p> <p>Findings and Implications: E-voting is expected to enhance electoral efficiency, transparency, and accuracy while reducing the risks of fraud and human error, provided that robust data security measures are implemented to safeguard system integrity against cyber threats. The implementation of a modern and reliable e-voting system is therefore expected to restore public confidence in the electoral process, expand secure and accessible voting opportunities, and increase voter participation.</p> <p>Conclusion: Ultimately, this would strengthen democratic governance by ensuring that election outcomes more accurately reflect the aspirations and will of the people.</p>
Keywords: e-voting; election; abstain from voting	

INTRODUCTION

A general election (*pemilu*) is a process by which citizens elect their representatives in government through voting (Labolo, 2023; Siagian et al., 2022). In democratic theory, elections are understood as a fundamental mechanism of political participation and popular sovereignty, allowing citizens to express their preferences and influence the direction of state policy (Hudhaibi, 2023; McPhee & Sheridan, 2023; Meijer et al., 2018; Silalahi & Tampubolon, 2021). Elections are an important form of political

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participation in a democracy, as they provide an opportunity for citizens to voice their opinions and influence the direction of state policy (Arniti, 2020; Arpandi, 2023; Kharisma Wirayanti & Ananda Putra, 2024; Setiawan & Djafar, 2023). This process is generally regulated by constitutional and statutory frameworks to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in line with democratic principles. In elections, various candidates or political parties compete to win the most votes, which are then translated into seats in legislative bodies or executive positions. Thus, elections not only determine leaders and representatives of the people but also serve as an institutional reflection of the will and aspirations of the people.

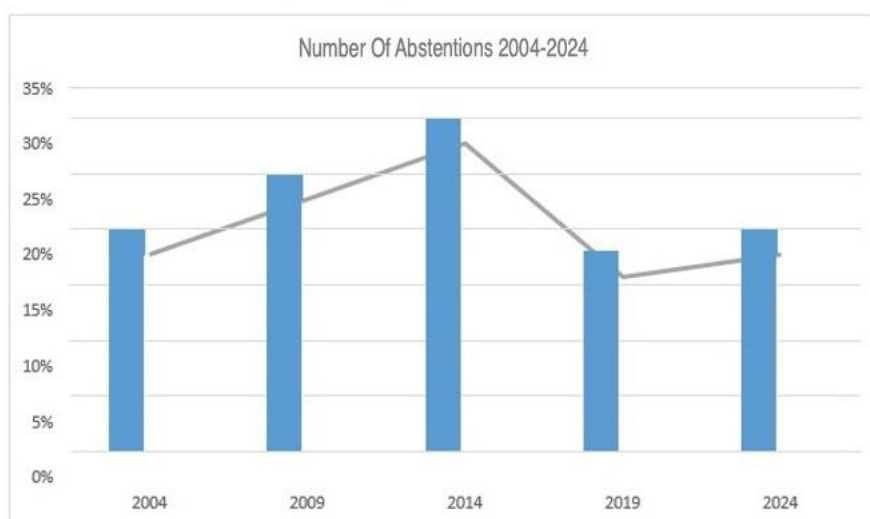


Figure 1. Number of Abstentions 2004-2024

The diagram above shows that public participation in elections still faces challenges that have not been fully resolved. Empirical election data from 2004 to 2024 shows that the number of people who choose not to vote (*Golongan Putih* or Golput) remains high. In 2004, the abstention rate reached 29,955,275 people, or approximately 20%, which then increased to 43,141,765 people, or approximately 25%, in 2009, and peaked in 2014 with 58,609,922 people, or 30%. Although in 2019 the number of abstainers dropped to 34,756,541 or 18%, in 2024 the number of abstainers surged again, reaching more than 40,194,706 people or around 20% of the total voters.

This phenomenon reflects a persistent and deep-rooted public distrust of the electoral system. Factors contributing to this low level of trust vary, from perceptions of fraud in the election process, a lack of transparency and accountability from election officials, to dissatisfaction with the performance of elected leaders in previous elections. From a democratic governance perspective, low voter turnout represents a significant challenge to Indonesian democracy, indicating that many people

feel their votes will not bring about meaningful change or that no candidate truly represents their aspirations (Bevir, 2006; Pribadi & Iqbal, 2022; Simpson et al., 2025). This condition signals the need for systematic evaluation and reform of the electoral system to restore public trust and ensure that elections function as an inclusive and representative manifestation of democracy.

Low public participation reflects a lack of citizen involvement in determining the direction of national policies and leaders, which can result in the election of leaders who do not represent the interests of the majority of the people (Fung, 2015; Fung Archon, 2015; Sugiyono, 2020). As a result, the resulting policies may not align with the needs and aspirations of the community. Furthermore, low participation also increases the risk of corruption and fraud in the election process, due to minimal public oversight. The Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) identified 19 major issues related to the 2024 elections, highlighting various challenges in the election administration, including issues of integrity and transparency. This further underscores the importance of improvement efforts to restore public trust in the electoral system. As presented in Table 1, voter abstention (Golongan Putih/Golput) data from the 2004–2024 general elections provides empirical support for this condition and illustrates the persistent pattern of low electoral participation.

Table 1. Voter Abstention

No	Voting Issues	Problems Related to the Implementation of Vote Counting
1	37,466 polling stations saw voting open later than 07.00.	11,233 polling stations where Sirekap was found could not be accessed by election supervisors, witnesses and/or the public.
2	In 12,284 polling stations, it was found that aids for the visually impaired (braille templates) were not available at the polling stations.	3,463 polling stations were found to have started counting votes before the voting time was over.
3	10,496 polling stations had incomplete voting logistics.	2,162 polling stations were found to have discrepancies between the number of valid and invalid ballots counted and the number of voters who exercised their right to vote.
4	8,219 polling stations were found to have special voters who used their voting rights in a way that did not correspond to the sub-district domicile stated on their e-KTP.	1,895 TPS found by TPS Supervisors were not provided with Model C.
5	6,084 polling stations experienced swapped ballot papers.	Witnesses, TPS supervisors and members of the public found that 1,888 polling stations were unable to

No	Voting Issues	Problems Related to the Implementation of Vote Counting
		clearly witness the vote counting process.
6	At 5,836 polling stations, it was found that there were companions for voters with disabilities who did not sign the companion's statement letter (Model C form. COMPANION-KPU).	1,473 polling stations were found to have intimidated election organizers.
7	5,449 polling stations found by the KPPS did not explain the procedures for implementing voting and vote counting.	—
8	At 3,724 polling stations, the DPT Announcement Board was not installed around the polling stations and did not contain marked voters for voters who no longer met the requirements.	—
9	At 3,521 polling stations, witnesses were found wearing attributes containing elements or serial numbers of candidate pairs/political parties/DPD.	—
10	At 2,632 polling stations, there was mobilization and/or directing of voters' choices (by successful teams, election participants, and/or organizers) to exercise their voting rights at the polling stations.	—
11	2,509 polling stations were found to have witnesses who were unable to show a written mandate letter from the campaign team or election participants.	—
12	2,413 polling stations were found to have voters using their voting rights more than once.	—
13	2,271 polling stations were found to have intimidated voters and/or election organizers at the polling stations.	—

Source: Data Processed

From the table above, 3 significant problems in the election system are evident, indicating that if these problems are not addressed immediately, the quality of future elections will likely continue to decline. This not only worsens the image of the election itself, but also has the potential to increase the number of golput (abstentions), where more voters choose not

to exercise their right to vote. 3 Kompas Tv, Bawaslu Finds 19 Problems in Voting and Counting of Votes in the 2024 Election, Feb 15, 2024 This decline in voter participation will further weaken the legitimacy of the election results and threaten the stability and progress of the country's democracy.

Therefore, overhauling the election system by adopting e-voting is a crucial step to address the various problems that have plagued the democratic process in Indonesia. E-voting offers significant potential to improve election efficiency and transparency by minimizing the possibility of fraud and reducing human error in vote counting. The use of advanced technologies, such as smart cards and multi-touchscreens, can transform the way people participate in elections by providing a faster, more accurate, and more secure platform. This can also improve the public's image of elections by providing a clearer picture of the integrity and fairness of the electoral process, which has often been questioned.

Furthermore, the ease of access offered by an e-voting system has the potential to increase public participation and reduce the number of non-voters (*golput*), which in turn can strengthen the legitimacy of election results. With increased public trust in the electoral system, it is hoped that leaders with greater integrity and who are able to more accurately reflect the aspirations of the people will emerge. This contributes to the progress and stability of the country's democracy, creating a more stable political environment that is responsive to the needs of the people. The implementation of e-voting, if carried out correctly and accompanied by strict security measures, has the potential to reform the electoral system in a better direction and more in line with modern democratic standards.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach through a structured literature review to provide a comprehensive analysis of persistent issues in the implementation of general elections in Indonesia (Sugiyono, 2020). The study systematically examines peer-reviewed academic articles, official publications issued by election management and supervisory institutions such as the General Elections Commission (KPU) and the Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), as well as relevant policy documents and credible secondary reports published between 2004 and 2024. The inclusion criteria focus on sources that address voter participation, electoral integrity, governance challenges, and the application of electronic voting systems, while literature lacking direct relevance or analytical depth is excluded. Data are analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns related to public trust, administrative weaknesses, and barriers to transparent and effective elections. Based on this analytical framework, the

study explores the adoption of an e-voting system utilizing smart cards and multi-touchscreen technology as a potential solution to improve electoral efficiency and transparency. The proposed system is expected to reduce vote manipulation and human error in vote counting while simultaneously enhancing public participation by providing more accessible and secure voting mechanisms. Through this methodological approach, the study seeks to contribute to the formulation of a more ideal democratic order by strengthening electoral credibility and ensuring that election outcomes more accurately and reliably reflect the aspirations and will of the people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal Basis for the Implementation of E-Voting in Indonesia

The implementation of e-voting in Indonesia is legally feasible and supported by a strong constitutional and statutory framework. Article 22E of the 1945 Constitution explicitly mandates that general elections must be conducted directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly every five years. This constitutional principle does not restrict the method of voting, allowing for technological innovation as long as these core democratic values are upheld. Furthermore, Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections regulates electoral mechanisms and procedures, including provisions that allow the use of information technology to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in election administration. Additional legal reinforcement is provided through regulations issued by the General Elections Commission (PKPU), which operationalize the use of technology within electoral processes. Collectively, this legal framework indicates that e-voting does not contradict constitutional norms but rather complements them by strengthening electoral integrity, expanding voter participation, and reinforcing public trust in election outcomes, thereby contributing to the consolidation of democratic quality in Indonesia (Bachmid & Djanggih, 2022).

Budget Readiness for E-Voting Implementation

From a financial standpoint, the feasibility of implementing e-voting can be assessed through the availability and allocation of the election budget, particularly for technological infrastructure such as RFID readers and touchscreen monitors. Based on information published on the official website of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), the total budget allocated to the General Elections Commission (KPU) for the 2024 General Election amounts to Rp 28,398,893,459,000. This budget is distributed across various electoral stages, including logistics, training, vote counting, operational activities, and technology-related expenditures, many of which are directly relevant to supporting an e-voting system. The structure of this

allocation demonstrates that technological integration is already embedded within the existing electoral budget framework.

KPU Budget Allocation Details

1. Socialization, Counseling, and Technical Guidance Stages:

A total of Rp 172.3 billion has been allocated for outreach, education, and technical guidance on election stages, with the primary goal of increasing public awareness and participation in the election process. These funds will be used to provide clear information regarding all election stages and to train election officials to ensure they are competent in carrying out their duties. Through this allocation, it is hoped that all members of the public and election officials will have a thorough understanding of the election process, thereby increasing voter participation and ensuring the quality of election implementation. Facilities and Infrastructure in the Technology Sector

2. Information and Communication and Technical Election Training:

A budget of Rp 370 billion has been allocated for the development of facilities and infrastructure in the field of information and communication technology and technical election training. This allocation includes the purchase of hardware and software, network infrastructure development, and technical training for election officials. This development aims to improve the efficiency and security of the election system, including the implementation of e-voting technology.

3. Logistics Management, Procurement, Reporting, and Documentation:

A total of Rp 2.44 trillion has been allocated for the management, procurement, reporting, and documentation of election logistics, with the aim of ensuring all logistical needs, such as ballots, ballot boxes, and stationery, are available and properly distributed throughout Indonesia. Efficient and timely logistics management is key to ensuring the smooth implementation of elections, so that every citizen can exercise their right to vote without hindrance. This funding allocation also covers accurate reporting and documentation, which are crucial for the transparency and accountability of the overall election process.

4. Formation, Selection, Honorarium, and Operation of Ad Hoc Bodies:

The largest amount, Rp 18.6 trillion, is allocated for the formation, selection, honorariums, and operations of the Ad Hoc Body. This Ad Hoc Body consists of election officials at the central and regional levels, tasked with organizing and overseeing elections. This allocation covers officer honorariums, operational costs, and the selection and training process.

5. Collection, Counting, Recapitulation, and Determination of Results:

Rp 2.60 trillion has been allocated for voting, counting, recapitulation, and determination of election results, ensuring each stage runs smoothly and

transparently. This fund is used to guarantee the accuracy of the vote count and the accountable determination of election results, covering operational costs for polling stations and honoraria for officials involved in each process. This budget is designed to support all election-related activities, from polling station preparation to the final recapitulation, so that the results can be legally accepted by all relevant parties.

6. Legal Advocacy, Election Dispute Resolution, and Regulation Drafting:

A total of Rp 27.30 billion has been allocated for legal advocacy, election dispute resolution, and regulatory development to ensure a free and fair election. These funds will be used to address various disputes that may arise during the election, provide legal assistance to those in need, and develop regulations that support a transparent and accountable election process. This allocation also covers costs for legal consultations, mediation, and arbitration, as well as the development of policies that can anticipate and resolve potential conflicts or violations during the election, ensuring that each stage of the election is conducted in accordance with democratic principles and applicable law.

7. Campaign and Pledge:

Rp 886.64 billion has been allocated to support campaign activities and the swearing-in of elected officials. This allocation is used to fund various campaign activities carried out by political parties and candidates, ensuring they can effectively convey their programs and visions and missions to the public, and comply with all applicable regulations. Furthermore, these funds also cover costs associated with the swearing-in process for elected officials, ensuring the ceremony is conducted solemnly and in accordance with established protocols. Therefore, this allocation aims to ensure the smooth running and integrity of the campaign process and the legitimacy of the officials who will take office.

8. Operational and Non-Operational Expenditures:

Rp 2.6 trillion is allocated for operational and non-operational expenses, covering various costs related to the daily operations of the General Elections Commission (KPU) and other supporting activities essential to the implementation of the election. This budget covers administrative costs, office maintenance, equipment procurement, and support services that ensure the smooth running of KPU activities. In addition, these funds are also used to finance non-operational activities such as outreach, voter education, and programs to increase public participation in the election. With this allocation, the KPU is expected to carry out its duties efficiently and effectively, ensuring that every aspect of the election is implemented in accordance with established regulations and standards.

9. Regional Elections for 4 New Autonomous Regions (DOB):

An allocation of Rp 974.35 billion is designated for elections in four new autonomous regions, covering logistics, outreach, training, and operations. This allocation highlights the need for adaptable electoral systems, including e-voting, that can function effectively in newly established administrative areas.

Cost Calculation for E-Voting Equipment

In the proposed e-voting system, conventional voting, manual counting, and recapitulation processes are no longer required. Consequently, funds allocated for these activities can be redirected toward the procurement of e-voting devices. Based on data from online procurement platforms, RFID readers are priced between Rp 500,000 and Rp 1,000,000, while touchscreen monitors range from Rp 3,000,000 to Rp 5,000,000. Using the upper price range to ensure conservative budgeting, the estimated cost per polling station, assuming four devices per station, is Rp 24,000,000. With a total of 823,220 polling stations nationwide, the estimated total procurement cost reaches Rp 19,757,280,000,000, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 2. Estimated E-Voting Equipment Budget

Item	Unit Price (Rp)	Units per TPS	Total TPS	Total Cost (Rp)
RFID Reader	1,000,000	1	823,220	823,220,000,000
Touchscreen Monitor	5,000,000	3	823,220	18,934,060,000,000
Total per TPS	6,000,000	4	-	24,000,000
Grand Total	-	-	823,220	19,757,280,000,000

Source: Data Processed

Given the existing allocation of Rp 2.60 trillion for voting, counting, and recapitulation, this analysis indicates that, from a budgetary perspective, the KPU has a substantial foundation to support the gradual implementation of an e-voting system.

Technical Design of the Proposed E-Voting System

The proposed e-voting system is designed to enhance electoral efficiency, integrity, and inclusiveness through the integration of smart cards (electronic identity cards/KTP), RFID readers, and multi-touchscreen devices. Conceptually, the system operates similarly to an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), where voters authenticate their identity by scanning their electronic ID cards using an RFID reader. This authentication is synchronized with the

Permanent Voter List (DPT) and is complemented by physical verification at polling stations to prevent identity fraud and ensure procedural legitimacy.

Once verified, voters are presented with five electoral choices, namely President, Regional Representative Council (DPD), People's Representative Council (DPR), Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD. After a vote is cast, the system automatically blocks the voter's ID card from further use, ensuring that each voter can vote only once. This mechanism minimizes the risk of multiple voting and manipulation, as voter status is immediately updated in the centralized database.

In the vote counting and recapitulation stage, manual processes are eliminated. The system automatically tallies votes and displays the results in real time, enabling faster announcement of outcomes and higher transparency. By reducing human intervention, the system lowers administrative errors, shortens the recapitulation process, and alleviates the workload of election officials, which is particularly relevant considering the fatalities caused by exhaustion during the 2019 simultaneous elections.

To provide a clearer overview of the technical workflow and to systematically summarize each operational stage of the proposed e-voting system, the main components and processes are synthesized in the following figure 2.



Figure 2. Summary of how e-voting works as follows:

From a budgetary perspective, the technical design is supported by existing allocations. The Rp 2.60 trillion budget initially designated for voting, counting, and recapitulation can be redirected toward procuring e-voting devices. Based on conservative price estimate Rp 1,000,000 per RFID reader

and Rp 5,000,000 per touchscreen monitor, the total cost per polling station is Rp 24,000,000, assuming four devices per station. With 823,220 polling stations nationwide, the total estimated procurement cost reaches Rp 19,757,280,000,000. This calculation indicates that the General Elections Commission (KPU) has a sufficient financial foundation to support the gradual implementation of the proposed e-voting system.

Empirical Evidence from Domestic and International Experiences

Empirical evidence from international and domestic contexts demonstrates the feasibility of e-voting implementation (Hainey et al., 2016; Li et al., 2024; Nielsen et al., 2017; Zainuddin et al., 2020). Internationally, countries such as India and Brazil have successfully adopted e-voting systems, showing that elections can be conducted efficiently, securely, and reliably even in regions with limited technological infrastructure. These cases illustrate that e-voting systems do not necessarily require high-bandwidth internet connectivity, provided that the system architecture is designed to operate effectively under constrained conditions.

In Indonesia, e-voting has been implemented successfully on a limited scale. The most prominent example is Jembrana Regency, Bali, where e-voting has been used in hamlet head elections since 2009, with a total of 54 elections conducted electronically. This implementation has been shown to increase transparency, public trust, and voter participation. Similarly, the use of e-voting in the 2017 village head election in Babakan Wetan Village demonstrated the system's capacity to restore public confidence in electoral integrity and result accuracy.

Additional empirical relevance is reflected in the allocation of Rp 974.35 billion for regional head elections (pilkada) in four New Autonomous Regions. This allocation covers logistics, community outreach, training for election officials, and operational costs, indicating the government's commitment to ensuring fair and efficient elections in newly established regions. The flexibility of e-voting systems makes them particularly suitable for such regions, as they reduce logistical complexity while enhancing administrative efficiency.

Despite these positive experiences, challenges remain, particularly regarding technological infrastructure readiness, system security, and public trust. Stable internet access, especially in remote areas, continues to be a concern. However, the proposed e-voting system is designed to function with minimal connectivity, mitigating these limitations. Ensuring robust system security against cyber threats, alongside comprehensive training for election officials and sustained public awareness campaigns, remains essential. When supported by adequate preparation and institutional commitment, empirical

evidence suggests that e-voting can serve as an effective instrument for increasing transparency, participation, and electoral legitimacy.

E-voting Achieves Good Governance in Elections

The principles of Good Governance are in accordance with Law No. 30 of 2014 article 10 paragraph (1), namely the AUPB referred to in this Law includes the principles: 12

- a. legal certainty;
- b. benefits;
- c. impartiality;
- d. accuracy;
- e. not abuse authority;
- f. openness;
- g. public interest; and
- h. good service.

From a Good Governance perspective, e-voting clearly embodies all the principles of Good Governance by immediately displaying the number of votes in the election after voting, eliminating hidden information that could lead to vote manipulation. Furthermore, the government has been careful in using electronic voting for the public interest in elections, resulting in more democratic and transparent elections. Therefore, with all its advantages, e-voting can truly achieve Good Governance in elections compared to conventional elections, which often face numerous problems in their implementation.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that low voter participation and high abstention rates in Indonesia's general elections point to enduring structural issues within the electoral system, including public distrust due to fraud perceptions, limited transparency, and dissatisfaction with elected leaders. The introduction of an electronic voting system, featuring smart cards and multi-touchscreen technology, offers a potential solution to enhance electoral efficiency, transparency, and reliability. Pilot implementations, such as in Jembrana, Bali, suggest that e-voting can improve administrative accuracy and build public confidence if accompanied by robust data security measures. However, the study has limitations, focusing primarily on technological and institutional factors, with limited attention to socio-cultural aspects like digital literacy disparities, infrastructure gaps, and voter readiness. The research is largely conceptual, lacking empirical evidence on the long-term impact of e-voting on voter participation, trust, and democratic consolidation. Future

research should involve comparative studies across regions with varying technological capacities and longitudinal studies to better assess the effects of e-voting on democratic legitimacy and ensure its sustainable implementation in Indonesia.

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