

# The Effectiveness of Bureaucratic Reform on Public Service Quality in Post-Pandemic Indonesia

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## Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of implementing Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Services and Law Number 5 of 2014 on the State Civil Apparatus within the context of post-pandemic bureaucratic reform in Indonesia. The research employs a normative juridical method, focusing on the analysis of positive law, academic literature, and government policies related to bureaucratic reform. The study examines how the implementation of both laws has influenced the improvement of public service governance and the professionalism of civil servants in the post-pandemic era. The findings reveal that the enforcement of these laws has contributed significantly to the enhancement of public service standards, the application of merit-based systems, and the acceleration of bureaucratic digitalization. However, the effectiveness of the reform remains constrained by the digital competency gap among civil servants, weak accountability mechanisms, and limited institutional integration. This study emphasizes that accelerating bureaucratic reform is a strategic necessity through improving civil servant competencies, strengthening oversight mechanisms, and expanding digital-based services to ensure that public services operate efficiently, transparently, inclusively, and fairly within the framework of modern governance in the post-pandemic era.

## 1. Introduction

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is a national strategic agenda aimed at creating a clean, effective, transparent, and accountable government. This issue has strengthened since the 1998 reform and is increasingly structured through Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services and Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN. These two regulations are the basis for improving bureaucracy and public services. Wahyurudhanto<sup>1</sup> stated that bureaucratic reform reflects a shift from traditional public administration to modern public management that emphasizes efficiency, results-orientation, and community satisfaction.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 accelerated the need for bureaucratic transformation towards a digital and adaptive system. Bureaucratic reform is tested to continue to provide fast and fair services in the midst of social restrictions. Faedlulloh et al.<sup>2</sup> emphasized that the pandemic exposed bureaucratic weaknesses in terms of coordination, human resource capacity, and the readiness of information technology infrastructure. However, this situation is also a momentum to accelerate the digitization of the bureaucracy and strengthen the implementation of the two laws so that public services become more responsive.

In the context of Law No. 25 of 2009, public services are the right of every citizen and must be carried out professionally and accountably. Meanwhile, Law No. 5 of 2014 mandates that civil servants must be competent, neutral, and have integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> Albertus Wahyurudhanto. "Critical Reorientation of Bureaucratic Reform and Good Governance in Public Sector Administration in Indonesia." *Webology* 17, no. 2 (2020): 311

<sup>2</sup> Dodi Faedlulloh, Vina Karmilasari, and Anisa Utami. "Examining the Indonesia Bureaucracy Response and Problem in Pandemic Times: A Preliminary Diagnostic Study." (2023)

The synergy between the two is expected to strengthen the effectiveness of cross-sectoral bureaucratic reform. Pribadi<sup>3</sup> emphasized that improving the quality of public services is not enough just with regulations, but also requires civil servants who have digital capacity and hold service ethics.

The implementation of post-pandemic bureaucratic reform shows progress as well as challenges. The digitization of services such as Online Public Service Malls and SP4N-LAPOR shows an increase in the effectiveness of the e-government mechanism. However, challenges arise in the form of digital capacity gaps between the central and regional governments, resistance to work culture, and weak accountability. Sebayang et al.<sup>4</sup> found that the effectiveness of reforms is often hampered by overlapping regulations and the unpreparedness of civil servants in the technology system. This shows that the success of reform is not only determined by policies, but also by human resource readiness and institutional commitment.

Setiadi<sup>5</sup> shows that public satisfaction with public services is still fluctuating due to the inequality in service quality between urban and rural areas. The lack of digital infrastructure and the disparity in ASN capabilities worsen this condition. This emphasizes the need for an affirmative strategy for regional bureaucracies so as

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<sup>3</sup> Ulung Pribadi. "BUREAUCRATIC REFORM, PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMANCE, AND CITIZENS'SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA." *Viešoji politika ir administravimas* 20, no. 2 (2021): 319

<sup>4</sup> Herda Sri Rahayu Sebayang, Marlon Sihombing, and Warjio Warjio. "Reformasi Birokrasi dalam Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik pada Dinas Penanaman Modal dan Pelayanan Terpadu Satu Pintu (DPM-PTSP) Kabupaten Karo." *PERSPEKTIF* 11, no. 4 (2022): 1479

<sup>5</sup> Setiadi, Ade. "Reformasi Pelayanan Publik dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Kepuasan Publik." *Syntax Literate; Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 7, no. 11 (2022): 17398

not to be left behind in the transformation of national services. Fauzi et al.<sup>6</sup> also highlighted the implementation of new work systems such as work from home and hybrid systems that can increase flexibility, but still require strengthening performance supervision.

From the perspective of administrative law, a normative juridical approach is important to assess the extent to which the two laws have been implemented in accordance with the principles of good governance and the general principles of good governance. Dwiyanto<sup>7</sup> emphasized that bureaucratic reform is not only a managerial process, but also a legal process that ensures that every administrative action has normative legitimacy and is oriented towards public services. Research on bureaucratic reform must assess the suitability between legal norms and bureaucratic practices post-pandemic.

Although the reforms have been going on for more than a decade, various challenges still arise until 2023. Sparrow et al.<sup>8</sup> emphasized that the acceleration of bureaucratic reform is an urgent need in facing public expectations for fast, transparent, and digital services. The government must balance technological innovation with the principles of legal certainty, justice, and accountability.

Against this background, this study analyzes two main issues: first, how the implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009 and Law No. 5 of 2014 contributes to the effectiveness of bureaucratic reform in improving the quality of public services post-

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<sup>6</sup> Arief Rachmat Fauzi, Ratri Istania, and Bambang Giyanto. "Adaptasi Sistem Kerja Baru Pada Masa Pandemi Dalam Pelayanan Publik." *Publikauma: Jurnal Administrasi Publik Universitas Medan Area* 11, no. 2 (2023): 91

<sup>7</sup> Dwiyanto, Agus. *Reformasi birokrasi publik di Indonesia*. Ugm Press, 2021

<sup>8</sup> Robert Sparrow, Teguh Dartanto, and Renate Hartwig. "Indonesia under the new normal: Challenges and the way ahead." *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 56, no. 3 (2020): 275

pandemic; Second, what specific challenges are faced and the urgency of accelerating bureaucratic reform as a strategic need to build a resilient, adaptive, and public satisfaction-oriented bureaucracy. These two questions are important to understand the effectiveness of post-pandemic bureaucratic reform and how the legal framework can accelerate that transformation.

## **2. Methods**

This research uses a normative juridical method, which is an approach that focuses on the study of applicable positive legal norms, legal doctrines, and legal principles that govern the implementation of bureaucratic and public service reform in Indonesia. This approach is used to understand and examine how the provisions in Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services and Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus (ASN) are implemented in bureaucratic practices after the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the research is not directed at the collection of empirical data through field observation, but on the analysis of written legal materials that are the basis for the implementation of bureaucratic and public service reforms.

The types of legal materials used in this study consist of three categories, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include relevant laws and regulations such as Law No. 25 of 2009, Law No. 5 of 2014, as well as other implementing regulations such as Government Regulations, Presidential Regulations, and regulations from the Ministry of State Apparatus

Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform.<sup>9</sup> Secondary legal materials are in the form of scientific literature, research results, journal articles, government agency reports, and academic publications that discuss the implementation of bureaucratic reform and the quality of public services in the post-pandemic era. Meanwhile, tertiary legal materials are used as support, in the form of legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and sources of explanations of state administrative law terminology.

The technique of collecting legal materials is carried out through literature studies by inventorying, studying, and comparing various legal sources and literature that are relevant to the focus of the research. Data analysis is carried out in a normative qualitative manner, namely by interpreting and relating the legal norms contained in laws and regulations with their implementation practices in the field, as reported in research results and government policy documents. The results of this analysis are then used to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the two laws in supporting bureaucratic reform and identify the challenges and urgency of accelerating their implementation. Thus, this normative juridical method provides a systematic analytical framework to understand the extent to which public law principles have been embodied in Indonesian bureaucratic practices post-pandemic.

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<sup>9</sup> Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Republik Indonesia (KemenPAN-RB). “Pelaksanaan Reformasi Birokrasi Sekretariat Jenderal DPR RI Tahun 2023.” Jakarta: Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Republik Indonesia, 2023. Accessed November 22, 2023. <https://share.google/wRQin9BhglzOAKqQt>

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009 and Law No. 5 of 2014 in Post-Pandemic Bureaucratic Reform**

The implementation of Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services is an important basis in realizing responsive and community-oriented services. After the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a paradigm shift from conventional services to digital and adaptive services. The government adjusts the Public Service Standards (SPP) to the demands of the public who increasingly want fast, transparent, and efficient services. Innovations such as online queues, the issuance of electronic documents, and the disclosure of public information are part of the implementation of good public services (Personal, 2021). This transformation also encourages agencies to strengthen internal governance so that services remain accountable in accordance with the principles of administrative justice regulated by law.

The acceleration of digitalization in various government agencies can also be seen from the launch of the Online Public Service Mall (MPP Online), the integration of SP4N-LAPOR, and the implementation of the Online Single Submission (OSS) digital licensing platform as part of digital-based bureaucratic reform.<sup>10</sup> This effort shows the government's adjustment to the needs of post-pandemic services that demand efficiency and flexibility. This digital approach expands public access to services, especially in the health, business licensing, and

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<sup>10</sup> Arief Rachmat Fauzi, Ratri Istania, and Bambang Riyanto. "Adaptasi Sistem Kerja Baru Pada Masa Pandemi Dalam Pelayanan Publik." *Publikauma: Jurnal Administrasi Publik Universitas Medan Area* 11, no. 2 (2023): 91

population administration sectors. This is in line with the principle of good governance that places the community as the center of public services.<sup>11</sup>

However, the success of the implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009 is still uneven. Sebayang et al.<sup>12</sup> noted that there is a significant gap between urban and rural areas regarding the readiness of digital infrastructure and human resource capacity. Urban areas are faster to adopt innovation because they are supported by technology and trained bureaucrats, while many underdeveloped areas still face internet limitations and lack of training of apparatus in digital services. This condition emphasizes the need for affirmative policies through continuous mentoring and training so that the transformation of public services takes place inclusive in all regions.<sup>13</sup>

In the implementation of Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN, a major change can be seen in the transformation of the ASN management system. The merit system began to be implemented consistently through competency-based recruitment, objective promotion, and performance-based performance assessment. The goal is to form a professional and nepotism-free bureaucracy. Kurnianingsih et

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<sup>11</sup> Setiadi, Ade. "Reformasi Pelayanan Publik dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Kepuasan Publik." *Syntax Literate; Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 7, no. 11 (2022): 17399

<sup>12</sup> Herda Sri Rahayu Sebayang, Marlon Sihombing, and Warjio Warjio. "Reformasi Birokrasi dalam Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik pada Dinas Penanaman Modal dan Pelayanan Terpadu Satu Pintu (DPM-PTSP) Kabupaten Karo." *PERSPEKTIF* 11, no. 4 (2022): 1479

<sup>13</sup> Mark Turner, Eko Prasojo, and Rudiarto Sumarwono. "The challenge of reforming big bureaucracy in Indonesia." *Policy Studies* 43, no. 2 (2022): 343

al.<sup>14</sup> emphasized that the shift towards meritocracy is important for improving the quality of public services because ASN is the main implementer of state policies.

ASN is also required to adapt to the service model of the digital era. After the pandemic, the work pattern of ASN has changed through the implementation of work from home and hybrid systems. This change is not only technical, but also a transformation of work culture towards a dynamic and results-oriented bureaucracy.<sup>15</sup> The government is increasing the digital literacy of civil servants through training, because technology is a key element of future services. Sparrow et al.<sup>16</sup> emphasized that mastery of information technology by civil servants is a prerequisite for the success of bureaucratic reform.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the ASN Law is also seen from the increase in the integrity and professionalism of ASN. A performance-based reward and punishment system has begun to be implemented to strengthen accountability. Dwiyanto<sup>17</sup> explained that the success of bureaucratic reform is determined not only by changes in organizational structure, but also by the behavior of civil servants that reflect public integrity and ethics in accordance with the principles of good governance.

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<sup>14</sup> Fitri Kurnianingsih, Nazaki Nazaki, and Oksep Adhayanto. "BUREAUCRATIC REFORM STRATEGY EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE SECRETARIAT OF DPRD KEPULAUAN RIAU PROVINCE." *Ganaya: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4, no. 2 (2021): 568

<sup>15</sup> Arief Rachmat Fauzi, Ratri Istania, and Bambang Riyanto. "Adaptasi Sistem Kerja Baru Pada Masa Pandemi Dalam Pelayanan Publik." *Publikauma: Jurnal Administrasi Publik Universitas Medan Area* 11, no. 2 (2023): 92

<sup>16</sup> Robert Sparrow, Teguh Dartanto, and Renate Hartwig. "Indonesia under the new normal: Challenges and the way ahead." *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 56, no. 3 (2020): 274

<sup>17</sup> Dwiyanto, Agus. *Reformasi birokrasi publik di Indonesia*. Ugm Press, 2021

The relationship between the two laws is very close in bureaucratic reform. Law No. 25 of 2009 is a driver of reform output in the form of quality and responsive public services. On the contrary, Law No. 5 of 2014 strengthens reform inputs through the development of professional and integrity civil servants.<sup>18</sup> The synergy between the two creates a balance between the quality of the service system and the capacity of the bureaucratic implementer, as well as the foundation of the 2020–2025 Thematic Bureaucratic Reform which focuses on public services with a direct impact.

However, the effectiveness of the implementation of these two laws still faces various obstacles, especially cross-agency coordination, data integration, and consistency of performance evaluation. Many institutions are still running sectorally without adequate data synchronization, causing inefficiencies. Hawari and Kartini<sup>19</sup> emphasized that weak collaboration between agencies leads to duplication of programs and overlapping authority. Therefore, institutional consolidation and strengthening results-based evaluation are important steps.

Overall, the implementation of the two laws has encouraged the transformation of the Indonesian bureaucracy through the digitalization of services, strengthening the merit system, and changing the work culture of civil servants. However, the sustainability of reform requires a commitment to law, politics, and

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<sup>18</sup> Albertus Wahyurudhanto. "Critical Reorientation of Bureaucratic Reform and Good Governance in Public Sector Administration in Indonesia." *Webology* 17, no. 2 (2020): 311

<sup>19</sup> Alhilal Yusril Hawari, and Dede Sri Kartini. "Transformasi Birokrasi di Indonesia Pasca Pandemi." *Jurnal Pemerintahan dan Kebijakan (JPK)* 4, no. 2 (2023): 128

continuous supervision so that reform does not stop at regulations, but is truly realized in effective, transparent, and fair public services for all citizens.

### **3.2. The Challenges and Urgency of Post-Pandemic Bureaucratic Reform**

Although bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has shown progress, the implementation of Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services and Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN until 2023 still faces substantive challenges. The two main issues that consistently arise are the gap in the digital capacity of the apparatus and the weak accountability mechanism for public services. Both affect the effectiveness of reform because it is directly related to the competence of human resources of the apparatus and institutional integrity in providing services to the community.

The gap in the digital capacity of civil servants is a fundamental problem in the modern bureaucracy. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalization of services, the ability of civil servants to operate digital systems remains limited. The Ministry of PAN-RB (2023) stated that more than 60% of civil servants only have basic digital literacy, so adaptation to the online system is slow and uneven. This has an impact on the implementation of e-government programs such as integrated services, electronic licensing, and public complaint mechanisms. Sparrow et al.<sup>20</sup> emphasized that the low digital literacy of civil servants can widen the gap between regulations and practices, because technology that is supposed to improve efficiency is actually a burden for unprepared apparatus.

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Sparrow, Teguh Dartanto, and Renate Hartwig. "Indonesia under the new normal: Challenges and the way ahead." *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 56, no. 3 (2020): 272

This limitation is exacerbated by an uneven information technology infrastructure. Sebayang et al.<sup>21</sup> found that agencies in central and urban areas are faster to adopt digital services, while service units in the regions still rely on manual systems due to network and device limitations. This inequality hinders smart service optimization and results in disparities in service quality. Faedlulloh et al.<sup>22</sup> assessed that digital transformation will not succeed without sustainable human resource capacity building, both through technical training and work culture changes.

From a legal perspective, the low digital capacity of civil servants shows challenges in the implementation of Law No. 5 of 2014 and Law No. 25 of 2009. The ASN Law demands competency-based professionalization, while the Public Service Law mandates easy, fast, and adaptive services. When digital competence is minimal, these two legal provisions are difficult to realize optimally. Dwiyanto<sup>23</sup> emphasized that the professionalism of civil servants includes the ability to integrate technology to increase efficiency and transparency. Therefore, digital capacity building is an urgent legal and policy need.

In addition to the capacity of the apparatus, weak accountability and supervision of public services are also a big challenge. Even though SP4N-LAPOR! has been implemented nationally, the effectiveness of handling reports is still low.

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<sup>21</sup> Herda Sri Rahayu Sebayang, Marlon Sihombing, and Warjio Warjio. "Reformasi Birokrasi dalam Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik pada Dinas Penanaman Modal dan Pelayanan Terpadu Satu Pintu (DPM-PTSP) Kabupaten Karo." *PERSPEKTIF* 11, no. 4 (2022): 1481

<sup>22</sup> Dodi Faedlulloh, Vina Karmilasari, and Anisa Utami. "Examining the Indonesia Bureaucracy Response and Problem in Pandemic Times: A Preliminary Diagnostic Study." (2023)

<sup>23</sup> Dwiyanto, Agus. *Reformasi birokrasi publik di Indonesia*. Ugm Press, 2021

Setiadi<sup>24</sup> noted that many community reports were not followed up transparently and quickly, and many agencies had not included this complaint system in internal evaluation. Hawari and Kartini<sup>25</sup> added that weak supervision shows that there is still resistance to public openness and participation, even though Law No. 25 of 2009 requires service providers to open participation spaces and provide periodic evaluations.

Low accountability is also related to the implementation of the principle of ASN responsibility in Law No. 5 of 2014. The internal supervision system is still administrative and has not ensured personal responsibility. Many audit findings were not accompanied by strict sanctions, creating the impression of impunity. Pribadi<sup>26</sup> emphasized that weak rewards and punishments reduce the motivation of civil servants to innovate and maintain integrity.

These two challenges are clearly seen in the findings of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022 which recorded more than 8,292 reports of maladministration, especially related to service delays, data input errors, and lack of competence of digital officers.<sup>27</sup> The general pattern shows that service constraints are often caused by a combination of low digital capacity and weak supervision.

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<sup>24</sup> Setiadi, Ade. "Reformasi Pelayanan Publik dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Kepuasan Publik." *Syntax Literate; Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 7, no. 11 (2022): 17398

<sup>25</sup> Alhilal Yusril Hawari, and Dede Sri Kartini. "Transformasi Birokrasi di Indonesia Pasca Pandemi." *Jurnal Pemerintahan dan Kebijakan (JPK)* 4, no. 2 (2023): 124

<sup>26</sup> Ulung Pribadi. "BUREAUCRATIC REFORM, PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMANCE, AND CITIZENS'SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA." *Viešoji politika ir administravimas* 20, no. 2 (2021): 316

<sup>27</sup> Ombudsman Republik Indonesia. "Laporan Tabungan Ombudsman Republik Indonesia Tahun 2022." Jakarta: Ombudsman Republik Indonesia, 2022. Accessed October 21, 2023. <https://share.google/P5GBOSgwgMVnIRYhN>

This delay in bureaucratic transformation underscores the urgency of accelerating post-pandemic reforms. The level of public trust is still fluctuating, with a figure of 73.6% according to the KemenPAN-RB survey.<sup>28</sup> The community now demands fast, transparent, and digital-first services.<sup>29</sup> Bureaucratic reform is also important for the country's resilience to face future crises.<sup>30</sup>

Legally and structurally, the acceleration of reform is needed to meet the target of the 2020–2025 National Bureaucratic Reform. If the implementation of these two main laws is inconsistent, the goal of creating a clean, effective, and service-oriented bureaucracy will not be achieved. Therefore, strengthening the digital capacity of civil servants, integrating public supervision, and enforcing accountability are important steps to ensure an adaptive, responsive, and fair bureaucracy.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of the implementation of Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services and Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, it can be concluded that post-pandemic bureaucratic reform has made significant progress in realizing more modern, transparent, and community-oriented public services. Improving service standards, digitizing the

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<sup>28</sup> Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Republik Indonesia (KemenPAN-RB). "Pelaksanaan Reformasi Birokrasi Sekretariat Jenderal DPR RI Tahun 2023." Jakarta: Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Republik Indonesia, 2023. Retrieved November 22, 2023. <https://share.google/wRQin9BhglzOAKqQt>

<sup>29</sup> Albertus Wahyurudhanto. "Critical Reorientation of Bureaucratic Reform and Good Governance in Public Sector Administration in Indonesia." *Webology* 17, no. 2 (2020): 314

<sup>30</sup> Zein, M. Harry Mulya. *Reformasi birokrasi: Dunia birokrasi dan pemerintahan*. Sada Kurnia Pustaka, 2023

bureaucratic system, and implementing the merit system in ASN management are positive indicators of the sustainability of the reforms carried out by the government. However, the successful implementation of the two laws has not been evenly distributed across regions and sectors. The gap in the digital capacity of the apparatus and the weak public accountability mechanism are still the main obstacles that need to be overcome immediately so that bureaucratic reform can run effectively and inclusively.

Post-pandemic bureaucratic reform also contains strategic urgency for the future of governance in Indonesia. Changing public expectations that demand fast, transparent, and digital-based public services must be balanced with increasing the capacity of civil servants and strengthening a credible supervisory system. For this reason, the implementation of the two laws must continue to be synergized in the National Bureaucratic Reform policy, with a focus on strengthening the competence of the apparatus, integrating data between institutions, and enforcing the principles of accountability and administrative justice. With consistent legal commitments and sustainable implementation, bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is expected to be able to create a bureaucracy that is professional, adaptive, and able to respond to public service challenges in the post-pandemic era.

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