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## **Transformation of the Labor Inspection System in Indonesia: Towards an Effective Centralized Model**

**Faizal Amir P Nasution\*, Sita Agung Trisnantari, Henriko Tobing, Ari Yulastuti, Muhyiddin**

*Ministry of Manpower – The Republic of Indonesia*

\*Email Correspondence: faiziomarch@gmail.com

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### **Abstract**

The labor inspection system in Indonesia plays a vital role in ensuring compliance with labor standards, protecting workers' rights, and creating a safe and productive work environment. However, its implementation faces numerous challenges, such as the limited number of labor inspectors, ineffective central-regional coordination, and minimal budget allocation. With an actual ratio of 1:57,000 formal workers—far below the ILO standard of 1:20,000—the labor inspection system remains suboptimal. This study aims to analyze the problems within the decentralized inspection system, evaluate the potential of a centralized inspection model, and formulate strategies and a roadmap for implementation. Using qualitative and quantitative approaches, including interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and literature reviews, the study finds that a centralized labor inspection system is more effective in improving inspection standards, resource distribution, and cross-regional coordination. Benchmarking functional roles such as Family Planning Counselors and Mining Inspectors supports this recommendation. Implementation strategies include regulatory revisions, increasing the number of inspectors, improving competencies, and ensuring adequate budget provision through the national budget (APBN). A medium-term roadmap (2025–2029) has been developed to ensure a gradual and sustainable transition.

**Keywords:** labor inspection, centralization, labor inspectors, public policy, implementation, roadmap.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

Labor inspection is a strategic function within industrial relations governance aimed at ensuring workers' rights are fulfilled, companies comply with labor laws, and a safe and healthy

work environment is established. As a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Indonesia must meet international labor inspection standards, one of which is expressed through the ratification of ILO Convention No. 81 on Labor Inspection in Industry and Commerce. This commitment was realized through Law No. 21 of 2003, which seeks to optimize the national labor inspection system in response to evolving labor relations dynamics (Sugeng, 2017).

However, Indonesia's labor inspection system remains far from ideal. Data from 2023 shows that violations of labor standards and workplace accidents remain high. There were 13,299 cases of labor standard violations involving 6,223 companies, covering aspects such as non-compliance with minimum wages, working hours, and occupational safety regulations. Additionally, there were 370,747 cases of workplace accidents, predominantly in formal sectors such as labor-intensive industries (Kemnaker, 2023). These conditions indicate that the current labor inspection system is not functioning optimally to prevent violations or mitigate workplace risks.

A primary factor affecting the effectiveness of inspections is the limited number of labor inspectors. According to data from the Ministry of Manpower as of June 2024, Indonesia only has 1,470 labor inspectors across all provinces. This number is far below the ILO-recommended ratio of one inspector per 20,000 formal workers. With 57.19 million formal workers in 2023, Indonesia's actual ratio stands at 1:57,000, significantly below international standards (Muharam et al., 2022). This gap means that many companies cannot be routinely inspected, particularly in highly industrialized regions like West Java, East Java, and Central Java, which have the largest concentrations of workers and industries.

Beyond quantity, the quality of labor inspectors is also a concern. Many inspectors lack adequate competencies in understanding labor norms, inspection techniques, and audit procedures. Furthermore, there is minimal investment in formal training programs, affecting the quality of inspections in the field (Tobing et al., 2019). Uneven distribution of inspectors exacerbates the issue, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas like Maluku, Papua, and Southeast Sulawesi.

Another critical problem is the weak coordination between the central and regional governments in implementing labor inspections. Under Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, labor inspections are implemented by provincial governments, while the management of human resources remains under the central government. This duality often leads to policy misalignment across planning, implementation, and evaluation (Nuraeni et al., 2021).

In addition, budget allocations for labor inspection operations are often inadequate. Many regional governments do not prioritize funding for inspection activities, and the decentralization funds provided by the central government are insufficient to meet needs. For example, Southeast Sulawesi Province has a budget of only Rp800 million for labor inspection operations in 2024, which is far from enough to address the geographical challenges of the archipelago and the high demand for inspection activities.

The rapid evolution of labor dynamics, including demographic changes, technological adoption, and flexible working arrangements, further complicates labor inspection challenges. In the era of globalization, pressures to increase productivity often result in unhealthy labor practices, such as violations of occupational safety standards and excessive use of contract labor. Effective labor inspection is therefore essential to balance the interests of workers and employers while supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Yeni et al., 2021).

Given these data and realities, there is an urgent need to reform Indonesia's labor inspection system. One widely considered proposal is the transformation of the inspection system from a decentralized model to a centralized one. Under this model, the central government would manage and implement inspections directly by establishing Central Technical Implementation Units (UPTP) in every province. This approach is expected to address the weaknesses of the current system, such as the imbalance in the number of inspectors, weak coordination, and the lack of uniform inspection standards across regions (Muharam et al., 2022).

A centralized inspection system would allow the central government to ensure that labor inspectors receive standardized training, have access to adequate facilities, and receive sufficient budget support. More importantly, this model is expected to minimize local political interventions that often compromise the independence and integrity of inspectors in the regions.

This background serves as the basis for this study to explore and analyze the potential implementation of a centralized labor inspection model in Indonesia and formulate relevant policy recommendations to support the transition toward a more effective and credible system.

## 1.2. Problems

The labor inspection system in Indonesia, although regulated by various laws, still faces numerous challenges rooted in structural, operational, and coordination weaknesses. These challenges are further exacerbated by changes in labor dynamics that demand quick government adaptation. The detailed issues are as follows:

### a. Limited Number and Competence of Labor Inspectors

Currently, Indonesia has only 1,470 labor inspectors, while the number of formal workers reached 57.19 million in 2023. The current ratio stands at 1:57,000, far below the ILO standard of 1:20,000 formal workers (Kemnaker, 2024). This gap prevents many companies from being routinely inspected, especially in highly industrialized areas like West Java, Central Java, and East Java. Furthermore, inspector competence varies. Many lack adequate skills in conducting inspections, audits, and reporting. The lack of advanced training further exacerbates this situation, resulting in inspections carried out without standardized and consistent methods (Tobing et al., 2019).

### b. Weak Central-Regional Coordination

Under Law No. 23 of 2014, labor inspection implementation is delegated to provincial governments, while human resource management remains under central government authority. This duality often creates policy misalignment. Regional governments

frequently struggle to access data and coordinate with the central government, particularly in terms of planning, operations, and evaluation (Nuraeni et al., 2021).

c. Limited Operational Budget

Operational budgets for labor inspection are limited at both central and regional levels. For instance, Southeast Sulawesi Province has only Rp800 million allocated for labor inspection operations in 2024. This budget is insufficient for geographically complex archipelagic regions, making it difficult to conduct inspections effectively.

d. Local Political Interference

Decentralized inspection models provide opportunities for local leaders to influence decisions and inspection priorities. This weakens inspector independence and creates conflicts of interest. Political interference often makes it difficult for inspectors to take firm action against companies with ties to local officials (Tobing et al., 2023).

e. Geographic and Infrastructure Challenges

Indonesia's vast and archipelagic territory poses significant challenges for labor inspections. Many remote areas are difficult to access, and inspectors lack adequate transportation and protective equipment. These challenges leave many areas without sufficient inspection coverage, leading to increased labor standard violations and workplace accidents.

These problems highlight the urgent need for a centralized labor inspection system, which can address structural, operational, and coordination weaknesses more effectively.

### 1.3. Research Objectives

This study is designed to provide an in-depth analysis of Indonesia's labor inspection system and offer comprehensive solutions. The specific objectives of this study are:

a. To Identify Current Challenges in the Labor Inspection System

This study aims to uncover the root causes of the inefficiencies in labor inspections, including factors such as the limited number of inspectors, inadequate budget allocation, and weak central-regional coordination.

b. To Evaluate the Centralized Labor Inspection Model as a Solution

The study seeks to evaluate the potential implementation of a centralized inspection model as a solution to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of labor inspections. The models explored include inspector management by the central government with regional involvement, and full central government management through the establishment of Central Technical Implementation Units (UPTP) in each province.

c. To Formulate Policy Recommendations

This study aims to develop relevant, sustainable, and implementable policy recommendations to support the transition to a centralized labor inspection system. These recommendations will address technical, operational, regulatory, and budgetary aspects.

d. To Project Future Labor Inspector Needs

The study also aims to calculate the required number of labor inspectors based on projected growth in formal workers up to 2029. This analysis will assist the government in planning recruitment, training, and inspector distribution more effectively.

Through this research, it is hoped that comprehensive solutions can be identified to improve the quality and credibility of labor inspections in Indonesia. This will better protect workers' rights, enhance company compliance with regulations, and achieve a balanced and sustainable industrial relationship.

## 2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze Indonesia's labor inspection system and explore solutions for improving its effectiveness and efficiency.

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with labor inspectors at the central and regional levels, provincial labor department officials, and academics specializing in labor issues. Secondary data came from official reports, such as those from the Ministry of Manpower, the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), and relevant literature, including data on labor inspector numbers, formal worker distribution, and labor violations.

### Data Collection Techniques:

- a. In-depth Interviews were conducted to understand the challenges faced by inspectors, particularly in high-revenue regions like Central Java and lower-revenue regions such as Southeast Sulawesi.
- b. FGDs identified key issues and discussed solutions for a centralized inspection system, involving stakeholders like regional government representatives and public policy experts.
- c. Literature Review analyzed existing regulations (e.g., Law No. 23 of 2014 and ILO Convention No. 81) and international case studies on centralized inspection models.

Using purposive sampling, locations and subjects were selected based on regional characteristics relevant to the study's objectives. Focus areas included industrial centers and remote areas with fewer resources.

Inspector needs were calculated using the ILO ideal ratio of 1:20,000 formal workers. A simple arithmetic method projected growth in formal workers (2015–2023), excluding anomalies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Data Analysis

- a. Descriptive Analysis provided a clear overview of existing challenges, including structural, operational, and coordination issues.

- b. Synthesis Analysis integrated findings to formulate the ideal centralized inspection model.
- c. Policy Evaluation assessed alternative policies using Bardach's criteria: technical feasibility, financial viability, political acceptability, and administrative practicality.

To ensure reliability, data triangulation compared interview results, FGDs, and official documents, minimizing bias and enhancing accuracy.

This structured methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of Indonesia's labor inspection system, supporting actionable and sustainable policy recommendations for its transformation.

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

#### **3.1. Analysis of the Division of Authority in Labor Affairs Under Law No. 23 of 2014**

Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government regulates the division of authority between the central and regional governments in labor inspection. According to Annex G of this law, labor inspection responsibilities are divided into two levels:

- a. The Central Government holds authority over the establishment of inspection systems and management of labor inspector personnel, including recruitment, training, and strategic policies.
- b. The Provincial Government is responsible for the operational implementation of labor inspections within its region.

However, this division creates coordination disharmony. While the central government manages inspectors, operational implementation at the provincial level often faces budget constraints and limited facilities and infrastructure. As a result, labor inspection becomes ineffective, particularly in regions with scarce resources.

#### **3.2. Benchmarking Analysis**

##### **3.2.1. Functional Family Planning Counselors**

In managing functional staff, Family Planning Counselors (PKB) and Family Planning Field Officers (PLKB) are centrally managed by the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), while their utilization is carried out by local (district/city) governments. This model illustrates an effective functional workforce management system with a clear division of authority, as shown below:

Table 1. Model of Family Planning Counselors

Management Aspect	Central Government	Regional Government
PKB/PLKB Staff Management	Recruitment, training, salaries, and allowances	Utilization of PKB/PLKB staff
Operational Funding	National funds through BOKB	Operational funding via local APBD

Source: Law No. 23 of 2014

This model can serve as a reference for improving the labor inspection system. Centralized management by the central government ensures standardized training and competency for functional staff, while local governments remain responsible for operational implementation in the field.

3.2.2. Benchmarking Analysis of Functional Mining Inspectors

The management of Mining Inspectors is another example of a centralized governance system under the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM). According to Law No. 3 of 2020 on Mineral and Coal Mining, Mining Inspectors are fully managed by the central government. The details are as follows:

Table 2. Model of Mining Inspectors

Management Aspect	Central Government	Provincial Government
Management of Mining Inspectors	Recruitment, salaries, allowances, and operations	Local inspection implementation
Facilities and Infrastructure	Provided by the central government (ESDM)	-

Source: Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, processed by Pusbangiaker (2024)

The existence of Mining Inspectors, who are stationed at the provincial level but managed centrally, is an effective solution to overcome coordination weaknesses. This approach ensures uniform performance standards and enhances the effectiveness of inspection activities.

3.3. Policy Analysis from the Perspective of Labor Inspectors

To understand the challenges of policy implementation from the perspective of labor inspectors, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in two provinces with different characteristics: Central Java (high regional revenue) and Southeast Sulawesi (low regional revenue).

3.3.1. Labor Inspectors from Central Java Province

Central Java has 140 labor inspectors, but this number is still insufficient to oversee the province's high industrial activity. The regional budget allocation (APBD) of Rp2.7 billion, supplemented by Rp800 million in central government deconcentration funds, is considered inadequate. Labor inspectors in this province highlighted the following challenges:

- a. Concerns about decreased welfare if their status is transferred to central government employment.
- b. Limited facilities and infrastructure, such as transportation and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- c. The need for periodic competency training to improve skills.

### 3.3.2. Labor Inspectors from Southeast Sulawesi Province

Southeast Sulawesi has 16 inspectors overseeing 17 districts/cities, with the primary challenge being the geographically dispersed islands that are difficult to access. Most inspectors expressed their willingness to become central government employees, provided that:

- a. Welfare and career stability are guaranteed.
- b. Adequate facilities and infrastructure are provided to support inspection duties.
- c. Inspectors are placed in their home regions to maintain work effectiveness.

### 3.4. Analysis of the Need for Labor Inspectors

The projected need for labor inspectors is calculated based on the ILO ideal ratio of 1 inspector per 20,000 formal workers. With Indonesia's formal workforce reaching 57.19 million people, the ideal number of labor inspectors is estimated to be 3,599 inspectors. The table below presents a comparison between the existing number of inspectors and the ideal need across several provinces.

Based on this data, there is a national shortage of 2,267 labor inspectors to achieve the ideal ratio. This highlights the urgent need for massive recruitment of labor inspectors, particularly in regions with high industrial density and remote areas that are not yet adequately monitored.

**Table 3.** Projection of the Need of Labor Inspections

Province	Existing Juni 2024	Projection of the need of Labor Inspections						Gap in 2029 <sup>p</sup>
		2024 <sup>p</sup>	2025 <sup>p</sup>	2026 <sup>p</sup>	2027 <sup>p</sup>	2028 <sup>p</sup>	2029 <sup>p</sup>	
Aceh	25	52	54	56	58	61	63	38
Sumatera Utara	39	166	176	185	194	203	212	173
Sumatera Barat	34	54	57	60	63	66	69	35
Riau	38	74	76	77	79	81	82	44
Jambi	33	38	39	41	42	43	45	12
Sumatera Selatan	39	85	88	91	94	97	100	61
Bengkulu	19	18	19	20	21	21	22	3
Lampung	37	73	77	81	84	88	92	55
Kep Bangka Belitung	27	20	21	22	23	24	25	-2
Kep Riau	37	35	36	37	38	39	39	2
DKI Jakarta	47	165	167	170	172	175	178	131
Jawa Barat	174	547	566	585	605	624	643	469



Province	Existing Juni 2024	Projection of the need of Labor Inspections						Gap in 2029 <sup>p</sup>
		2024 <sup>p</sup>	2025 <sup>p</sup>	2026 <sup>p</sup>	2027 <sup>p</sup>	2028 <sup>p</sup>	2029 <sup>p</sup>	
Jawa Tengah	140	418	439	461	482	504	525	385
DI Yogyakarta	21	52	53	55	57	58	60	39
Jawa Timur	158	434	449	464	478	493	508	350
Banten	65	151	154	157	160	163	166	101
Bali	21	66	69	72	75	78	81	60
Nusa Tenggara Barat	17	43	46	48	51	53	56	39
Nusa Tenggara Timur	17	40	43	46	49	52	55	38
Kalimantan Barat	27	60	64	68	71	75	79	52
Kalimantan Tengah	25	34	36	37	38	39	41	16
Kalimantan Selatan	34	49	51	52	54	56	58	24
Kalimantan Timur	49	54	56	58	60	62	64	15
Kalimantan Utara	8	10	10	11	11	11	11	3
Sulawesi Utara	30	28	30	31	33	34	36	6
Sulawesi Tengah	21	28	29	30	31	32	33	12
Sulawesi Selatan	51	89	93	98	102	107	111	60
Sulawesi Tenggara	18	28	30	32	33	35	37	19
Gorontalo	12	12	13	14	14	15	15	3
Sulawesi Barat	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	2
Maluku	17	16	17	18	19	20	21	4
Maluku Utara	6	12	13	14	14	15	16	10
Papua Barat	14	13	14	15	16	17	18	4
Papua	21	21	22	22	23	24	25	4
Total	1332	2.996	3.118	3.240	3.356	3.477	3.599	2267

Source: Ministry of Manpower, processed by Pusbangjaknaker (2024)

This analysis reveals that the current labor inspection system suffers from significant weaknesses, including a lack of labor inspectors, weak central-regional coordination, and insufficient facilities and infrastructure. Benchmarking with the management of Family Planning Counselors and Mining Inspectors illustrates that a centralized management model can be an effective solution to improve the quality of labor inspections.

The urgent need for labor inspectors and the geographical challenges in Indonesia require a reform of the inspection system towards full centralization while ensuring the welfare of inspectors and operational efficiency at the local level.

### 3.5. Strategies and Roadmap

To build an effective, integrated, and centralized labor inspection system, a comprehensive strategy and clear implementation roadmap are required. These strategies aim to address various

challenges, including resistance from labor inspectors, regulatory changes, budget allocation, and effective coordination between central and regional governments.

### 3.5.1. Strategies for Developing an Effective and Integrated Centralized Labor Inspection System

#### a. Government Strategies to Overcome Resistance from Labor Inspectors Regarding Transition to Central Government Employment

Resistance from labor inspectors towards centralization policies often stems from concerns about reduced welfare and career uncertainty. The government can address this resistance through:

- **Welfare Guarantees:** Develop regulations ensuring inspectors' welfare, including performance allowances equivalent to those at the regional level.
- **Job Placement Stability:** Implement placement schemes that consider inspectors' domiciles to minimize psychological and social impacts.
- **Open Communication:** Conduct intensive dialogue and socialization with labor inspectors to explain the benefits of the new system, such as enhanced professionalism, regular access to training, and clearer career pathways.

#### b. Steps to Accelerate Regulatory Changes and Establish an Ideal Institutional Structure

The government needs to draft supporting regulations for the transition process, with the following steps:

- **Revising Relevant Laws:** Amend Law No. 23 of 2014 and its derivative regulations to grant full authority to the central government for managing and implementing labor inspections.
- **Establishing Central Technical Implementation Units (UPTP):** Develop UPTP Labor Inspection and Occupational Safety Centers in each province to execute operational and integrated inspection duties.
- **Transition Scheme:** Draft transitional regulations to govern the transfer of inspectors' status from regional to central government employment, including their rights and obligations.

#### c. Ensuring Adequate Budget Allocation Through APBN

Effective labor inspections require sufficient budgetary support. Steps include:

- **Allocating a special APBN budget** for operational costs, including salaries, allowances, facilities, and inspector training.
- **Providing deconcentration funds** to provinces to ensure inspection operations continue during the transition period.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** to ensure transparent and accountable budget usage.

#### d. Mechanisms to Maintain Effective Coordination and Collaboration Between Central and Regional Governments

Coordination between central and regional governments must remain effective. Applicable mechanisms include:

- Regular Coordination Forums: Establish periodic central-regional forums to align policies and address field challenges.
  - Integrated Reporting System: Develop an information technology system enabling real-time reporting to the central government.
  - Special Assignments Optimize the role of UPTP in provinces to bridge central coordination with local Manpower Departments.
- e. Supporting Regulations to Address Challenges in the Transition from Decentralized to Centralized Inspections
- The formulation of comprehensive supporting regulations should include:
- Mechanisms for transitioning labor inspectors to central government employment.
  - Adjustments to inspectors’ rights and obligations under the new system.
  - Sanctions and incentives for stakeholders supporting or hindering system implementation.
- f. Socialization and Training to Strengthen Labor Inspectors During System Transition
- Socialization and training programs include:
- Competency Training Programs to ensure inspectors are capable of performing duties under the new system.
  - Socialization for Stakeholders to build an understanding of the benefits of a centralized labor inspection system.
- g. Implementing the Transition Process from Decentralized to Centralized Labor Inspections
- The transition process must be planned in stages as follows:
- Preparation Phase (2025–2026): Drafting regulations, conducting socialization, and launching pilot projects in select provinces.
  - Implementation Phase (2027–2028): Nationwide implementation with periodic monitoring and evaluation.
  - Stabilization Phase (2029): Institutional strengthening and impact assessment of the new labor inspection system.

3.5.2. Roadmap for Building an Effective and Integrated Centralized Labor Inspection System

The following is the medium-term roadmap for developing a centralized labor inspection system (2025–2029):

**Table 4.** Medium-term Roadmap for Developing a Centralized Labor Inspection System

Strategy	Programs and Activities	Time Frame	Involved Institutions
Regulatory Revisions	Drafting and enacting derivative regulations for Law No. 23 of 2014	2025–2026	Ministry of Manpower, DPR, Ministry of Law and Human Rights

Establishment of UPTP	Establishing UPTP Labor and OSH Inspection Centers in each province	2026–2028	Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Finance, Provincial Governments
Strengthening Labor Inspector HR	Recruitment, training, and capacity building for labor inspectors	2025–2029	Ministry of Manpower, National Civil Service Agency, Provincial Governments
APBN Budget Allocation	Allocating budgets for inspector salaries, allowances, and operational costs	2026–2029	Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Finance
Implementation of Integrated IT	Developing a centralized reporting and monitoring system based on information technology	2026–2028	Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Communication and Informatics, Provincial Governments
Socialization and Training	Conducting socialization with stakeholders and competency training for inspectors	2025–2027	Ministry of Manpower, Provincial Governments, Labor Associations
Monitoring and Evaluation	Periodic evaluation of the centralized labor inspection implementation	2027–2029	Ministry of Manpower, Bappenas, Provincial Governments, NGOs

This strategy and roadmap emphasize the importance of careful planning in developing a centralized labor inspection system. Regulatory support, budget allocation, strengthened coordination, and socialization and training are key elements in the transition process toward a more effective, efficient, and integrated labor inspection system.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the analysis and discussions, this study concludes that the current labor inspection system in Indonesia faces various structural, operational, and coordination challenges. The dual authority between central and regional governments, as stipulated in Law No. 23 of 2014, has led to inefficiencies in inspection implementation. The limited number of inspectors, inadequate budgets, and unequal distribution further hamper inspection effectiveness.

Benchmarking with Family Planning Counselors and Mining Inspectors demonstrates that a centralized inspection system provides several advantages, such as improved competency standards, better coordination, and more efficient management. Based on projections, Indonesia needs 3,599 labor inspectors to achieve the ILO ideal ratio (1:20,000 formal workers). However, the current number of inspectors stands at 1,470, resulting in a shortage of 2,267 inspectors.

To address these challenges, transitioning to a centralized labor inspection system is the most relevant solution. This transformation involves institutional reforms, regulatory revisions, adequate budget provision, and capacity-building for labor inspectors through continuous training. A medium-term roadmap (2025–2029) has been developed to ensure a gradual and structured transition process.

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