
Community Based Forest Management as a Model to Support Sustainable Forest Management in Indonesia

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SOCIAL FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (SFDP)

Introduction

Under the Memorandum of Understanding between The Federal Republic of Germany and Indonesia (April 9, 1984), the GTZ has, among many other programmes, committed technical and financial aid to supporting the Government of Indonesia's policy of introducing sustainable management practices for the natural and plantation forest resources by the year 2001.

This initiative is currently being developed in both the commercial and social sectors and implies that the forestry sector, among others, has to develop appropriate strategies and methods to improve management practices and increase the participation of the rural communities in the utilisation of Indonesia's forest resource base. The Indonesian Government has therefore embarked on facilitating the development of a more balanced distribution of the income realised from forest utilisation.

It is the latter which has become the focus of much attention and the subsequent initiation of a social forest programme. The principle of this programme is the development of a system which, with government participation, allows management over the remaining natural forest by the local communities.

Background

It is important to note that the role of Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) is to manage and sustain the smaller, often more remote "islands" of remaining natural forest within and outside the officially allocated government

forest area. CBFM is to be implemented in approximately 40 - 10,000 ha of forest. CBFM is therefore not competing with large-scale forest operations allocated to private and government concessionaires. The social forestry programme is therefore regarded as being complimentary to the private sector initiatives currently being undertaken to sustain the remaining natural forest. Such initiatives are also regarded as a means to stabilise the community by creating employment and to return more of the forest revenue to the local communities through legalising what are currently considered illegal activities.

Local communities living in the forest area have limited access to the forest for utilising non-timber forest products. The harvesting of commercial trees for profit, however, is not yet permitted. A lack of understanding between government and traditional law has therefore resulted in considerable misunderstanding and conflict. The success of CBFM is therefore dependant on a participative approach in developing an appropriate model that is acceptable to the principal stakeholders by minimising misunderstanding and the opportunity for conflict.

While sustaining the natural forest resource is a priority, such a model should not be restricted to the management of the forest land alone but integrated with the adjoining non forested land which ultimately has an influence over the natural forest. By optimising the potential economic benefits through the development of alternative incomes, encroachment into natural forest by the communities for slash and burn subsistence farming will be minimised. Diversification of the use of natural resources is therefore a basic requirement in the development of a CBFM model.

At the community level the CBFM model therefore has to:

- Recognise and incorporate traditional laws and values
- Recognise and respect traditional land tenure rights
- Recognise representation and empowerment of the communities
- Encourage alternative and appropriate income generation

To address these issues the communities have to have some recognised forum through which local representation is ensured.

For the community to be able to confidently take charge of and manage its own natural resources, the CBFM model has to be:

- appropriate
- simple
- low cost
- low technology
- highly labour intensive

In terms of government acceptability, revenue from CBFM must be higher than the cost of monitoring and control and the resulting model needs to be integrated into the government's management structure. In terms of the community, returns must be equal to or higher than the benefits of illegal logging. These two criteria are regarded as the biggest challenge to ensuring the successful implementation of CBFM.

SFDP Experience

The project has already identified and established a pilot area within West Kalimantan called the Participatory Forest Management Area or PFMA in which the land use and traditional tenure has been identified through the process of village micro land-use assessment.

With its government counterparts, the SFDP is now developing a model which attempts to address the issues mentioned above. In particular the project is endeavouring to determine the cost to establish a CBFM model for replication elsewhere in Indonesia. Without government intervention in the form of bank guarantees, loans or subsidies, CBFM as a method for sustaining the natural forest resource is probably not a realistic option. Funding for replication is therefore essential.

To support CBFM replication elsewhere in Indonesia, SFDP is currently developing a series of guidelines based on field experience, for use by government and communities to assist in its establishment and management.

A community association (*lembaga*), based on traditional and local government representation, has already been established which is in the process of being restructured to be principally responsible for the external affairs (e.g. promotion of the community land use system, links with government and private institutions, other investment opportunities, security) and internal affairs (conflict resolution, traditional rights, community representation) of the land area under the PFMA.

The proposed silvicultural system for harvesting the remaining natural forest under CBFM conditions has been dramatically simplified without compromising sustainability. Yield is determined by tree number alone and therefore makes its calculation and harvesting simple and easy to implement, monitor and control both internally and externally.

The management and business component of the CBFM model (the timber and non timber products from the PFMA) is to be conducted by a community co-operative which is directly accountable to its members in terms of business activities and to the *lembaga* in terms of its own activities within the PFMA. It must be noted that while the co-operative is directly accountable to the *lembaga* it remains autonomous in terms of its policy, function, management and associated activities.

The co-operative should also manage the purchase and marketing of other natural resource products from the adjoining non forest areas such as rubber, resin, weaving etc.

The project has secured a 500 ha "test area" within the PFMA's remaining natural forest for the development of the proposed silvicultural and harvesting system and results will be available before the middle of July 1999. Given favourable results and acceptability of the model to the government, it is anticipated that the remaining 15,000 ha of natural forest within the PFMA will be allocated to the community for commercial harvesting over a 40-year period.

Information from the SFDP experience that is useful for the revision of forest policy, law and land use is continuously being presented to the Department of Forestry and Plantations in an effort to ensure that the remaining forest areas considered compatible for CBFM are protected and not converted to other land uses.

To establish a balanced perspective with respect to establishing CBFM in Indonesia, a table outlining the objectives and potential problems of implementing this model is outlined below:

Objective
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable forest management over the remaining natural forest 2. Legalise the illegal logging of the natural forest 3. An increase in Government revenue which can be more equitably shared between the stakeholders 4. Stabilisation & security through ownership & empowerment of the local communities 5. Creating jobs (CBFM is a labour intensive activity)
Potential Problems
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A possible uncontrolled increase in forest utilisation 2. Increased financial & human resources are needed from the government to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor, control & train its staff in CBFM - establish & manage a CBFM enterprise by the communities 3. An Institutional management structure has not yet been established 4. The number of stakeholders participating will increase (more bureaucracy and time & potential for conflict)

Within the current government system there are constraints which can delay the implementation of CBFM. They are:

- Overlapping & inappropriate land use prevent bringing the remaining natural forest resource under SFM. In many cases, much of the remaining natural forest is allocated for alternative land use.
- Different perceptions of the objective and function of CBFM amongst institutions and stakeholders.
- Many current rules and regulations are in conflict with the objective of SFM and CBFM.
- The high expectations of the government that SFDP will produce all the answers for the development and implementation of CBFM.

In summary, the implementation of CBFM will require significant resources from the government in the form of training, and of loans/guarantees for communities to establish and manage CBFM. In addition, the current government rules and regulations will have to be simplified without losing their capacity to effectively monitor and control forest operations. If the system is not changed and there is no real sense of ownership and security, the communities will possibly revert to illegal logging practices, despite the obvious advantages to all stakeholders of SFM supported by CBFM.