

# Analysis of Multistakeholder Forestry Processes In Indonesia

Summary and comments on a study report<sup>1</sup> (2003) by INSIST and Partners, Yogyakarta commissioned by DFID's Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP)<sup>2</sup> and GTZ's Strengthening the Management Capacities in the Ministry of Forestry Project (SMCP)<sup>3</sup>



Photo by: Serge Marti -West Kalimantan 2002

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<sup>1</sup> Erwin Fahmi, R.Yando Zakaria, Hariadi Kartodihardjo and Francis Wahono. 2003 (July). *MINUS MALUM: Analysis of Multistakeholder Processes in Indonesia*. INSIST and Partners, Yogyakarta. This is a 150 pages study report written in Indonesian *bahasa* and this English summary is made with the help from Serge Marti.

<sup>2</sup> MFP is a bilateral cooperation programme between UK and Indonesia through DFID and the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry.

<sup>3</sup> SMCP is a bilateral cooperation project between the Indonesian and German Governments. The initiative is implemented by the Ministry of Forestry and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

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## Abbreviations

ARuPA	= Local NGO (based in Yogyakarta)
BP DAS	= Watershed Management Office
BPN	= National Land Use Agency
CBD	= Convention on Biological Diversity
CBFM	= Community Based Forest Management
CPR	= Common Pool Resources
DFID	= Department for International Development
DPRD	= District/Regional House of Representatives
EPIQ	= Environmental Policy and Institutional Strengthening Indefinite Quantity Contract
GTZ	= German Technical Cooperation
INSIST	= Institute for Social Transformation (National NGO, based in Yogyakarta)
KONSEPSI	= Local NGO (based in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara)
KSDA	= Nature Conservation Office
LePMIL	= Coastal and Remote Community Development Institution (Local NGO, based in Kendari, SouthEast Sulawesi)
LKAD	= Association of Inter-Village Cooperation
LP3ES	= National NGO (based in Jakarta)
MFP	= Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme
MoFEC	= Ministry of Forestry and Estate Crops
MSP	= Multi-stakeholder Process
nfp	= National Forest Programme
NGO	= Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	= Natural Resource Management Programme
NTB	= West Lesser Sundas (West Nusa Tenggara)
PerDa	= Regional/District Regulation
Perhutani	= State Forest Enterprise
PRAP	= Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning
RI	= Republic of Indonesia
SFDP	= Social Forestry Development Project
SMCP	= Strengthening the Management Capacities in the Ministry of Forestry
UK	= United Kingdom
UU	= National Law
UUPK	= Basic Forestry Law
UNCED	= United Nations Conference on Economic Development
UNFCCC	= United Nations Framework Convention on Combating Climate Change
USAID	= United States Agency for International Development

## Summary

In recent years many Multistakeholder Processes (MSP's) have developed in Indonesia particularly as a means to establish much needed dialogue about forest policy reform involving all relevant stakeholders, from government officials to local community members.

A study, commissioned by DFID's Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP) and GTZ's Strengthening the Management Capacities in the Ministry of Forestry Project (SMCP) examines the impact of these processes in relation to decision-making on forest resources, sustainable forest management, conservation and improvement in the life quality of the communities living in and around the forest. This analysis of MSP's is placed within the broader context of Indonesian forest sector policy. The conceptual framework for MSP's and methodological considerations are also reviewed by the study.

Focusing on 5 case-studies from around Indonesia, the study finds that most multistakeholder forestry processes have tended to result in dialogue dead-lock. The implementation of decisions that have been reached in the multistakeholder dialogue has been incomplete. The transaction costs are high, while results – in terms of delivering improved conditions for the forest dependent poor – are so far behind expectations.

According to the study part of the problem is in the process design and implementation. The dialogue boundaries are left unclear at the preparation stage of some MSP's and at times the nature of the process itself is misunderstood. Not all relevant stakeholders are involved. It is difficult to ensure that community members are true representatives of customary or farming communities. Community representatives also suffer from a lack of organisational capacity and from conflicting interests. There is inequality between stakeholders because of unequal access to knowledge, time and resources. The stakeholders most at risk (the community) can be left exposed. There is a general lack of commitment (by process initiators and funders) to follow-up activities generated by the process.

Lack of commitment not just to the follow-up but to the process itself comes from central government. While MSP's may generate individual attitude change, Government officials are moved frequently from post to post, making it more unlikely for change to occur in institutional culture. In the broader context obstacles include the ongoing conflict between centralised forestry laws and the decentralisation process. In addition the existing arrangements have allowed corruption to flourish and have often favoured rent-seeking activities over dialogue and change.

The study recommends improvement in process delivery through better identification of particular problems, analysis of obstacles and opportunities and commitment to follow-up actions. There is room for improvement in supporting processes, especially in providing long-term support to the stakeholders most at risk from the ensuing decision-making (the community), but the broader context of Indonesian forest policy limits MSP's effectiveness in delivering forest policy reform. The MSP's in this study are nevertheless valuable as a learning process despite their high transaction costs. In the absence of many pro-people and pro-environment forest policy initiatives, multistakeholder processes are better than nothing. It is a case of choosing the lesser evil: minus malum.

## Foreword from the GTZ-SMCP Team Leader

“Forests are a source of life: For the planet, and for its people. All societies are dependent on forests and trees... By harmonizing the needs of people and of the planet for forests, the world can progress along the path of sustainable development. But this harmonization can not be achieved by the forest community alone. Bridges must be built with other sectors of society and a variety of actors...” (Source: Statement of the World Forest Congress 2003). Building these bridges is part of governance which is participatory, transparent and accountable; and in which management and decision making are decentralized, people are empowered, and partnerships flourish.

Decentralization, people empowerment and participation, transparency and accountability are important features of good governance. The *national forest programme (nfp)* concept has been developed and agreed upon internationally as the frame for the implementation of (good) governance in forestry since UNCED 1992. The nfp is a multisectoral and multistakeholder dialogue process in and by countries based on commonly agreed principles to resolve priority issues on the way towards sustainable forest management. Inclusion of the civil society in forest management is a principle which is promoted worldwide.

Community forests in Indonesia are a part of the forests of the world and cannot be treated in isolation from international targets as laid down for example in the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Combating Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Forest Principles of the UN Conference on Economic Development (UNCED). These targets frequently represent also a (political) commitment on the national level. Their consideration at the local level represents an additional challenge to management and facilitation.

There is quite some experience in community based forest management in Indonesia, but this experience has not yet been translated into a wider policy framework. In particular, there is lack of policy coherence among the different forest related sectors, and among different levels of authority. This refers particularly to the issue of land tenure and/or contractual safety.

Participation of communities in forest management is the basic principle of Social Forestry. It includes the right to participate in decision making. This requires a high degree of organisation and an agreed set of rules and procedures that need implementing. Participatory processes need facilitation; the job of the facilitator is to maintain the balance between the required independence of the process and the necessity to achieve tangible results.

Within multistakeholder participation, the different actors bring their individual interests to the table and these do not necessarily always tally with the agreed objectives. The challenge is to motivate stakeholders in favour of the common interest and purpose of sustainable economic development and resource conservation. The strengths and weaknesses of the stakeholders need to be balanced. This requires leadership and facilitation skills.

This study was commissioned by the Multistakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP DFID – Ministry of Forestry) and the Strengthening the Management Capacities in the Ministry of Forestry Project (SMCP GTZ) to the Institute for Social Transformation (INSIST). The purpose was to analyse some cases of multistakeholder processes in forest management in Indonesia and to draw some lessons with regards to process and policy decisions. The

recommendations may help to sharpen the *national social forestry program* and serve as orientation to new developing processes.

Jakarta, May 2004

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# **1. Background and problem presentation**

## **1.1 Indonesia Forest Policy Background**

Indonesia has had an increasing rate of deforestation going up to an estimated 2.6 million ha/yr in the 2001-2002 period. Forest policy continues to be confused, particularly on the vexed issue of decentralisation, with unclear separation of roles and responsibilities between the center and the regions. Central Government has become ever weaker in its representation of the public interest. Regions have misused decentralisation to continue rent-seeking activities in forestry, introducing new levies which complicate forest management and make illegal logging a more attractive alternative.

It is clear to many observers that the damage to the forests is due not only to profit-seeking activities but also comes down to the unclear bundle of rights for forestry businesses and for forest dependent communities.

## **1.2 Community and Government Management of Forest Resources**

Forests are common pool resources (CPRs). Their management is difficult since it is not easy to prevent a user from consuming available resources, and there is no incentive for stakeholders to 'produce' new resources (which others may then use). The resulting competition for ever scarcer resources generates conflict, as seen across Indonesia.

Management of common forest resources should therefore focus on regulating production and consumption of forest goods and services. This regulation is best served by state and/or voluntary institutions who can force each potential beneficiary to contribute to their provision (not an appropriate action for a market institution).

One option is the coercive authority of the state, in the form of taxes or other instruments, although the state tends to favour more privileged members of society and urban areas. An alternative to state coercion is self-regulation of production and consumption through community institutions.

It has been shown that community institutions can under certain circumstances manage CPRs effectively within the area the community covers. But community institutions may not be sufficient to control threats to CPRs which appear at higher levels of decision-making. In these situations the Multistakeholder approach can be more useful.

## **1.3 The Multistakeholder Approach**

The Multistakeholder Process (MSP) encourages the involvement of all stakeholders (individuals or organisations with an interest in a decision) in a policy dialogue. A multistakeholder process may succeed if stakeholders share core values such as:

- the importance of justice and equity in formulating rules for governance and benefit-sharing,
- democracy and participation amongst stakeholders based on equality of capacity (in turn dependant on equality of access to knowledge and information, as well as authority)

If these values are shared, and if benefits to stakeholders are expected to be higher than costs, then MSP's may secure institutionalised cooperation in the form of collective action. The chances of multistakeholder decision-making leading to collective action could be increased if stakeholders cooperated on the basis of mutual trust and/or shared beliefs.

The question is how to cultivate feelings of mutual trust and shared beliefs in a group of people who do not share a common background (as do for instance the inhabitants of a community) and who do not have equal access to power or information as is often the case in multistakeholder processes.

#### **1.4 Construction of CPR Management Systems**

The management of CPRs could theoretically be carried out on two levels:

- acknowledging and strengthening community institutions at the field level,
- developing a multistakeholder process as it is affected by external decisions not at the field level.

The dynamic supposes a strengthening of both institutional arrangements. Strengthening the community institution would strengthen the right to association and self-regulation, necessary for democracy to flourish.

Strengthening the multistakeholder process involves cultivating feelings of mutual trust and shared beliefs. It also supposes: identifying clear boundaries for stakeholders and for the CPR; compatibility between rules of utilisation and provision and the local reality; modification of collective choice arrangements, especially operational rules, involving stakeholders most affected by impacts; monitoring the behaviour of appropriators; establishing graded sanctions to offenders of the rules of the game; making conflict resolution mechanisms available; recognising community rights to self-organisation.

These steps for strengthening Multistakeholder Processes all depend on decision-making at three key levels:

- Operational level choice is decision-making based on existing institutional frameworks the rules of which could be changed at the level of collective choice.
- Collective level choice is decision-making by a group of people with authority to do so, changing institutional frameworks and rules in a way that may be coercive (i.e. carry sanctions for deviation) for individuals within their administrative or social constituency. The rules at the level of collective choice can be overturned at the constitutional level.
- Constitutional level choice is decision-making by a group of people with authority to do so, and the decision regulates what is allowed or not allowed at a collective choice level. The constitutional choice therefore regulates the collective choice level.

Policy-making can work in two ways. The constitutional level can support (or hinder) the operational or collective choice levels. However the constitutional level can also be corrected by the accumulation of valuable experiences and lessons (best practices) at the collective choice level.

## 1.5 The Study

Multistakeholder Processes (MSP's) have been seen as an innovative way to deliver much needed forest policy reform. Several donors have pursued the MSP strategy for forest policy reform in Indonesia: DFID through its Multistakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP), GTZ through Strengthening the Management Capacities in the Ministry of Forestry (SMCP) and the USAID backed Natural Resources Management Programme (NRM).

This study has been tasked to research the multistakeholder approach to forest policy reform at a sub-national level, examining its impact on, and its relation to decision-making on forest resources, sustainable forest management, conservation and improvement in the life quality of communities living in or near the forest. The research is based on 5 case-studies of multistakeholder processes recently undergone in Indonesia. The purpose of the investigation is to determine in each case to what extent the conditions for a successful multistakeholder process have been fulfilled.

## 2. Methodology

This study was tasked to research the multistakeholder approach to forest policy reform at a sub-national level, examining its impact on, and its relation to decision-making on forest resources, sustainable forest management, conservation and improvement in the life quality of communities living in or near the forest.

The task was carried out taking the following steps:

- Developing a conceptual framework
- Formulating fundamental questions of investigation, based on the conceptual framework;
- Investigation of the 5 case-studies using these questions.
- Valuation of the 5 cases using the success-criteria for each initiative.

In order to gain an understanding of whether the 5 case-studies fulfilled these conditions, several critical questions were identified. These questions can be summed up as follows:

1. Have the boundaries of multistakeholder dialogue been set and does the process include a clear analytical, spatial and chronological framework?
2. Have there been steps taken to ensure a beneficial outcome to the first appropriators (the community members) who are at most risk from the decision-making process.
3. Has there been participation of all relevant stakeholders in a spirit of equality and shared access to information?
4. Is there support for the continuity of the process? Are the circumstances conducive?
5. Is there sufficient support for the process at the three levels of operational, collective and constitutional choice?

Once the questions of investigation were formulated and the case-study sites chosen, the collection of data/information was carried out through field investigation, bibliography, and discussion with various stakeholders, both in the Center and in the Regions. Findings were tested at a national workshop for the Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Partners in Yogyakarta, in March 2003.

The critical questions provide the basis for describing each case and assessing its achievements in Chapter 3. These results then serve to value the process and the policy it has

the potential to generate and to determine whether it is worthwhile or an appropriate strategy for policy change.

Finally the chapter 4 draws on the results of the case studies to generate some preliminary discussion on the multistakeholder processes overall.

### **3. Results**

Five case-studies were chosen for this analysis of multistakeholder processes. As Table 1 shows, the cases are chosen for their diversity in terms of initiators, main partners, source of funding, status of the forest area, geographical distribution in Indonesia, and duration of the processes. These factors help ensure that common themes – if not generalisations – could emerge during the analysis of the processes.

#### **3.1 Kendari Case: “Participatory Planning and Conflict Resolution of Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga Forest Areas”**

##### **Background to Problem**

The conflict between government and the communities living around Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga began in the early 70’s when communities were displaced from their traditional lands for a reforestation scheme, while urban migrants occupied some of the same land. Conflict deepened in the 90’s when forest boundary-markers were erected by the forest service. There has been fundamental disagreement between government conservation policy wanting to prohibit community use of the forest and communities fighting to stay on their ancestral land, where some having won legal recognition of *waworaha* inheritance rights in the Supreme Court.

##### **Multistakeholder process**

The NGO LePMIL helped to organise a multistakeholder process given the threats to these forests, and the lack of success of government reforestation schemes. The initiative aimed to facilitate community initiatives, identify threats and opportunities, facilitate conflict resolution, and facilitate synergy between community and government programs.

A six phase implementation process was planned and carried out:

1. Improving forestry personnel capacity in Multistakeholder facilitation.
2. Exercises in developing shared perceptions in community and government.
3. Extensive use of PRAP (Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning) methods to explore community potential, problems and needs.
4. Holding four facilitated multistakeholder discussions, using PRAP results to define common problems and bringing together community representatives, PRAP facilitators, Forest Police, village/sub-District government, kecamatan government and Kendari provincial and city forestry services.
5. Regular discussions for improving government and community capacity for conflict resolution based on sharing different perspectives on issues. An agreement on conflict resolution was signed by community and local government in July 2002.
6. Developing a multistakeholder action plan on community-based forest management in Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga agreeing on support for community-based economic development and steps to natural resource management with community, forestry service, agricultural service, BP DAS (watershed management office) and KSDA (nature conservation office) all committed.

## **Findings**

This thoroughly-planned initiative seems to fulfil its immediate objectives reaching an agreement on conflict resolution and a joint action plan between community and government concerning economic development, land conflict and ecosystem functions. However this successful outcome is invalidated by post-agreement land ‘reclamation’ carried out in the forest areas by 300 poor urban families, bringing to light some of the weaknesses of the MSP:

### **a) The boundaries of the dialogue were not clearly established at planning stage.**

For the local community and the NGO the main issue is traditional land rights. For the government conflict resolution is a technical matter to be handled within the limits of legislation which puts the contested lands under state control and require 30% forest cover to comply with Forestry Law *UUPK* No. 41 Year 1999. Another related boundary-setting problem is that the 30% forest cover in this case relates to a LePMIL and forestry concern to stop increasing siltation of the Gulf of Kendari. However siltation was not a central point of discussion, nor was there preliminary research to investigate the possible link between deforestation and siltation in the Gulf of Kendari (a link dismissed by community members)

### **b) The stakeholders running the greatest risk were left most exposed**

The process included communities, but then limited their numbers to two of eleven members of the Integrated Team, the rest being from government except for one NGO staff. Community groups could not stop land occupation because urban community stakeholders had not been consulted and community groups had limited capacity. The ensuing land grab suggested that the community could not honour agreements, leading to a breakdown of trust.

### **c) Not all relevant stakeholders were involved**

Communication was interrupted with Bapedalda of Southeast Sulawesi Province because of staff change-over. Bapedalda was in fact preparing a strategy to overcome siltation so there was a lost opportunity of linking the land conflict to the siltation issue. Other ‘important figures’ were not active in the process, such as the Heads of the Agricultural Service and the National Land Agency Office (BPN), and members of the Regional House of Representatives. The 300 urban poor families who occupied the land after agreements were reached were not part of the discussions and therefore did not feel bound by the agreements.

### **d) Lack of commitment to follow-up**

This was evidenced by the 6 month delay in setting-up an Evaluation Team, seemingly caused by forestry staff changes. Even after the Team had been set up, it was not functioning at the time of this research, due to the lack of a Head of District’s Decree, a work-plan or a budget.

### **e) Lack of action at the constitutional level.**

While parties involved agreed to the process and to an action plan at operational and collective level, clearly there is a need for commitment at constitutional level. Otherwise agreements are of limited validity as they can be overruled by higher level (provincial and central government) decisions. Efforts by LePMIL to get higher level officials involved were frustrated by staff turn-over. And there are indications that the issue of constitutional level agreement was avoided deliberately leading to the possibility of further distrust amongst the stakeholders involved. This was already seen to be happening due to lack of follow-up and the land reclamation which the community had been unable to stop.

**Table 1 - Matrix for Characteristics of the Observed Cases**

No.	Name of Initiative	Main Initiator	Main Partner	Main Funding	Forest Status	Process time	Status
1.	Participatory Planning and Conflict Resolution in Nanga-Nanga and Nipa-Nipa Forest Areas, Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi	Coastal and Remote Community Development Institution (LEPMIL)	Kendari City Forestry Service	DFID (MFP)	Grand Forest Park (Conservation Forest)	Less than 1 year	An intermediate agreement is established; in the progress of preparing a follow up
2.	Initiative for Legislation of Regional Regulation on Community-Based Forest Resource Management, Sumbawa District, West Nusa Tenggara	Mataram LP3ES, Mataram Conception, Sumbawa Center (NGO)	DPRD of Sumbawa District	DFID (MFP)	Production Forest	Less than 1 year	A Regional Regulation is issued, in the progress of preparing implementation plan; there has not been any response from the Central Government
3.	Social Forestry Development Program/FSDP, Sanggau District, West Kalimantan	Cooperation between RI Government in this case the Ministry of Forestry and GTZ	Sanggau Local Government (?) and Community Groups (?)	German Government and RI Government	Production Forest	More than 10 years	Shifting of project to Local Government
4.	Initiative for Legislation of Regional Regulation on Community-Based Forest Resource Management, Wonosobo District, Central Java	Several local & national NGOs & People Organizations (forest farmers)	DPRD of Wonosobo District	Various donor agencies	Production Forest	2-3 years	A Regional Regulation is issued but it not acknowledged by the Central Government
5.	Initiative for Legislation of Regional Regulation on Regional Forestry, West Kutai, East Kalimantan	Natural Resource Management (NGO/International Research Institution)	West Kutai Local Government	USAID (NRM)	Production Forest	1-2 years	A Regional Regulation is issued, in the progress of preparing implementation plan

## **Conclusion**

The Kendari initiative only achieved an agreement to form an Integrated Evaluation Team but did not formulate binding rules of the game. There was no planned change in the institutional structure of the local forestry department to help resolve conflicts in the forest area. Many parties concerned in the decision-making were not involved in or bound by the agreements. No budget was specified for the agreement. Post agreement implementation was weak. At the time of the study the Integrated Team has not yet worked.

Though well-thought out, the Kendari initiative lead to limited results due to lack of government openness about siltation concerns, lack of constitutional level commitment, non-involvement of key stakeholders, lack of commitment to operational follow-up and the exposure of communities to greater risk. Should it entirely fail to deliver, there is a risk that this MSP could lead to increased conflict, the opposite of what it set out to do.

## **3.2 Sumbawa Case**

### **Background**

The NGO KONSEPSI NTB (LP3ES) acted as the initiator in the process, first disseminating information about the concept of Regional Regulations (PerDa) on Community-Based Forest Resources Management to the local House of Representatives (DPRD) of Sumbawa and other District. Sumbawa and Dompu District already have PerDa's and West Lombok has drafted one.

### **Multistakeholder process**

The PerDa creating process ran through a series of activities, comprising:

1. A workshop on increasing the legislative capacity of the DPRD in CBFM
2. An exchange visit to District Wonosobo as a follow-up to the workshop, given Wonosobo's experience in participatory CBFM PerDa drafting.
3. The above activities involved representatives of the DPRD, District and province Forestry Service, local NGO's from Sumbawa, and representatives from 5 other NTB District, demonstrating enthusiasm for similar legislation processes across the province.
4. Awareness-raising of community perceptions and expectations related to forest resources, including awareness of customary law and the study of secondary data.
5. Preparation of Draft PerDa simultaneously in Sumbawa and East Lombok.
6. Public consultation on the draft PerDa, drawing on inputs from farmers near the forest and in a second phase from professional groups, NGOs and Universities.

### **Findings**

The objective of delivering a regional legislation (PerDa) on community based forest resource management in 7 months was achieved but several problems can be identified:

#### **a. Unclear boundaries of dialogue**

There were different understandings of why the PerDa was being drafted. For the Head of District the PerDa would serve to clarify forest management issues (of an ex-Perhutani 18,000 ha teak stand) while local communities thought the PerDa could help to solve land-use issues, and other stakeholders hoped the process would help in conflict resolution around illegal logging.

#### **b. Lack of involvement of primary stakeholders**

There was a lack of community participation during the preparation and the process itself, limited to field visits and public consultations. Many groups were not heard. In addition the PerDa and the community-based management model were not well disseminated. As a result there is little sense of ownership of the legislation by the community and therefore less chance the community defends the policy or helps to stop it from being abused.

#### **c. PerDa requiring serious redrafting:**

The PerDa does not clearly define responsibilities (e.g. for setting-up community organisations which could be abused for legalised forest destruction), or integration with national or provincial legislation. A Head of District's decree, to be consulted with the public, was to serve as an operational guideline on implementation of the Regional Regulation.

#### **d. Lack of follow-up:**

KONSEPSI saw PerDa issuance as the final step, not implementation. Local government did not plan a dissemination budget so many local people remain unaware of the PerDa. After legalization of the PerDa staff and funds were allocated from the Regional Budget but there was confusion about the budget line.

#### **e. Lack of operational level or constitutional level agreements or action**

This process focused on delivering a PerDa working at the collective level agreement. But this was not backed with support for new skills in community and environment friendly forest resource management so at the operational level, the new policy risked being abused by well-informed free riders. At the constitutional level the PerDa was at risk of being cancelled for going against national policy such as Forestry Law No. 41, as had happened in the Wonosobo.

### **Conclusion**

The multistakeholder dialog did not have a collectively agreed basis. Local communities, most at risk, had little influence on the drafting process. The PerDa was full of contradictions and required amendments to make it operational. KONSEPSI saw its work as coming to the end with PerDa approval, instead of facilitating implementation. This weakened the process. Finally, collective level agreements were not backed by efforts to strengthen and reform the operational level, especially forestry department procedures. At the constitutional level the Sumbawa PerDa process risked being blocked by Central Government as it had in Wonosobo. The Sumbawa approach delivered on speed, seven months to develop a PerDa. This initiative also demonstrated that there is political will in Sumbawa to give priority to community-based natural resource management. However the process was inadequate in terms of creating a new social contract or even new institutional arrangements. Initiators and their partners gave greater priority to their own interests than to placing the communities in a winning position. Initially the PerDa should be applied as a pilot project to be learned from and improved upon.

## **3.3 The Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP)**

### **Background to Problem**

SFPD has used around 40 billion rupiah, about half of which was paid for by the government and half by GTZ over a 12 year period in an attempt to develop a Community Based Forest Management Model (CBFM), based on the recognition of community rights and obligations, a guarantee for long-term land-use, local community involvement in forest management, and pursuing local economic development through forest product marketing.

### **Multistakeholder process**

Preconditions for the CBFM success were seen to be national and customary law enforcement, community organisation, absence of illegal logging, building trust between government institutions and community, and existing laws and regulations for CBFM prepared by government. Finally land-use planning was to be agreed and land-use rights clarified. Given the limited organisational capacity in communities, CBFM required the support of multiple stakeholders such as government, NGO's and others. SFDP set up 11 key project components including: a participatory village land-use agreement; forest management, human resources development; institutional development; marketing; adaptation of techniques and technologies for community forest management; information systems; a dialogue process between stakeholders; use of forest products as start-up capital for development; a forest utilization organization (cooperative); and an Association for Inter-Village Cooperation (LKAD).

### **Findings**

After twelve years, SFDP has had mixed results. Success was obtained in slowing the reduction of primary forest over a decade. Community perceptions of program impacts were positive in terms of technical and organisational learning and a sense of program ownership. The Association for Inter-Village Cooperation (LKAD) was an institutional innovation. And SFDP played a part in establishing the Social Forestry Department in the Ministry of Forestry. On the other hand, SFDP has not had a significant impact on community incomes. The eleven components of SFDP never quite fitted together. Communities felt that with no follow-up to SFDP planned, established institutions would be weakened and illegal loggers would win out. The participatory land use agreement - seen as a prerequisite to long-term success of the community forestry programme – was recognised by district government in a PerDa but was never legalised by Central Government. It was realised that national scaling-up of such agreement was difficult as it depends on the existence of a forest management process like CBFM. Hence, adopting the land use agreement required the formulation of other policies at a macro level (forest management system), restructuring the forest estate and thinking through agrarian reform and natural resources management at national level. As this was unlikely at this stage, national expectations for SFDP ended up hampering its chances for success in Sanggau.

#### **a) The boundaries of the dialogue were not clearly established early on.**

From a community perspective SFDP was seen as a means to generate income requiring long-term stability in land-use agreements. For the government SFDP was a pilot project to test a technical model of community forest management – a national experiment located in Sanggau District. Central government did not legalise the land use agreement which it did not consider in line with existing legislation as it suggested changes in forest function and land ownership. The boundaries of the dialogue were thus unclear from the start because of these conflicting perspectives on what SFDP was about. This hindered the programs chances of success.

#### **b) Not all relevant stakeholders were involved**

District Parliament played a minor role in SFDP as did sectors such as agriculture, industry, trade, and land. Half-way through SFDP local government dropped out of the process, leading to blockages and a need for new agreements. In the current transitional process, local government is being asked to increase its role as the forest management institution.

#### **c) Lack of commitment to follow-up**

The forestry department has not taken on SFDP as an example of innovation in forest

management as demonstrated in its unwillingness to recognise the land-use agreement process. Consequently, its interest conflicts with the results of SFDP. Communities asked questions about project continuity, the need for a new source of capital for starting a timber cooperative, and about community involvement in reforestation but none of the other stakeholders provided solutions to these concerns, further endangering any possible future for CBFM.

**d) Lack of action at the constitutional level.**

SFDP is another example where organisational and collective levels of agreement were based on clear ground rules, where long-term institution-building and dialogues should have helped program success. But central government's lack of support for legalising the land use agreement – one of the key components of the program (because of the central government's insistent focus on forest management instead of tenurial security) – contributed to its overall poor performance.

**Conclusion**

The project concept was carefully laid out and theoretically well-designed. However there was no shared understanding of long term objectives of SFDP between the community (wanting economic return) and central government (interested in a technical forestry model). The legal basis for guaranteed land-use, a central prerequisite for project success, was not facilitated by Central Government (ongoing delay of issuance of logging licenses by the Ministry of Forestry, non-recognition of PerDa 200 year 2001 District Sanggau).

There was discontinuity over the 12 years of the programme because of changing commitment of key stakeholders such as local government. The handover strategy was well planned but there was a lack of commitment to funding project continuity, an on-going lack of backing at a constitutional level for long-term land-use security, and strong pressure from illegal logging interests undermining sustainable forestry techniques. All of this point to possible total collapse of SFDP institutions after donor departure.

**3.4 Wonosobo Case**

**Background to Problem**

The state forests of Central Java had been managed by state-owned Perum Perhutani during the 'New Order' period, with limited community involvement. The reformation era power vacuum, a confused decentralisation process, land shortages in an agricultural area with high population density, pine plantations by Perhutani blamed for drying the land, and a refusal to allow communities to plant crops in young tree plantations, have all led to increased illegal logging, marginalisation of communities and land occupation.

**Multistakeholder process**

The Wonosobo Multistakeholder Process began in April 2000 with dialogues between NGO's<sup>4</sup>, Peoples Organisations, farmer groups, and the local DPRD, culminating in an agreement in August 2000 to negotiate policies related to communities and forest management. These stakeholders, together with Perhutani and the local government, launched a draft document called Community-Based Forest Management.

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<sup>4</sup> With the Yogyakarta based advocacy NGO ARuPA serving as the initiator of the process.

From March to August 2001 the local government declared an environmental 'break' which the local parliament used to carry out consultations on CBFM in 40 villages. Further farmer meetings agreed on a detailed concept of community-based forest management, planting teak instead of pine at lower density allowing intercropping in young plantations, and providing some benefit-sharing of the timber income to the community. This agreement was backed by a demonstration outside the DPRD in May 2001.

With ARuPA's help, a range of stakeholders including the Wonosobo forestry department drafted the PerDa on Community-Based Forest Management which was enacted in October 2001. PerDa 22/2001 gives devolved regulatory authority to the multistakeholder Wonosobo Forestry Forum, giving local communities real decision-making powers and recognizing some of their demands relating to the state forest area such as a change of species and planting density, and providing some benefit sharing.

In January 2002 talks were held about implementation guidelines for the PerDa including defining the Wonosobo Forestry Forum with its multistakeholder membership including government elements (Regional Planning and Development Agency, Assistant II, National Land Agency, the Ministry of Forestry and Estate Crops, Tourism Service), representatives of the community, representatives of universities, and NGOs. The draft guidelines on Community-Based Forest Resources Management were intended to be adopted by the Head of District, to begin implementation in 19 villages bordering the forest.

### **Findings**

This PerDa had the support of all stakeholders involved in the MSP. Real decision-making powers were to be devolved to the community in the Wonosobo Forestry Forum. All stakeholders involved agreed to contribute resources not just ideas. Grass-roots farmer groups supported the process as they made clear in demonstrations held to defend their interests.

But soon after the PerDa 22/year 2001 was enacted, the Ministry of Forestry and Estate Crops (MOFEC) pressed the Ministry of Home Affairs to block the farmer-friendly PerDa, thereby going against the laws and spirit of decentralisation. This move was thought to be inspired by officials in the Ministry of Forestry with strong rent-seeking interests in Perhutani.

#### **a) Boundaries of the dialogue:**

In the case of the Wonosobo MSP the objectives of the dialogue were understood and agreed by the stakeholders. MOFEC, having initially recommended the Multistakeholder approach, then obstructed it, partly misunderstanding the process, but mainly in an effort to obstruct the resulting legislation which would have made rent-seeking activities more difficult.

#### **b) Support to stakeholders most at risk**

The Wonosobo case has the most substantial organisational work in terms of preparing community groups for the process, ensuring better representation of community interests, and stronger community participation in dialogue but also in advocacy for their rights.

#### **c) Relevant stakeholders were involved**

The stakeholders involved included the NGO ARuPA as the initiator, other NGO's and farmer groups, cross-party members of the local parliament, the Head of District and his deputy, the head of the local Forestry Department and the farmers whose land bordered the state-owned forest. Further government and non-government stakeholders were due to take part in the Wonosobo Forestry Forum as stipulated in the PerDa and draft Implementation Guidelines.

#### **d) Hostility at the constitutional level.**

Despite the high level of commitment at operational and collective levels of decision-making, and despite initially allowing the PerDa process to take place, Perhutani and the Ministry of Forestry called a halt to the PerDa, demonstrating resistance to the process on four occasions:

- by requesting the Ministry of Home Affairs to cancel the PerDa 22 year 2001
- scrapping a Perhutani decision which supported community participation in forest management (albeit to a far lesser extent than the PerDa)
- relocating the head of Wonosobo forestry department who supported the PerDa.
- forcing the Head of District of Wonosobo to delay issuing Implementation Guidelines prepared for executing the PerDa in 19 villages near the forest.

#### **e) Commitment to follow-up**

Local parliament members continue to lobby for PerDa implementation (despite members who supported the PerDa as chairpersons on environment-related commission B being subsequently ousted from their positions), farmers are still organised, planting teak and intercropping on state forest land, while supporting NGOs'/farmer unions still prepare for organisational implementation of Community-Based Forest Resources Management.

### **Conclusion**

The Wonosobo MSP seemed to have all the elements for success – a strong and highly motivated MSP, support for more people-friendly forest management from all stakeholders, clear dialogue boundaries, and detailed implementation plans for PerDa no 22/2001. The PerDa is at present blocked because of obstruction from the Ministry of Forestry and Perhutani interests, ignoring decentralisation laws and demonstrating a lack of commitment to either farmer-friendly or environmentally friendly solutions and a preference for totalitarian approaches from the New Order past.

Interestingly, the implementation of the blocked PerDa continues in an orderly manner in the field with the planting of reclaimed state forest land by thousands of local farmers, facilitated by NGO's. The arrogance of Central Government in this case does not stop the most vulnerable stakeholders from implementing a forest management system which they helped to create.

## **3.5 West Kutai Case**

### **Background to Problem**

West Kutai District in East Kalimantan has been the scene of high levels of forest resource extraction. These rent-seeking activities, and related confusion – especially after decentralisation – about licensing for forest products, have contributed to increased conflict over power-sharing, boundary definitions, and vertical and horizontal social disputes. Meanwhile, poverty in forest dependant populations has remained high and natural resource destruction is ongoing, at ever increasing rates.

### **Multistakeholder process**

In 2001, the local government of West Kutai District, together with other interest groups, established the Working Group for a Regional Forestry Program involving various stakeholders from communities, private sector, and government, academics, NGOs and a donor support team from the Natural Resources Management Program (NRM/EPIQ) and Deutsche Gessellschaft Für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The working group established that licensing was still biased towards wood utilisation, that

most conflicts were related to tenurial uncertainty, that present government institutions were weak and incapable of improving coordination and managing relationships between the stakeholders involved in forest management, that forest destruction had secondary consequences such as flooding, drought and the loss of biodiversity, and that forest policies are not oriented towards forest communities or forest protection.

The District Government and the Working Group of West Kutai (2001) identified two key issues to work toward change:

- 1. Forest management:** The need to improve the institutional framework; the need to clarify policy and legal issues such as the distribution of authority between central and local government, uncertainty in law enforcement, and the absence of harmony between customary and positive law; forest management issues such as the overlap of forest concessions, illegal logging, overall resource depletion, conflict and community rights.
- 2. Impacts of forest management:** on the economy; on communities dependant on forest products; looking at the institutional problem of dualism between traditional and positive law in villages; looking at problems of land conflict between communities and between communities and local government or companies.

Working Group planning steps and work agenda were prepared and agreed to collectively. These next steps included collection of data and information, preparation of forestry portrait documents, scenario planning, strategic planning, and preparation of forestry program documents carried out according to principles of democracy, participation and transparency.

As a follow-up step the Working Group prepared a PerDa concerning West Kutai Forest Management. A Head of District's decree declared that PerDa preparation should involve consultation of community groups. Through the PerDa it was hoped that the government would manage to reconcile community and private sector expectations with regard to forest management.

## **Findings**

### **a) The boundaries of the dialogue were not clearly established early on.**

In the case of the West Kutai Working Group process there was common agreement amongst stakeholders that urgent multistakeholder dialogue was necessary to address commonly-held concerns. From the community perspective legislation no longer responded to their needs, policy-making was not considered transparent and forest resources were increasingly threatened. The Local Government understood a need for reforming forest policy as had been laid-down by the center, and agreed that the reform process, including preparing for a new Regional Regulation (PerDa), should be transparent. And the private sector agreed to dialogue, aware that field conditions were no longer as conducive to sustainable forest management.

The boundaries of the dialogue were not always clear. All stakeholders agreed to the need to control forest destruction but the communities also wanted management rights that potentially increased pressures on forest resources. The government rhetoric was for greater benefit to the community but did not provide real policy instruments to deliver this change.

**b) The stakeholders running the greatest risk were left most exposed**

Community voices were thin on the ground and not always impartial or representative. These voices insisted on access to benefits from forest products rather than on the risks of resource destruction. This has put communities in a weak position. The traditional community demand to have a separate regulation for community forest management has not been addressed.

**c) Stakeholders not equally represented**

The establishment of the Working Group involved multiple stakeholders, all of which were represented in the working group. However in reality the group was dominated by local government members not always sensitive to community aspirations. Many internal dialogues were held where not all stakeholders were present. Results would be presented back to the multistakeholder forum for clarification. Neither the private sector nor the process initiator (NRM) played a particularly significant role. The Working Group also had community representatives but some of these were pursuing their own interests rather than wider community interests. Community organisation was weak despite support from NGO's as was shown in the lack of clarity in community demands during the drafting of the PerDa.

Despite the process being based *in principle* on a collective approach, *in practice* participants did not have equal participation in dialogue. Indeed the dialogue would be 'adjusted' whenever it strayed from the Head of District's real policy direction (a direction reflected in the issuance of numerous licenses for forest exploitation).

**d) Lack of commitment to follow-up**

Commitment to follow-up has been weak. On the whole the collective strategy has been more of an exercise in communication than a real negotiation between the concerned parties.

**e) Lack of action at the operational or constitutional level.**

The main success in West Kutai was a new PerDa no.18/2002 on regional forestry, a result of collective dialogue between stakeholders. However this did not translate into change at either the operational or constitutional levels. For instance, at the operational level several management models were developed by the community and they were going to be legalized by a Regional Regulation under the umbrella of Social Forestry. However, up to this time that has not been defined appropriately, and the regional regulation on social forestry is still in drafting process. There is also no political will to tackle the fact that all the forest in West Kutai is already licensed to concessionaires and that changes to licensing and to operational rules must therefore be made in order to change forest management. Reform is also blocked at constitutional level by a lack of change in central government policies.

**Conclusion**

This MSP privileged dialogue and set-up a forum to look into forest policy reform where all stakeholders were represented. However the boundaries of dialogue were not always clear, as in other cases there was a lack of support at a constitutional level, but in West Kutai the operational level also failed to materialise. Stakeholders were not equal partners in the debate, and the government ended up picking and choosing the parts of the MSP that suited its policy priorities. It cannot be said that the Working Group delivered the strong new social contract that was necessary in order to improve natural resource management in West Kutai.

## 4. Resume

### **Have the boundaries of multistakeholder dialogue been established?**

The definition of dialogue boundaries is a key step for delivering successful MSP's. In several of the cases studied, the nature of the process has been misunderstood. In Sumbawa the initiator considered the process finished once a regional regulation was enacted. In West Kutai authorities went along with the dialogue but only accepted discussion results that fitted their existing policies, thereby invalidating the process. Shared understanding of process objectives is often lacking. In Sanggau program initiators and community groups understood that legalising the land-use agreement and with it long-term rights, was a prerequisite for a successful outcome. Central government only saw SFDP as a forest management model and refused to legalise the agreement. In Sumbawa communities thought the process was about land-use issues while the Head of District thought it to be about teak plantations on ex-Perhutani lands.

### **Have steps been taken to ensure a beneficial outcome for the stakeholders who are at most risk from the decision-making process?**

In Wonosobo the community position was strengthened through organisational development, advocacy and actions in the field. As a result, communities were not over-exposed when constitutional-level support broke down. SFDP put a lot of effort into building community institutions but these seemed unlikely to survive the end of the funding period. In Kutai there was little guarantee of a beneficial outcome for communities and even less so in Sumbawa where communities were hardly involved in the MSP. Finally in Kendari, communities were left in a weaker position after dialogue as they did not have the capacity to stop land-grabs by urban-dwellers.

### **Has there been participation of all relevant stakeholders?**

In each of the processes there were difficulties with stakeholder involvement. Only in Wonosobo were all relevant stakeholders involved. Lack of previous stakeholder identification left some actors out of the Kendari process. Sumbawa's PerDa drafting hardly involved the community at all and in West Kutai the community voice was also very weak. Rapid Government staff turn-over is a problem in most of the MSP's.

### **Is there support for the continuity of the process?**

The results show little long term support available for the processes. In the SFDP continued support was asked for but after a 12 year commitment could not be offered. In Sumbawa the initiator did not continue supporting the process once legislation had been enacted. In Kendari the Implementing Team was never formed, while in West Kutai it became clear that the process was more an exercise in communication than a real negotiation.

### **Has the process reached agreements at the three levels of operational, collective and constitutional choice?**

In every case the policy process led to collective level agreements. But at operational level only Sanggau and Wonosobo have developed clear procedures, Kendari has an operational level action plan which has not been implemented. In Sumbawa and West Kutai the respective PerDa processes have not been backed up with operational arrangements. The biggest problems have been at the constitutional level. As we have seen SFDP was weakened by central government refusal to legalise the land-use component of the programme. In Wonosobo a seemingly successful process was brought to a halt by the Ministry of Forestry's blocking strategy. The Sumbawa PerDa could similarly be overturned.

## 5. Discussion

The conceptual framework demonstrates the need to include community institutions in the management of common pool resources, and shows the need to use multistakeholder processes to include decision-making at higher levels that can otherwise overwhelm the local process. The multistakeholder process only has a reasonable chance of changing policy however if certain conditions are fulfilled, of shared values and 'rules' enabling the success of the approach.

Preparation of a multistakeholder process clearly requires a much greater initial investment of time, personnel and resources than have been allocated so far. The purpose is to help different stakeholders gain a shared understanding of basic issues related to forest resource management, to develop insights into the democratic and participatory nature of the process itself, and to clearly define the issues to be addressed, the stakeholders to be invited, the territory in question, and the length of time the process is planned for. Developing shared values such as democracy and participation based on equality of capacity are seen as critical to the success of multistakeholder processes. A central premise of MSP's is changing public policy to benefit the forest dependent poor. However, traditional and farming communities rarely have a high level of organisation after decades of being politically marginalised. Communities should be supported by organisational strengthening and further access to information and understanding. However this requires a long time and tremendous persistence.

Full participation of organised community groups can make decision-making processes more drawn-out. A process with hardly any community participation like the Sumbawa PerDa seems to go very smoothly. Similarly there is often an attempt at avoiding certain issues in the hope of avoiding conflicts. Avoidance of conflictive topics by forcing a consensus at a very early stage of the process are false stalling strategies that do not lead to healthy democratic arrangements. Involving all stakeholders is not easy. Identifying true community representatives is difficult, particularly in the absence of strong community organisations. In addition, MSP processes have tended to rely on individual commitment, not institutions and are therefore vulnerable to frequent personnel change as occurs in government. Not only are community groups sometimes weak and disorganised but local government is also frequently lacking in capacity to carry out reform. This contributes to the difficulty of institutionalising any multistakeholder process. In this sense there is also a need to strengthen local government capability.

So far multistakeholder processes have not lived up to their promise. The MSP approach has had limited success at reaching collective decisions on a district level. It has had rather less success in delivering operational level changes. This is due to a large extent to the design flaws described above. At the constitutional level MSP's have fared even worse and even the well-planned Wonosobo process was brought to a halt by Central Government intervention. At present the absence of supportive central government policy and the threat posed by MSP's to rent-seeking activities may limit the processes to a means for learning democracy instead of being the basis for creating new social contracts. It remains to be seen to what extent improving the design and implementation of the process can help. It is also crucial to decide early on whether a particular process is worth pursuing since sporadic unaccompanied initiatives may increase the likelihood of resource conflict.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study shows that multistakeholder processes had not been successful yet in delivering pro-poor forest policy reform in Indonesia. The five MSPs across Indonesia resulted in tend to dialogue deadlock, at least during the study time.

The research shows that most of the 5 case-studies were flawed in their ability to deliver necessary conditions at an operational and collective level, and sufficient conditions such as constitutional-level arrangements. Multistakeholder processes need a guaranteed long-term support from initiators and/or supporters. The dialogue boundaries must be well-designed. Actions that can be taken to improve delivery at the operational and collective level include allocating more time and resources to help develop a shared understanding of policy issues in different stakeholders. In particular, community groups and local government should be prioritised for organisational strengthening and should be given improved access to information and training. MSP's should seek to become institutionalised processes, not just occasional ones relying on individuals to keep them going.

While there is great scope for improving delivery of necessary conditions, it is the sufficient conditions that prove most difficult to fulfil. At the time of the study there is no constitutional level support for MSP's. Centralised forest policy is still reluctant to recognize the role of the regions or of communities in forest management. Change is difficult as long as actors who have enjoyed high rent from forest resources remain in positions of power and influence.

However change is necessary since the present forest management regime can no longer maintain the forests. To obtain change fundamental issues must be dealt with, namely community rights over forest lands, clear authority over forest management at all levels, improving the capacity of decision-makers and transformation of the current system of forest management. If these issues are not addressed, there is a danger that MSP's could become a kind of validation of the present system. Initiatives that support MSP should be continued and improved on the basis of evaluations. MSPs should be implemented so as to simultaneously address operational, collective and constitutional levels of agreement. National Forest Programme (nfp) development should be carried out as an MSP to help meet sufficient conditions. Donors should improve grant-making to help meet sufficient conditions. The Ministry of Forestry and donors should integrate their approaches. District level MSP's could be used to enter policy at local, provincial and national levels. This would be possible only if at the national level the organisation as well as the main task and function of the Ministry of Forestry were restructured towards strengthening and synchronising regional forestry institutions instead of dealing with technical forestry issues.

It is important not to forget using other approaches such as people's jury, 'truth and reconciliation' models and continued use of advocacy. It is also important to note that these are early days for MSP's and that most cases have taken place over a 1-2 year period which is insufficient for any significant change.

Despite drawbacks, MSP is a useful learning tool in a difficult policy environment. It may be the only form of pro-poor and pro-environment collective decision-making available to policy makers at present: *minus malum*. It may yet become a powerful tool for reform in future.

## **A Note from UK Co-Director of the MFP (one year after the study was concluded)**

Over the last three years, the MFP has provided financial support to dialogues across the country with a view to rebuilding social contracts between actors who claim a stake in Indonesia's forest lands and resources. Contrary to development assistance in the past when projects were dominated by expatriate technicians, the programme has emphasized local ownership and processes. This has led to a rich set of approaches and experiences with varying levels of success. The present study's aim was to shed some light on the quality of those processes with a view to improving their performance. It thus represents an important contribution to 'shared learning' amongst programme partners.

The authors are to be congratulated on the results of their analysis so far: they are based on a rigorous but simple theoretical framework which allowed for a consistent analysis across the case studies. The story told resonates with our own field observations, and will, no doubt, lead to the definition of concrete recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Multistakeholder Processes for the benefit of the stakeholders themselves, the country's forests and the forest practitioner and scientist.

Indonesia's forests today go through a typical '*tragedy of the (unmanaged) commons*'. The State's lack of effective authority makes a return to local institutions and processes all the more important; trade-offs between the often conflicting claims by varying forest users can only be attained through multi-stakeholder processes. Trust is a key ingredient – in fact, it is the very loss of the trust by forest communities and other users in the State which is the main reason for the crisis which is presently unfolding.

The authors' consideration of multi-stakeholder processes across three dimensions – operational, collective decision making and constitutional framework, and the set of guiding questions represent a welcome approach to dissecting the processes in the field. Our own experience has taught us that, in addition to those important quality attributes of the process itself, the following also needs considering: (i) building a good understanding of the (local) political economy of forest land utilization; (ii) knowing the (local) drivers of change (actors, such as a charismatic NGO activist, or processes, such as decentralisation) and 'hitching a ride' on the development waves they generate and (iii) generating a learning process that allows those involved to draw the lessons from their successes and failures, and make the necessary adjustments for the next stage.

There is no such thing as a unique and linear policy process; multi-stakeholder dialogues are full of surprises. Important stakeholders are only discovered as the process unfolds, and the process itself affects and alters the behaviour of actors such that new approaches have to be thought of as the process unfolds. Unfortunately, the authors didn't have sufficient time to witness the full richness of the preliminary and subsequent dynamics that generated and were generated by the multi-stakeholder initiatives they studied. In other words, theirs was a limited 'snapshot' of a much longer local history in the making.

The Nipa-Nipa initiative is a case in point: in the time it has taken for this study to get finalized and published, the drivers of this specific multi-stakeholder dialogue, learning from their experience thus far and some of the developments as related by the authors, have initiated a new phase in the dialogue and legislative process, with active collaboration and co-funding from local government. In the Sumbawa case too there have been further

developments: the original proposers have initiated a process to improve on the initial legal draft, and a parallel proposal by an alternative group is strengthening community organization. Central Government has been approached too, and has raised no objections to the District PerDa.

Our own request to the authors to concentrate on recommendations to improve the processes has necessarily focused the latter on the weaknesses of the current approaches. In the meantime, much of what has been achieved runs the risk of being overlooked. This is particularly true about the level of trust which is palpably higher in many of the places where multi-stakeholder processes were conducted in the country, even where conflicts apparently got worse when they initially reached the surface through the dialogue. We do not share the view that the processes the authors studied ended up in 'deadlock' – they may have led to momentary impasse (a temporary deadlock), but the enthusiasm they have generated and the doors they have opened often give rise to subsequent processes that would have been impossible to plan for at the beginning.

One of the consequences of the diminishing effectiveness of State control in Indonesia's forests after the 1997/98 financial and political crisis is the collapse of data gathering and analysis. This has furthered complicated multi-stakeholder dialogues, as factual information is lacking, and stakeholders rely on their own mythologies to pursue their own political agendas and claims. The summary's foreword mentions that multi-stakeholder processes need facilitation by competent and independent actors – we would add that factual information gathering and data construction by independent agencies accepted as such by all stakeholders represent an equally important element of successful participative planning, and that the absence of such actors has contributed to the difficulties mentioned in the paper.

To conclude, we believe the authors' analytical framework has contributed to a qualitative assessment of some of the processes they have analysed in the field. Their search for 'improvements' and the 'snapshot' nature of their investigations may lead to the erroneous conclusion that successful MSP's are necessarily linear and complete, and that stakeholder must share a common understanding of where they want to go. Our own experience shows that shared visions only appear after many concerted steps, and that the first step in a dialogue often carries an increased risk of conflict because it is often seen as an opportunity by stakeholders to let their own views be known by others. Trust too only appears later on – mutual respect and recognition are often a sufficient condition for initiating a process. We don't always know who the most important stakeholder are from the beginning, and it is the process itself that helps identify them. This does lead to temporary impasses, but does not necessarily really mean 'dead-lock'. Processes are many layered, non linear, and 'messy', and take time. Too intense interference by outside actors may well have been the very contribution of the Sanggau's ill fated social forestry development project – the MFP's experience in Sikka (Flores) would tend to support such analysis. Finally, the most important ingredient for a dynamic process seems to be the ability of the process drivers to promote shared lesson learning by the stake-holders.

The paper talks about the high transaction costs incurred by multi-stakeholder processes. It is true that MSP's take time, and that in the meantime much forest land/resource is lost. But rather than ascribing these primarily to weak processes, we contend that it is the extent of the distrust in the state and of conflict amongst stakeholders that was generated by the former forest management regime which is responsible for those costs, and, while we agree with the authors that the processes can be improved in quality, thus leading to a greater likelihood for

success, we caution against attempts to short-circuit necessary trust building. It is unlikely that the pace of forest destruction set in motion when forests were earmarked for timber mining to foment economic growth and outside resource users were brought in whose livelihoods do not depend on the local environment will be much abated by ongoing MSP's. What the latter can achieve, however, is a common vision of what tomorrow's forest will look like, and how it will benefit a much wider range of local and outside interests, including those of the international community interested in the fate of tropical forests in the light of global environmental change processes.

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