



UNIVERSITAS MATARAM

Memberikan penghargaan kepada :

Ir. Muktasam, M.Sc. Ph.D
Sebagai

Pemakalah

Dalam kegiatan Seminar Nasional dan Pameran Hasil-hasil Penelitian

dengan tema : "Membangun NTB dan Masyarakat Akademik yang Berdaya Saing melalui Pengembangan IPTEKS"

Tanggal 29-30 September 2009 di Mataram

Mataram, 30 September 2009

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REGULATING THE COMMONS: PARTICIPATORY AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER APPROACHES? ¹

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies of regulating the commons in Eastern Indonesia have led to critical questions on the importance of *participatory* and *multistakeholder* approaches. These studies found that even though some “participatory” and “multistakeholder” approaches have been promoted, the fact indicates that the efforts have led to “no where” in managing the commons”. Forest condition due to illegal (as well as legal) logging and encroachment is getting worst. Farmers and community in downstream are start to observe and find that they are at risk. Water for irrigation and household consumption are now decreasing, and sustainable agriculture issues come to the surface.

The questions are (1) what goes wrong with participatory and multistakeholder approaches? What forms of approaches taken to involved local community and local government agencies in policy development? Why there is no real action taking place on the ground to conserve the commons even though “participatory” and “multistakeholder” approaches have been practiced?

The studies found several issues in promoting participatory and multistakeholder approaches for managing the commons such as lack of serious commitment from the local “government”, conflict between the local community and the district governments, lack of support from the local parliaments, donor-driven projects, and many others. These studies highlight the needs for (i) innovative approaches in regulating the commons, (ii) rethinking the existing approaches in policy development – especially in managing the commons, and (iii) rethinking “donors’ approaches” in facilitating policy changes for the commons.

Keywords: Participatory, Multistakeholder, Regulating, Forest

1. Introduction

Forest as a common goods (the term Common will be used for rest of the document) is now became a complex issue. Primarily, forestry development everywhere is supposed to achieve and to sustain forest functions such as ecological and socio-economic functions. However, due to fast *population growth*, *economic crisis* and the *emerge of reformation regime* (include perception and attitude changes toward forest and natural resources) and the *globalization* have had significant impacts on forest management – managing the common. These changes are going so fast that lead to community expansion to the forest areas. In many areas of the country in Indonesia, forest sustainability are at risk, where the surrounding communities stepping in, clearing trees, occupying and claiming for forest land ownership by ignoring issues of forest degradation and sustainability.

¹ *Paper yang disampaikan pada “Seminar Nasional dan Pameran Hasil-hasil Penelitian” pada Lembaga Penelitian – Universitas Mataram, Mataram, 29 – 30 September 2009.*

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Research carried out by the Research Center for Rural Development - Mataram University reveals at least four major problems of forest management in Lombok Island. These problems are (1) *Bio-physical aspects*; continuous destruction of forest vegetation and land - tree clearing for timber/illegal logging and food crop cultivation, erosion, decreasing of water supply, lost of springs; (2) *Economic aspects*; lack of job opportunity, unemployment, limited land supply, low income or poverty, low price of agricultural products, and limited market access; (3) *Social institutions*; lack of awareness and knowledge in forest management and land conservation, lack of community participation in forestry development programs, ineffective groups, absence of rules and norms, negative perceptions and attitudes; and (4) *Policy aspects*³; gap between policy formulation and policy implementation, lack of policy socialisation, and lack of community participation in policy formulation and implementation – more centralized and top-down policy development (Muktasam, et al. 2003).

These problems and issues highlight the importance of participatory and multi-stakeholder approach, inter-stakeholders coordination and collaboration to solve and address forest management, and this is one of among the other arguments for Department for International Development – Multistakeholder Forestry Program (DFID-MFP) involvement in supporting forestry development. In Nusa Tenggara, Multistakeholder Forestry Program (MFP) has been one of the supporting agencies for forestry development policies and programs that have involved various partners, agencies and stakeholders. In Nusa Tenggara provinces - Indonesia, MFP partners consist of Government and Non-government Organizations, Universities and Community Organizations and NGOs. A number and varies of activities have been supported by MFP covering several major islands in Nusa Tenggara such as Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, West Timor and Lembata. The activities promote by the MFP partners ranging from facilitating dialog, seminar, survey and action research, capacity building, conflict mediation to policy advocacy. These activities have facilitated learning processes to all involved stakeholders and to

³ *Forest policy has been defined as:*

- “a settled *course of action* that has been adopted by a group of people and is actually being followed by them” (Worrell, A.C. 1970, *Principles of Forest Policy*, McGraw-Hill, p.233).
- “a specification of certain principles regarding the use of a society’s forest resources which it is felt will contribute to the achievement of some of the *society’s objectives*” (Worrell, A.C. 1970, *Principles of Forest Policy*, McGraw-Hill, p.2) and
- “a commitment of the *authority of government* to a course of action over time that identifies a purpose or direction for dealing with some problem regarding forests and reflects social choices” (Worrell, A.C., 1970. *Principles of Forest Policy*, p. 235).
- The SAF defines policy as “a definite course or method of action to guide present and future decisions or to specify in detail the ways and means to achieve goals and objectives.” (Cubbage, F.W., J. O’Laughlin, and C.S. Bullock, III, *Forest Resource Policy*, Wiley (1993) p. 16.

some extent supported policy development and implementation at the local and the regional levels.

Policies and programs on community forest management have been initiated not only by MFP partners, but also by other stakeholders such as local government, non-governmental organization and even by local communities. These policies and programs might have been implemented in a “parallel mode of actions” with some unintended impacts which in turn lead to ineffective forest management – e.g. duplication and overlapping of efforts, redundancy, conflict of interest, negative image toward development (Muktasam, et al. 2003). There is a need to bring all those efforts and resources together in a convergence fashion of forest management, where such conditions are required (Gray 1985; Miller 1992).

To promote more effective and sound policies on community-based forest management, there is a need to study the dynamics of forestry policies, especially in the last five years during which a strong movement toward *decentralization and devolution*⁴ of forest management have been taking place, not only in Indonesia but also in other Asian-Pacific countries such as in Nepal (Fisher, B.Durst et al. 2000; Lai, Catacutan et al. 2000) and Thailand (Muktasam 2004). *How policies (on community-based forest management) had been initiated, formulated, implemented and created impacts on forest management* should be understood. Moreover, comprehensive information on *how programs and activities carried out by MFP partners have facilitated policy changes and effective policy implementation* has not been fully understood. Therefore, there is a need to understand the policy dynamics of the common (forest) in Nusa Tenggara, and identify constraints and opportunities to strengthen participatory and multistakeholder approaches in managing the commons.

2. Objectives and Significances

The main objective of this study is to get a comprehensive picture of policy changes in forest management (Regulating the Commons) in Nusa Tenggara for the last five years, and how MFP partners have contributed to these changes. In more specific, this study is aimed (i) to mapping all policy initiatives and products developed and applied in Nusa

⁴*These terms are defined as the relocation of administrative functions and power away from a central location respectively* Fisher, R. J., P. B.Durst, et al. (2000). Overview of Themes and Issues in Devolution and Decentralization of Forest Management in Asia Pacific. Decentralization and Devolution of Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific. T. Enters, P. B. Durst and M. Victor. Bangkok, RECOFTC: vi-xi.

Tenggara forest management; (ii) to understand the background, proses of policy formulation, policy contents, implementation and policy outcomes; (iii) to identify factors associated with policy development and implementation effectiveness; (iv) to identify programs and activities of MFP partners that supporting policy development and implementation; (v) to find out issues and opportunities that could be used by MFP partners to promote more effective policy formulation and implementation; and (vi) to develop sound and participatory recommendations for more effective policy development and implementation.

The results of the study would be usefull as inputs to all stakeholders involved in forestry development such as the local and the national government. More effective policy development and implementation could be promoted based on the study findings which in turn will lead to sustainable forest management and better community livelihood. In more specific, the results of the study will be used to support local government as well as MPF partners in facilitating policy formulation and implementation through capacity building activities such as legislative grafting, and sound research.

3. Study Methods

The study was carried out in Nusa Tenggara, both in East and West Nusa Tenggara provinces. In East Nusa Tenggara the study focused on policy initiatives in Lembata, Sikka and Sumba Timur districts while in West Nusa Tenggara the study focused in Sumbawa and West Lombok districts. Policy analysis and various social research methods were applied to the study such as document and content analysis, and case studies. Various techniques of data collection were applied such as workshop, focus group discussion, in-depth interviews, and field observation. Three major activities that were carried out in the study are (i) desk study using all available policy documents and reports; (ii) in-depth investigation of district policies based on the documents, secondary and primary data; and (iii) case studies for every MFP partners by reviewing their reports, interviewing them, and observing their programs and activities.

Primary and secondary data were used for the study. Secondary data were collected from related institutions such as the provincial and district department of forestry or forestry and plantations, Bureau of Statistic, and from MFP partners. Primary data was collected from various key informants, respodents from related key stakeholders, from field level to the national level.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis were applied. Content and process analysis were applied to identify issues in policy contents, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy outcomes. Gaps between “the concept” (policy statement) and “the fact” were identified using all concept and theories for ideal policy development, implementation and evaluation.

4. Study Results

4.1. The Existing Trend in Regulating the Commons

The results of the study indicate that in the last five years there is a consistent trend in all areas that forest degradation is continues. Various factors have been identified by the stakeholders such as unclear, absence and inconsistent policies on forest management. Even, in some cases it was claimed that the local policy on the common (forest) has accelerated the degradation rate (raised in West Lombok and Sumbawa districts). In addition to policy issues, other socio economic and political factors have contributed to continuous forest degradation in Nusa Tenggara.

Table 1. Policies Found in Regulating the Commons

Province	Trend in regulating the common (Forest)	Status
West Nusa Tenggara	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest Concession 2. Community-based Forest Management (Sumbawa and Lombok islands – in Sumbawa, and West Sumbawa districts; Three districts in Lombok island) 3. Customary Forest Regulation 	<p>Finished No progress after Perda</p>
East Nusa Tenggara	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community-based Forest Management (Sikka and Lembata districts) 2. Customary Forest Regulation (in Florest – Sikka district) 3. Forest National Park 	<p>Initial stage to the formulation of forestry policies</p>

Different levels of policy dynamic were found in the study. In West Nusa Tenggara province, it was found more progress compare to the East Nusa Tenggara province. Two districts of West Nusa Tenggara have had community-based forest regulations, namely Perda PSDHBM in Sumbawa and Perda HKm in West Lombok district. A different trend was found in Sikka, Lembata and Sumba Timur where the local government in collaboration with MFP partners are in the early stage of policy development – doing research and identification of policy contents. In Sikka and Lembata there is no local policy for forest management (except a Bupati decree in Lembata – given in the mid 2006). Forest policies in Sumba Timur will not be directed toward a policy product such as

Perda, but just in form of multistakeholders agreement (MOU) – see the following quotation.

“Penelusuran terhadap produk-produk kebijakan pengelolaan hutan yang dikembangkan dan diterapkan di Nusa Tenggara dalam lima tahun terakhir menunjukkan bahwa di Nusa Tenggara Barat telah ditetapkan paling tidak tiga Peraturan Daerah dan sedang berproses dua Rancangan Peraturan Daerah. Ketiga Perda yang telah ditetapkan adalah (i) Perda No. 25 Tahun 2002 tentang Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Hutan Berbasis Masyarakat (PSDHBM) di kabupaten Sumbawa – ditetapkan pada bulan Agustus 2002, (ii) Perda No. 10 Tahun 2003 tentang Hutan Kemasyarakatan (HKm) di Kabupaten Lombok Barat – ditetapkan pada bulan Oktober 2003, dan (iii) Perda provinsi No. 6 Tahun 2004 tentang Penyelenggaraan Hutan Kemasyarakatan di NTB – ditetapkan pada bulan Juli 2004. Sementara itu sedang berproses dua rancangan peraturan daerah yang terkait dengan pengelolaan hutan, yaitu (i) *Rancangan Peraturan Daerah tentang Pengukuhan Keberadaan Masyarakat Hukum Adat* – oleh Koslata dan dalam tahap konsultasi publik dan menjelang masuk untuk dibahas di DPRD Lombok Barat, dan (ii) *Rancangan Peraturan Daerah tentang Jasa Lingkungan* – disponsori oleh WWF dan saat studi ini dilakukan sedang dalam pembahasan di DPRD Lombok Barat. Selain itu juga tengah berproses ke arah pengembangan kebijakan dalam bentuk Peraturan Daerah di kabupaten Sumbawa Barat dan kabupaten Lombok Timur – pada saat studi ini dilakukan masih dalam tahapan “penelitian” guna menggali substansi kebijakan atau perda yang kemudian akan menghasilkan “Laporan Penelitian” (Naskah Akademik). In practice, there is no particular action taken to implement the policies and to stop the degradation process.” (Muktasam, et. al. 2006)

4.2. What forms of approaches taken to involved local community and local government agencies in policy development?

The study found that most of policy formulation initiative was initiated by local NGOs with strong support from international funding agencies such as DFID – MFP, and WWF Indonesia. Participation of local community and local government agencies has been facilitated through the following three major approaches:

- Formation of community organizations or community groups – Kelompok Tani Hutan or Kelompok Tani HKm or Kelompok Tani PSDHBM
- Formation of Multistakeholder Forums at the District level – Forum Multipihak
- Use of participatory approaches at the research and legislative drafting stages such as Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Workshops, Public Consultations, Round Table Discussions, and others.

4.3. What Goes Wrong with *Participatory* and *Multistakeholder* Approaches?

The following issues were found in the study:

- Demand driven project (MFP-DFID come to the ground and facilitated the programs)

- Issues with participatory process (well understood concept of participation) where participation of the people due to “the project” without critical awareness of issues and environmental problems. The second issue in participation, when there is an invitation, there is a trend that the key person from organizations or institutions will recommend the lower staff, and as results, they could not make any decision and this led to lack of commitment to the whole process in managing the common. The third issue in participation and multistakeholder approach is local autonomy and mutation – the changes that take place in the mother organization that make the team or the committee prone or do not working well.
- Commitment in resource sharing and sharing vision
- Lack of understanding in working together as a system – for example, a forestry is a system where water come from for farming irrigation, food crops are produced, oxygen is produced, and others. These facts show the need for other agencies involvement.
- Egocentric perception!
- Poor in stakeholder identification and participation strategies - lack of community participation, especially in policy formulation. As a results, there is issue in “profit sharing article” (sistem Bagi Hasil) where local community found themselves in worst of condition.
- Issues associated with the existing trend in democracy and local autonomy – local elected leader (e.g. Bupati Kepala Daerah) is likely to appoint a person based on his or her subjective aspect than objective and competency arguments.

4.4. Why there is no real action taking place on the ground to conserve the commons even though “participatory” and “multistakeholder” approaches have been practiced?

Although there have been local policies (Government Regulation or Perda), the study found that both policies have not been implemented well and even in a stagnant stage (West Lombok and Sumbawa districts). The policies then have not had any impacts on improving forest conditions and economic well being of the local communities. The following factors were identified:

- Unclear national policy direction, both at the local as well as at the national level – some area of forest has been encroached, occupied and converted by the people (not only the surrounding community but also the community from other regions) in all types of forest, from conservation and protected forest to production forest. The

government does not have power to stop these illegal occupations, and even after the forest occupied there is no clear action taken! Dilemma of doing supervision and do not do anything. Supervise mean “agree” with illegal encroachment, while not doing anything means letting them free for continuous encroachment (issues associated with the changes of pp no.6 change before it is implemented).

- On the other hand, the study found that in some areas where the national government gave the right to manage the common, the local government did not do the right thing and even making the common in worse condition. Devolutions led to worse degradation and deforestation.
- Ineffective policy implementation - the existing experiences on community-based forest management (such as at Batukliang Utara) highlight ineffective implementation of forestry policies to empower local community. Again, conserving the commons in not on the top of local community’s agenda.
- Issues associated with interagency coordination are another factors that hindering real actions at the ground.

4.5. The Promising Factors

Even though there are several issues in regulating the commons, there are several promising factors to promote more effective policies on the commons. Multistakeholder Forestry Program partners have played important and critical roles in the process of policy initiatives, policy formulation and policy implementation. Community-based forest management policies generated in Sumbawa and West Lombok, and collaborative actions in Sumba Timur are examples of how MFP partners facilitated policy changes. The movement toward community-based forest legislation in Sikka and Lembata also demonstrates the roles played by MFP partners in those districts.

The study also found for a good relationship among stakeholders in all study location except in Sikka. This could be a supporting factors for all MPF partners to promote and facilitate better policy formulation and implementation in the future. In addition, there is a critical awareness for continous land degradation in all stakeholders and the need for future collective action. Again, it is a strength and opportunity that could be used by MFP partners in helping the local government and the community for better forestry policies.

On the other hand, there are several challenges to MFP partners such as the issue of multistakeholder forum viability, commitment to sustaint their programs and activities once the support from DFID-MFP completed, and the challenge from the local community for the real implementation of community –based forest policies (Perda).

5. Lessons Learned and the Future Prospect for Regulating the Commons

On the basis of the above findings, this study concludes that the existing forestry policies have not played critical roles to stop forest degradation and to improve the socio economic condition of the local people. Even in the area where local policies are in place, such as those found in Indonesia – cases of West Nusa Tenggara and East Nusa Tenggara provinces - still the policies have had no impacts.

In regard to policy dynamics, it was found that West Nusa Tenggara is better or more progressive than in East Nusa Tenggara. Two districts in West Nusa Tenggara have produced community-based forest policies while in two districts in East Nusa Tenggara (Sikka and Lembata districts) are in the process of developing similar policies. However, in Sumba Timur district, the government will not move toward “community-based forest regulation”, but in form of “multistakeholder agreement” (MOU).

There are several factors perceived for less effective of the policies for the commons, and some of them are (1) lack of commitment from stakeholders, (2) community aspiration was neglected (e.g. in profit sharing articles), (3) complicated procedures in area determination for forest management, (4) the absence of formal agreement from the national government (in particular the Minister of Forestry) has been blamed for ineffective policies, and (5) socio economic and political factors to some extent have influenced the performance of the local policies for the commons.

Multistakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP) partners have played important and critical roles in the process of policy initiatives and policy formulation, however the challenges to MFP partners are the issue of multistakeholder forum viability, commitment to sustain programs and activities for effective management of the commons.

On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that (i) multistakeholder collective action could be continued to address the existing challenges in forest degradation; (ii) there is a need to redevelop shared vision among stakeholders as it was found that the multistakeholder forums in all locations are stagnant and the need to put ecological aspect as the first priority in forest development; (iii) Follow-up action is required to make the existing policies implemented, especially for Sumbawa and West Lombok; (iv) Technical assistant is required to help MFP partners, especially in the field of legislative drafting - rethinking the existing approaches in policy development and innovative approaches in regulating the commons. Supports for MFP partners are also required in the area of

Forum management as it is the fact that almost all multistakeholder forums are ineffective, and (v) rethinking “donors’ approaches” in facilitating policy changes for the commons.

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Acknowledgement:

Expression of gratitudes goes to MFP-DFID, Mr. Hasbi Berliani as Regional Facilitator of MFP, Dr. Hariady Kartodihardjo and Ir. Tri Nugroho (both as reviewers) for a their significant support to the study. The success completion of the study also due to the supports given by all MFP partners and local stakeholders such as the Department of Forestry, community groups and village leaders. For their contribution and supports, the Team would like to thank them all. Finally, the Team would like to thank all P3P staff who made the study possible. The content of this report is not representing the opinion of the funding agency in any way.
