



Indonesia Sustaining the Forest Livelihoods of Indigenous Communities for the Long Term

Indonesia’s biodiversity and cultural diversity are among what make it unique among the nations of the world. Out of more than 1,000 government-identified ethnic groups, roughly 250 indigenous communities live in the massive forested areas that dot the 17,000 islands that comprise the nation’s landmass. The culture, social structure, and livelihoods of these indigenous communities are inextricably linked with their forest domains.

The project, Improving Governance for Sustainable Indigenous Community Livelihoods in Forest Areas (SICoLIFe), financed by the Japan Social Development Fund (from September 2012 to August 2015) aimed to improve the livelihoods of these indigenous forest communities by building their skills in sustainable forest management, with a focus on indigenous community-based economic development. In addition to business activities directly related to forestry, the project also focused on helping indigenous women turn their talent in traditional arts into crafts businesses that would cater to the growing eco-tourism trade.

Legislative Changes Open Window of Economic Opportunity

In 2013, the Indonesian government enacted legislation that affirmed the forest ownership rights of indigenous communities. This was followed by a push to map out the boundaries of indigenous community forests as part of a national drive, called One Map, to clarify land ownership rights.

The new law opened up a new window of economic opportunity for the forest communities—to set up community-based forestry enterprises that would generate income. Yet, they faced significant obstacles. They lacked technical skills to formally identify the exact borders of their lands. They did not know how to embark on an effective land use planning process that would ensure sustainable natural resource management. Without business training, they also would have a hard time capitalizing on the economic potential.

The JSDF project was designed to address these challenges. In 2012, as the push for legislative action was gaining momentum, SICoLIFe, financed by a \$2.85 million JSDF grant got underway.



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About the JSDF Project

With AMAN —Indonesia’s national indigenous peoples’ alliance— as SCoLIFE’s implementing partner, the project team was able to tap into a well-established community network. The project featured several components, summarized here.

Primary Land Use Planning

In this component of the project, indigenous communities learned how to use land use planning tools and engage in planning processes for forested acreage identified as “ancestral domains”—their native land areas. First, local trainers affiliated with their community organizations received training on use of Geographic Information Technology and other mapping tools. In turn, the trainers shared their knowledge with community members, in a series of workshops aimed at building mapping skills and making use of the information for better planning.

Through this training, communities now had their own GIS mapping and database experts who can advise them on future land use plans, based on accurate data and information. Armed with this information, the individual communities proceeded to identify specific targeted economic uses for the land and design plans for participatory economic development.

In addition, guidelines were developed for registration, verification, and publication of ancestral domain maps. The guidelines helped standardize the process while the registration ensured legal rights. Once registered and published, the maps added to a growing library for use by government officials, community leaders, and the public at large.

Capacity Building for Community Based Organizations

Local community organizations are at the front lines of ensuring that efforts to support social development have long-lasting results—well after the conclusion of a grant-funded project. At the heart of SCoLIFE was a focus on the indigenous community organizations—and on empowering them with skills and knowledge so they could take the lead going forward. Training and knowledge-sharing activities were highly focused, based on specific needs that had been identified.



- Community organizing and financial management: As community activities became more complex with the addition of forestry and other commercial enterprises, the ability to organize and to manage finances would become increasingly important.
- Sustainable forestry management: More knowledge would be critical to ensure that future forestry activities would be in compliance with environmental policies and would enable appropriate protections of forest ecosystems.

- Empowerment for indigenous women: Starting first with local women’s leaders, the activities here aimed to encourage indigenous women to take a stronger role in community decision-making processes and in policy dialogue. Beginning with a train-the-trainer process, 203 women learned how to speak up and speak out, participating more fully at the local, regional, and national levels. These activities have been codified into an empowerment training module, for use with subsequent groups of women.

Forest Resources and Cultural-Based Income Generating Activities

One of the first steps in improving the potential for long-term livelihood improvement for indigenous communities involved identifying specific economic activities that had promise. After identifying products with the most economic potential, communities began to map out their business plans.

In addition to the forest-based enterprises, another area of focus was on traditional crafts made by indigenous women—particularly in parts of the country where eco-tourist sites were attracting more visitors from all over the world. Such visitors typically show an interest in local art as they purchase souvenirs of their trips. The growing demand for attractive, locally made souvenirs represented a significant opportunity to build a base of crafts businesses—particularly women-owned businesses.

The project also facilitated networking among women’s groups, leading to the creation of an online marketplace. Here, women-owned craft businesses can market their products reaching potential customers beyond their local base.

Administration, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Knowledge Sharing

An interesting aspect of the JSDF project was its targeted focus on enhancing the project management and implementation skills of the implementing partner—AMAN. The idea was to transfer knowledge and skills to this national umbrella organization, which could then oversee the various indigenous communities as they moved forward with project activities. This proved a critical component of the project. “Capacity in implementing big projects is not inherent in indigenous rights advocacy organizations like AMAN,” noted one AMAN staff member who worked on the JSDF project. The project gave AMAN the skills it needed to become a better administrative and implementing agency, to better serve its constituent communities.

By working through this partner, there was not a need to first gain trust and build cultural understanding before the efforts got underway. As the national representative agency for indigenous peoples, this bond already existed. Thus, the train-the-trainer and other learning engagements were more effective, because they combined a baseline of understanding about the local situation with best-in-class global knowledge.

Results

The SiCoLIFE project has yielded significant benefits for the indigenous communities that participated in it. Of note, the capacity of the implementing partner has increased significantly in several key areas: enabling rights recognition through mapping and planning ancestral domains, strengthening social mobilization and empowerment through improved organizational governance, and ensuring long term wellbeing through building the foundation for sound economic development.

Among the important results achieved:

- New community-based business enterprises are up and running.
- Average business incomes for participating communities increased by about 38 percent.
- Average business income for indigenous women in participating communities increased by more than 35 percent.
- At 19 regional “train-the-trainer” workshops, 42 participants—including three women—learned mapping skills and teaching techniques.

- 299 indigenous mapping experts and GIS/database specialists—including 60 women—have participated in local instructor-led training, and are now equipped with the skills and resources to guide community land use planning.
- More than 250 indigenous communities have mapped out lands and prepared participatory land use plans.
- As of August 2015, the Indigenous Territories Registration Body had submitted 604 indigenous territory maps covering 6.8 million hectares to the government through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
- 18 local organizations, representing 1,250 communities, now have a seat at the table for discussions on national forest policy.
- The project has proven so beneficial to AMAN’s member communities that it has secured additional funding to replicate activities in other areas.
- 1,545 beneficiaries directly involved in mapping, land use planning, or community enterprises

Project Development Goal (TPP) Indicator:

Name of TPP Indicator	Measurement Unit	Actual	Target Value
Community completes the plan of Participatory Land Use through participatory mapping and profile making	No. of Communities	251	250
Indigenous People have their capacity to participate in the National Dialogue on Forest Policy	No. of Communities	39	15
Capacity Building and the involvement of community representative, indigenous women and traditional organization in mapping and business enterprise	Persons	17,091	1,545
Local livelihood increases at least 30-50% income from the new business through community enterprise	Organizations	80	30

Lessons Learned

Despite the challenge of working across a vast geographic spread, the positive impacts of project activities are notable. To date, SCoLIFE is the first and only project to benefit indigenous peoples with nationwide reach across the archipelago.

Indigenous communities have reported clear improvements in their livelihoods—and in their ability to manage their forest resources. Increasingly, their voices are being heard on matters of national and local forest policy. Indigenous women are finding their voices—as well as economic opportunity. So too are the youth of the communities, as they discover a talent for and an interest in technology. They have developed skills that can translate into jobs and a better future.

A major factor that contributed to the success of the JSDF project was the focus on developing indigenous communities' organizational foundations and institutional capacity for economic enterprise. Going forward, continued strengthening of this governance base will be key to ensuring the longevity and sustainability of community empowerment.

Another strength of the project was the emphasis on territorial mapping. It has helped identify conflict areas, resolve boundary issues with mining concessions and other commercial operations, and confirm communal titling. For example, in Pagu Halmahera Utara, a local map created under project auspices showed that a mining enterprise's operations were overlapping into areas owned by indigenous communities. Using the map as evidence, the community successfully negotiated with the mine operator for enhanced monitoring of potential environmental impacts as well as increased corporate social responsibility commitments. The maps also support community land use planning efforts, including sustainable stewardship of forests.

In addition, the mapping of indigenous territories served as an important entry point to collaborate with district governments. This resulted in strong governmental support. District and provincial governments benefitted from the completion of robust and culturally appropriate maps that align with their own land use planning efforts. However, the maps have not yet been fully integrated into government registries. Going forward, full integration and systems alignment will be important to maximize the effectiveness of the maps and ensure that indigenous communities' ownership rights are preserved.

Social Impact

The project had a strong social impact. It improved community entrepreneurship and the ability of indigenous communities to govern shared economic activities. Communities themselves embraced the efforts with enthusiasm. This support and commitment came not just from the traditionally male-dominated ranks of community leadership, but also from women and young people.

Women showed keen interest in and potential for building businesses and community enterprises, both key to improving the overall wellbeing of communities. The success of the project in helping them increase their incomes and participate in community decision making is noted above.

The young people across the communities proved themselves eager learners, quickly absorbing new knowledge and technology. They gained respect and self-esteem, playing an important role in community organizing and territorial mapping. Of note, the lack of access to formal education, such as in Talang Mamak, did not impede young people's ability to learn and successfully deploy GPS and other technology.

Replicability

Based on the JSDF experience, the project-tested grant and technical assistance mechanisms have generated significant lessons that can inform the methodology of relevant Bank projects that are under preparation, including the Development Grant Mechanism (DGM) for indigenous peoples; the Forest Investment Program (FIP) and the Landscape Initiative. It is also expected that the DGM and the FIP will adopt the lessons learned, pushing for a stronger policy response not only from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, but also from the Agrarian and Land Use Ministry, as well as the Home Affairs, Coastal and Fishery, and Village Development ministries.

Knowledge Dissemination

The creation of guidebooks, training modules, and other instructional tools is an important—and enduring—outcome of the JSDF project. Such manuals can guide future, community-driven efforts to build skills and knowledge. In addition, there remain indigenous communities that lack the resources to register their lands, even though their ownership rights have been affirmed. With the increased organizational capacity of the local implementing partner and its affiliated community groups—along with tools developed and trainers trained—more communities will be able to tap into the economic potential of their land.



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