Bridging Policy Practice Gap in the Effective Implementation of REDD+ Programs in Indonesia
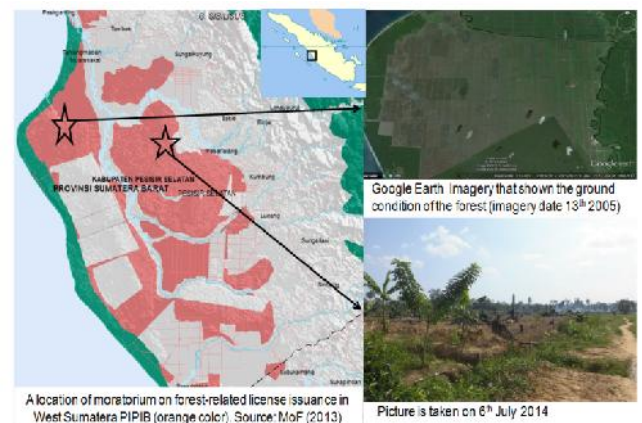
POLICY BRIEF

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During The 2014 UN Climate Summit, world leaders endorse a global timeline to cut natural forest loss in half by 2020, and strive to end it by 2030. The entities endorse the New York Declaration announced dozens of concrete actions and partnerships to implement the New York Declaration and Action Agenda. It also calls for restoring forests and croplands. Reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation, conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks, and sustainable managing forests (REDD+)is at the center of action agenda. Although REDD-plus calls for activities with serious implications directed towards the local communities, indigenous people and forests which relate to reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation; there is still ambiguity on involvement of these primary stakeholders in enhancing existing forests and increasing forest cover through appropriate incentive agreed upon by the consensus building process. Local communities of diverse endowment, in and around forest protection areas and designated national parks will be the primary target of consensus building since they are the primary stakeholder whose interest should be well addressed in policy together with local government, local and international NGOs, academicians and international funding agencies. This study seeks to implement its activities at multiple levels in the forest dependent communities

of Indonesia. It used literature study, multi stakeholders' forum, and field observation.

Figure 1. Locations of permit moratorium in West Sumatra which were already converted to palm oil plantation both by private companies and local communities

REDD Policy and its Implementation in Indonesia

Efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in Indonesia face tough challenges from economic development which is still very much exploitative in nature. Indonesian government adopts policiesto curtail forest cover changes. Indonesia also released second communication that set target on emission reduction including forestry sector. During 2014 New York UN Climate Summit, Indonesian delegates reported that Indonesia has embarked on comprehensive reforms to land use policies, customary land rights, regulations and law enforcement to meet its pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 26% by 2020 (41% subject to international support). At the same course time, Indonesia still issues

forest exploitation permit and forest conversion permit to allow multinational companies set up large plantations, mostly the oil palm. Local people also play active role in conversion of forest land into plantation in all types of forest. Forest fire continues unabated from time to time in Sumatra and Kalimantan islands that show ambiguities in REDD+ policy. Economic development objective remains paramount and many additional cases dominate forest protection policy. This shows ambiguity in implementing REDD+ policies.

At the same time, GoI (Government of Indonesia) also adopts policy to stop deforestation such as permit moratorium. Unfortunately, in area assigned as permit moratorium, i.e. in Tapan Village, Pesisir Selatan District, West Sumatera province, where local people converted the forest into oil palm plantation (Figure 1). Local people claimed forest land as their ancestor land. The process has been triggered by previous agrarian injustice. It has created land hunger among local people and at the same time oil palm price is steadily high. It is ironic that local governments play role in facilitating forest conversion by allowing road development in peat land forest. In addition, forest permit moratorium does not provide direct incentive for local government to protect the forest. Synergy among strengthening local claim on forest land ownership and demand for land together with the interest of local politics, explain why national policy on forest moratorium is ineffective at field level.

Local government neither benefit from forest protection and forest rehabilitation. Again case from Tapan Village in Pesisir Selatan District and Bonjol Village in Dharmasraya District, West Sumatra Province, show that local governments do not take active role to

prevent deforestation and forest degradation, quite contrary the local government adopt policy that facilitate deforestation. Forest management authority in contemporary Indonesia is decentralized to local government unit at district and provincial level, unfortunately the remaining forest is secondary forest with little benefit resultant of declining productivity or even negative productivity. The new Carbon trade opportunity shed hope for local government to be benefited from forest.

Figure 2. Rehabilitation of degraded–forest land using assisted natural regeneration (ANR) at Paninggahan village, Solok District, West Sumatera within voluntary carbon market mechanism. This is the second year of the project

This study also found a sense of hope, from Paninggahan Village, Solok District, West Sumatra. Under voluntary carbon market mechanism (VCM),group of farmers received cash money from carbon broker as compensation for forestland rehabilitation using assisted natural regeneration (ANR) technique. The broker, CO2BV (Carbon Dioxide Besloten Vennootschap (abbreviated B.V.), the Dutch terminology for a private Limited liability company), sells carbon certificate to voluntary buyer in Netherland, it then pays farmers in cash through respective farmer group. In addition, farmers also plant multipurpose tree species. As shown in Figure 2, the trees planted have grown up. This positive development occurred because local communities benefit directly from the land rehabilitation initiatives. It is in stark contrast to the results of land

rehabilitation carried out by the government previously. Forest rehabilitation, intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within REDD + scheme, has long been carried out in Indonesia. Unfortunately, all forms of government based rehabilitation using a top-down approach, and the achievements of rehabilitation only measured by the number of seedlings planted and the area of land rehabilitated. The result of rehabilitation is never measured by the impact and most rehabilitation fails though there are enough funds collected from concessionaires and spent for forest rehabilitation.

Efforts by people living around the forests in reducing emissions appear in various forms of activities, ranging from community-based rehabilitation, community-based forest protection, as well as the cessation of environmentally unfriendly agricultural activities in and around the forest area. The main reason was not to reduce emissions, but rather to preserve the environmental services, i.e.; maintaining water resources, and preventing natural disasters associated with deforestation and degradation. When threats are becoming apparent due to the destruction of forests, then there are also new incentives for people to reduce the rate of deforestation and forest degradation. Observations on the Simpang village, Pasaman District, West Sumatra Province, the community passed a rule on banning forest clearing for agriculture followed by wood-based furniture business closures in the village.

Policy Implications

Some policy adjustments shall be made by the government to reduce green house gases effectively, especially from the forestry sector. Following are the policies.

Synchronization policies at the national level

The Indonesian government needs to synchronize its national policies, especially policies related to economic development. To that end, the government must put a plan for reducing emissions in the long-term development plan document (RPJP) and into the medium term development plan (Plan). This document must obtain parliamentary approval for its implementation in the preparation of the annual budget. It is necessary to suppress the possibility of deflection by implementing policies and by changes in the political constellation. It needs a strong consensus building among stakeholders.

Community and local politicians are the main stakeholders in preserving the integrity of the forest area and in the rehabilitation of degraded forest land. Building a firm consensus about the rights and responsibilities of each party is very important to ensure each party to discharge its responsibilities and incentives of its efforts to protect and rehabilitate the land. Local people are very concerned to strengthen their communal claims and also to ensure continuity of their livelihood.

Putting Local People in Front Line of State Forest Management

Forest management efforts through the Forest Management Unit (FMU) which is being developed by the Ministry of Forestry give bigger room to accommodate community rights over forest areas to include the community in the village / village as the cutting edge of forest management in Forest Management Unit Structure. The benefits of sustainable forest management must be rightful most of the local communities, which furthermore provide incentive for them to

protect and to rehabilitate the forest. Forest Rehabilitation activities, as exemplified from Nagari Paninggahan, through activities that provide direct benefits to the community showed positive results. Hope for the success of rehabilitation appears to be in the hands of the local people, a few examples of small-scale projects conducted by the community is able to restore and improve forest cover. This is achieved because of the clear incentive for communities; tenure is clear, direct economic benefits, and possible incentives from perennial crops.

Provide incentives directly to the individual onfield level

Incentives received by the community member must be clear and the recipient is an individual or individuals executing activities and those who suffer losses from activities related to REDD +. Incentive distribution mechanism should not be passed through a complicated and lengthy bureaucracy. Transfer directly to the public from sources of financing will reduce the risk of abuse and boost public confidence. On the other hand, the mechanisms of community compensation through REDD + is not clear, even though technically there is no concrete form, it could cause significant inefficiencies in community involvement in REDD +. Indonesia REDD Agency plans compensation in kind in the form of community facilities and infrastructure, while the loss of income from the forest for REDD + is individual who lose access to forest resources. However, not get caught in CBFM euphoria, in some recent cases, the local people are the main perpetrators of deforestation and forest degradation on a large scale. They did this as a revenge for the previously injustice natural resource access where their access was restricted because of government granted concessions to private parties including post-operative logging concessions. Challenges of forest resource management in Indonesia are more profound under current regional autonomy and the era of economic democratization today.

Direct incentives to local governments for revenues from carbon emission reduction activities

Local government unit as the main actor in the field level will act in line with national policy, if there is a direct incentive for local government themselves, such as local revenue or budget allocation punishment if they do not take active role in preserving the forest. Through FMU, each local government can increase the revenue from sustainable utilization of forest products. Or local government shall be liable to a reduction in the budget of the central government if it does not perform well in protecting the forest areas and rehabilitating degraded forests.