

Forest Conservation Project

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1. Overview

1.1. Background, objectives, and approach

1.1.1. Background

In its first phase, from fiscal years 1998 to 2000, the IGES Forest Conservation Project aimed to identify principles or elements of sustainable forest management, based on experiences in the Asia-Pacific region, which account for an important portion of the strategy for forest conservation. The research was carried out by four interrelated sub-teams: (1) the sub-team on structural analysis of forest destruction (ST sub-team), to provide basic information to other sub-teams; (2) the sub-team on participatory forest management policy (PM sub-team), to make recommendations covering local and national levels; (3) the sub-team on timber trade policy (TT sub-team), to make recommendations covering national and international levels; and (4) the sub-team on legal/administrative measures for forest conservation (LA sub-team), to elaborate principles/elements for sustainable forest management as a final outcome of the project. Target countries were Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Lao P.D.R., Vietnam, China, Russia, and other Asia-Pacific countries.

The ST sub-team reconfirmed such leading root causes of forest destruction as “an insufficient base of local participation and community rights” and the “impacts of market forces,” as well as a “forest development paradigm with an industrial emphasis” and “economic/political challenges.” The PM sub-team analysed and compared existing participatory forest management systems in Southeast Asian countries, aiming to clarify their characteristics, and categorised them into several types based on their main actors, legal status of forest land, and activities. Then the sub-team made policy recommendations through an examination of internal and external constraints on participation. The TT sub-team mainly conducted time-series economic analyses (TEA) of the timber trade in both export and import countries in the Asian region as well as data collection for space equivalent analysis (SEA) of the timber trade. The LA sub-team focused on international legal measures related to forest conservation, international processes of policy dialogue on forest issues, and domestic legal/administrative measures related to participatory forest management. The sub-team elaborated the principles and elements for sustainable forest management in cooperation with the other sub-teams.

In its first phase, the project successfully constructed a valuable network with researchers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local people, and government officials in the Asia-Pacific region. These interpersonal relations with project members were utilised and evolved into inter-organisational relations with IGES in the second phase.

As a logical consequence of the fact that the major outcome of the project was a set of principles or elements of sustainable forest management, the main target groups in the first phase were governmental authorities. However, although we invited governmental officials to a series of regional workshops held in Jakarta, Vientiane, and Khabarovsk to discuss and examine our draft strategies, including policy recommendations, it did not seem to be enough for the project to have an influence on the national forest policies of each country.

Regarding the broad coverage of the project plan in the first phase, the IGES Boards of Directors and Trustees, the members of Research Advisory Committee (RAC), and outside experts suggested that the FC Project should

limit its theme to the participation of local people, focus on a few countries, and integrate the approaches in the second phase (FY2001–2003).

1.1.2. Objectives

The goal of the Forest Conservation Project was to develop strategies for forest conservation and sustainable forest management. Although many approaches should be taken into consideration to achieve the goal, we aimed to develop the following guidelines and recommendations to promote the participation of local people in forest management, an approach expected to achieve both poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management at the same time:

- Village action guidelines (VAG) for villagers and other stakeholders at the village level.
- Local policy guidelines (LPG) for local (provincial or district) governments and other stakeholders at the local level.
- National policy recommendations (NPR) to ensure the effective application of international treaties on local participation in forest management at the national level. Local government and stakeholders at local and national levels can make full use of these recommendations in order to promote the process of decentralisation.

1.1.3. Approaches and methodologies

The research was carried out using two interrelated approaches (Figure 1). One is the “local approach,” used to elaborate village action guidelines (VAG), in which the analysis starts at the village level and then the perspective expands to the local and national government levels. We applied a methodology called participatory action research (PAR), which is a process of inquiry through which the local people work together on issues they consider relevant in order to bring about an improvement. Putting on a series of small workshops at the village and district level is also an important method to use. The other approach employed was the “international approach” used to elaborate national policy recommendations (NPR), in which the analysis starts at the international level and then considers the national and local government levels. These two approaches were combined and synthesised in discussions at the local government level, especially in the process of elaborating local policy guidelines (LPG).

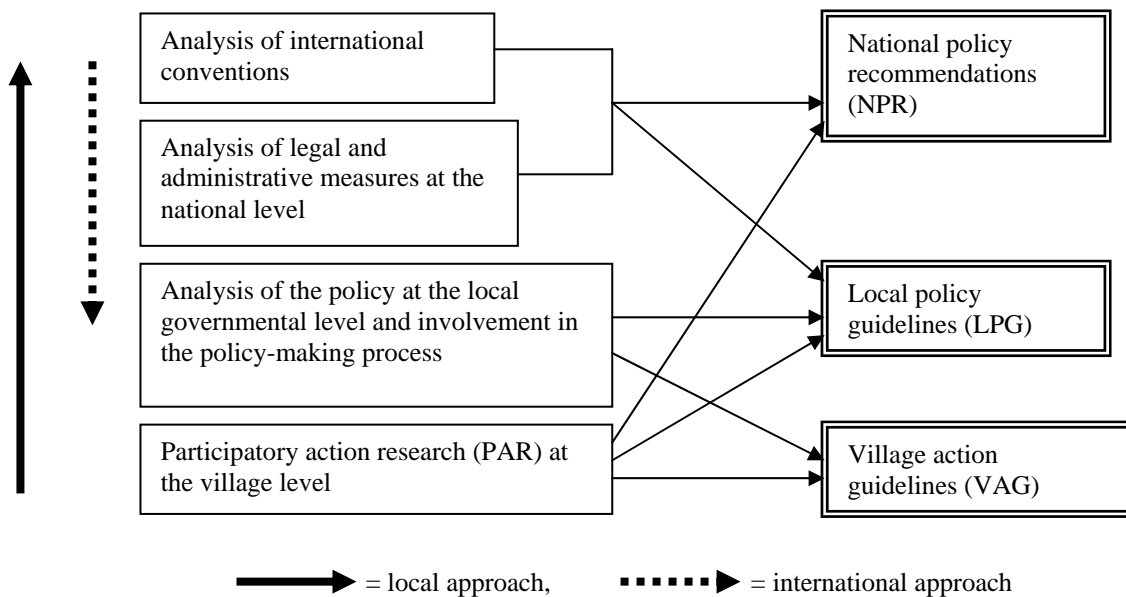


Figure 1. Overall process to develop the three outputs of the FC Project.

The activities of local forest management and local policy-making processes will be improved by applying the village action guidelines (VAG) and local policy guidelines (LPG) because of the advantage of the methodologies applied. There is every possibility for the local people and local governments to apply the guidelines, because the local people, local NGOs, and local government, as well as local researchers, would be considerably involved in the research process from the beginning.

1.1.4. Target countries

In the second phase the study targeted three countries: Indonesia, Laos, and Far East Russia. The significance of the strategic policy studies for the three countries lies in the political characteristics of each country and the actual state of their forests and forest management. And there appears to be a relatively high possibility for our research outputs to be applied in these three countries.

Indonesia is a country in transition to democracy as well as one of the most important countries in the world in terms of biodiversity conservation. Specific features concerning the forestry sector are (1) reforms of forest policy in accordance with the concepts of participation and decentralisation, (2) chaos as a result of drastic decentralisation, and (3) rapid deforestation and degradation of the forest due to various factors such as forest fires, large-scale plantations, logging, and slash-and-burn agriculture.

Laos is a country in transition to a market economy. Specific features concerning the forestry sector are (1) insufficient measures/mechanisms to implement new forest law, and (2) the recent reaction to and trend of efforts to transfer the responsibility of forest management to local people.

Russia has undergone some reforms in national policy, but this country is also in transition to a market economy. Moreover, the Russian boreal forest offers a unique approach compared with the tropical forests of Indonesia and Laos in the mode of participation. Specific features concerning the forestry sector are (1) dynamic reform of forest policy, (2) the strong impact of Asian countries on the management of local forests, and (3) changes in local forest management along with changes in the national economic system.

1.1.5. Target groups

We categorised various target stakeholders into two groups: main target groups and supporting target groups. “Main target groups” are the groups targeted by the guidelines and the expected main users of the guidelines. These are policy-makers as well as local communities. Their roles are indispensable to the success of forest management.

“Supporting target groups” may use or support the use of the guidelines, but are less likely to be involved in their direct implementation. These are local NGOs, people’s organisations, small business corporations, and universities at the local level; large NGOs and large business corporations at the national level; and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA), etc., at the international level.

1.1.6. Collaborative organisations

In order to have certain policy impacts, mentioned above, we collaborated closely with the relevant organisations, listed below, by concluding a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each of them in order to strengthen inter-organisational relations.

a. Indonesia

- The Center for Social Forestry of Mulawarman University (CSF) in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, is a member of the forum on national forestry reform and a member of the working group of local forest policy in West Kutai District. It has access to influence policy formation at the local and national levels. We can collaborate with local NGOs, local governments, and local people through the good offices of the CSF.
- The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in Jakarta is a national government-run science institute and has been very influential in the country. Collaborating with LIPI may bring about influence on decision-makers and the public.
- West Kutai District (and its local forestry service) is one of the leading local governments in Indonesia that has tried to manage its forest resources in a sustainable way by means of employing the multi-stakeholder approach. We expect that our guidelines will be applied in the district.

b. Laos

- The Faculty of Forestry of the National University of Lao PDR (NUOL) in Vientiane is run by the government of Lao P.D.R., and considerable influence can be expected from it. We can collaborate with other research institutes, local governments, NGOs, and local people through the good offices of NUOL.
- Relevant district agricultural and forestry offices (DAFO) and provincial agricultural and forestry offices (PAFO).
- The Department of Forestry and foreign donors including the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

c. Far East Russia

- The Economic Research Institute (ERI) of the Far Eastern Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Khabarovsk is capable of influencing decision-makers in Far East Russia because of its outstanding position. We can collaborate with provincial and district governments, other organisations, and local people through the good offices of ERI.
- The territorial office of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Lazo District government, heads of communities, and NGOs.

1.2. Review of achievements

1.2.1. Guidelines for Indonesia

a. Village action guidelines (VAG)

The guidelines were drafted to overcome issues of local forest management in five East Kalimantan villages: Muara Jawa', Tanjung Jaan, Engkuni-Pasek, Batu Majang, and dan Mataliba'. These VAGs are aimed at helping village communities to develop and enhance their role in the management of the local forest in each community.

These guidelines are useful for village decision-makers to develop village policies, programmes, and action plans. They can be used by a district government to develop policy and programmes, such as drafting technical guidelines, to support the participation of local people in forest management. For supporting groups such as NGOs, research organisations, universities, and private companies, the guidelines offer useful references to develop collaboration and facilitation plans.

The VAGs describe the village situation socially, ecologically, and economically, and elaborate problems related to the management of local forest. They also draw the direction and necessary measures to deal with the problems. The guidelines do not provide a detailed action plan, which, ideally, should be developed by each village community themselves.

The substance of the VAGs was developed from the actual situation in the research sites. The following are the four main issues in local forest management:

- forest and land
- forest-related village economy
- village institution
- government policy

Any efforts to improve local forest management (LFM) should deal with these issues. Otherwise, they will not be successful.

In the guidelines, several “problems” in each issue area were listed, and in order to tackle them “proposed measures” and “expected actors,” consisting of main actors and supporting actors, were proposed. Some examples of VAGs are listed below.

Village institutions

- Problems:
 - Contested customary laws due to changes in ecological and socio-economic conditions: in some cases people cannot rely on customary law, while new village rules do not exist.
 - Lack of organised activities: many village authorities do not have the capacity to organise their people.
 - Lack of participation of women in community decision-making.
- Suggested measures:
 - Review the customary law and develop new rules if necessary.
 - Organise the community and improve village leadership and management capability.
 - Develop a mechanism for settling internal village conflicts.
 - Coordinate with neighboring villagers.

Government policy

- Problems:
 - Restriction of villagers’ access to forest due to concessions for companies.
 - No formal recognition of the existing customary forest management practices.
 - Rapid and frequent change in policy on small-scale logging that caused confusion among villagers.
 - Lack of facilitation from the administration to solve boundary disputes among villages.
 - Lack of information dissemination of government policy.
- Suggested measures:
 - Propose that the concessionaires give the local people land-use access within the concession area.
 - Propose that the people become pro-active in communicating with the government.
 - Make a proposal to the government to give recognition of the customary forest management.
 - Improve the village information system.

b. District policy guidelines (DPG)

The DPGs were developed as a support system to implement the VAGs. In particular, they have aided the government of West Kutai District, especially the district’s forestry service, in developing policies and implementation programmes that support the activities of the community at the basic level, in this case, the villagers. These guidelines are also a supporting product for implementing the District Regulation on Community Forestry.

The DPGs are also intended to help the district government, who has the authority to carry out the coordinative function, to supervise the third parties, for example, business enterprises, NGOs, or academics, in supporting the village forest management activities.

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The ultimate goal of forest management is forest sustainability and supporting the improvement of the economy of the community members, both those whose lives are directly related to the forest (the forest community) and the general public. The development vision of West Kutai formulated this matter as “sustainable forest management, acknowledging the rights of the local community for the prosperity of all West Kutai communities.”

For this purpose, West Kutai District launched the following seven strategic forestry programmes:

1. Management and preservation forests
2. Policy development
3. Human resources quality improvement
4. Education and training infrastructure
5. Development of institutions for forest governance
6. Law enforcement
7. Customary rights acknowledgement and empowerment

By referring to the strategic programmes, it was agreed that seven important issues were to be tackled by the district government in its efforts to support community participation at the village level. The issues, elaborated in the DPGs in order to support the participation of villagers in forest management, are as follows:

1. recognition of customary rights and culture
2. social capital and community organising
3. community access to information
4. value and critical education
5. social control and law enforcement
6. conflict prevention and resolution
7. village economy empowerment

In the guidelines several “problems” in each issue were listed, and “proposed measures” and expected “actors,” consisting of main actors and supporting actors, were proposed in order to tackle the problems. Some examples of DPGs are listed below.

Recognition of customary rights and culture

- Problems:
 - Insecure access, control, and ownership of the villagers of forest resources, especially in the potential conflict areas such as in areas rich in coal mines and potential areas for plantation.
 - The commonly-held view among government officials and other parties that local people are ignorant and backward, and need to be taught and developed.
- Suggested measures:
 - Find the way to secure people’s access and ownership of forest under the district ordinance, involve them in decisions that will have impacts on them, and mediate for them in negotiating with the central government.
 - Strengthen peoples’ rights to forest in any ordinance issued by the district.

Village economy empowerment

- Problems:
 - Unequal benefits from timber: particular groups in the community (individual traders and loggers) get more, while most of the community members only get a little.
 - A tendency that the community members become more exploitative in the use of forest resources, focusing more on economic profits rather than forest resources conservation.

- The community has not overcome the dilemma between the immediate need for subsistence and the demand for long-term reforestation.
- Forest management is not seen as a major economic activity (except for those involved in exploitative logging activities) because most of the community members earn their living from farming and plantations.
- Suggested measures:
 - Formulate regulations to allow equal opportunities for all villagers to benefit from forest products and resources.
 - Introduce incentives in the form of sufficient long-term funding for replanting and reforestation activities to villages that are institutionally capable to manage the funds in a responsible way.
 - Find the ways to exercise inexpensive replanting and reforestation activities, manageable by the community members, without having to wait for external funds.
 - Promote efforts to increase the use of non-timber forest products.
 - Support the integration of farming activities and forest management.
 - Secure the long-term rights of the community to forest and community land, particularly the assurance that a particular right will not be spoiled by other economic activities, such as overlapping land allocation to a certain large enterprise.

1.2.2. Guidelines for Laos

a. Village action guidelines (VAG)

We selected three villages in the Phou Xang Hae Protected Area in Savannakhet Province (south part of Laos) and four villages in a degraded forest area in Oudomxay Province (north part of Laos), because the guidelines for a rich forest area might be different from those for a degraded forest area.

The main objective of the VAGs is to support the village authority in enhancing their role regarding forest management at the village level, and they are also useful to decision-makers at the village level for improving the implementation of forest-related activities. VAGs can be applied by the district agricultural and forestry office (DAFO), which intends to improve the policy to support the participation of local people in forest management. VAGs are also useful for supporting organisations such as foreign donors and NGOs to develop collaboration.

The substance of the village action guidelines was developed from the actual situation in research sites, and in doing so found that there are four main issues in local forest management, as follows:

1. land category and demarcation
2. livelihood
3. institutions (regulation, management system, decision-making)
4. human relations (or social capital)

Any efforts to improve local forest management (LFM) should deal with these issues; otherwise they will not be successful.

In the guidelines, several issues consisting of specific problems and good examples of each issue were listed. The internal and external factors that caused the issues were identified; principles, as fundamental rules for accelerating sustainable forest management by the local people, were clarified; and actions to overcome the issues, based on the principles and local reality, were proposed. Some examples of VAGs are listed below.

Land category and demarcation

- Issues (problems and good examples):
 - Villagers designated their spirit forest and protected forests spontaneously even before the establishment of the government-designated conservation area.
- Principle:
 - Customary rules for the use of spiritual forest are kept by the local people, and the forests are protected.
- Actions:
 - Transform the religious events to village regulations in statutory form to enable the local people to restrict the use of the spiritual forest.
 - Recognise the concept of forest conservation through the events related to the spiritual forests.

Human relations (or social capital)

- Issues (problems and good examples):
 - Only rich villagers or village élites were able to participate in the programmes supported by external donors and governments.
 - Ethnic groups living in the protected areas are classified as midland Lao, a minority group in Laos. They have customs of forest spirit worship and follow a unique lifestyle and culture different from the lowland Lao, the majority of people in Laos.
- Principle:
 - All ethnic groups and all villagers have rights to receive administrative service impartially.
- Actions:
 - Inform the local people of the detailed project plan, especially poor villagers and villages where minorities reside.
 - Build good relationships and mutual trust between villagers and DAFO staff.

b. Local policy guidelines (LPG)

The main objective of the LPGs is to support the local authorities in conducting sustainable forest management using the participatory method. LPGs are useful for local government decision-makers in developing local governance. In addition, they can be applied by the district agricultural and forestry office (DAFO) to implement policy to support the participation of local people in forest management.

The same items as in the village action guidelines were identified and proposed in the LPGs. Some examples of LPGs are listed below.

Livelihood

- Issue (problems and good examples):
 - Regardless of the village territory, the local people are allowed to collect non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for household consumption, while cross-border collection of NTFPs for sale is prohibited.
- Principle:
 - Customary rules for the use of marketable forest products are upheld.
- Actions:
 - Make an agreement on forest management among relevant villages, as well as support the local people's customs.
 - Integrate the agreement into the land-use plan in each village.

Institutions

- Issues:
 - Villagers established customary rules and taboos to avoid disturbing forest spirits. These rules included regulations on the use of forest resources such as a ban on felling rattan stems, burning for swidden agriculture, and logging large trees. These rules are applied to the rainy season, when plants and trees grow the most.
- Principle:
 - Management and collection of forest products in accordance with the local custom during the rainy season is maintained.
- Action:
 - Recognise the customary use of forest products in the rainy season, and approve its use as a useful forest management system.

1.2.3. Guidelines for Far East Russia

In the case of Far East Russia, comprehensive guidelines were drafted instead of village action guidelines and local policy guidelines, because village action guidelines were regarded as ineffective for changing and improving the state of participatory forest management under the present socio-political situation and the long-standing traditions of forest management in Russia.

The structure of the guidelines includes the following:

- an introduction (issue formulation)
- the socio-economic situation related to forest use in the research sites
- population classification in the southern part of Khabarovskiy krai according to the opportunity for its involvement in forest management
- obstacles to the local population's involvement in forest management
- links with *krai* (provincial) laws, official, and public programmes
- recommended measures for involving the local population in forest management
- conclusion

The working hypothesis of the guidelines is based on the recognition that local residents best know and understand the state of their own forest ecosystem and its reaction to anthropogenic pressures. They are directly interested in sustainable forest resource use, so they are able and willing to support correct decisions, or oppose wrong ones. Therefore, their involvement in forest management could promote the transition to sustainable forest use.

Research sites were chosen in three levels: (1) Khabarovskiy krai as a whole, (2) Lazo raion (district), and (3) two rural municipal formations (RMF) of the *raion*—Sita as a depressive case and Sukpai as a progressive case. An indigenous Udege village was also used as a case at the lowest level.

Classification of population

The guidelines contain two types of classification of population: demographic and social.

Demographic classification based on three population sets

- The first set, residents of large and average towns with populations over 50,000 people, is typified by the following characteristics:
 - professionals working directly in the forest sector
 - scientific workers researching forests and the forest sector (can be activated for participatory approach)
 - universities, schools teachers, and students (prospective for participatory approach)

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- members of ecological and partially ecological NGOs (prospective for participatory approach)
- residents using the forest for recreation (prospective for participatory approach)
- the rest of the population, which is practically inert from the point of view of the participatory approach
- The second set, residents of small towns and large settlements with populations from 5,000 to 50,000, includes practically the same target groups as the first set.
- The third set, residents of settlements and villages with populations of 5,000 and less, consists of residents of settlements that have a number of the following characteristics:
 - located on the banks of big rivers or sea-side, based on fishing and servicing water transport;
 - at small industrial units;
 - near a railway, mainly transport workers;
 - in agricultural areas;
 - have dead or dying forest industry activities, are surrounded by depleted forests, live in depressive settlements (prospective for participatory approach);
 - have active and even developing forest industry activities, surrounded by prospective forests (prospective for participatory approach);
 - have a high share of aboriginals (prospective for participatory approach); and/or
 - predominantly work using intangible forest benefits especially recreation and tourism (prospective for participatory approach).

Social classification of population

This classification, developed for the third set as the main target for the guidelines, is divided by the following nine types of community people based on their readiness to participate in forest management:

- forest workers (not high)
- business people (medium)
- managers (high)
- office workers (not high)
- retired people (medium)
- housewives (not high)
- students of universities and colleges (not high)
- school children (medium)
- unemployed (not high)

Obstacles to involvement of the local population in forest management

- Legal aspects: lack of legal basis for participation of the local population in forest management
- Institutional aspects: lack of rights at the municipal level, lack of specific mechanisms, alienation of people, loss of control, discrepancy of methods, and market, etc.
- Financial aspects: lack of finance on the municipal level, lack of financing of the participatory approach
- Communication aspects: undeveloped road network, lack of communication means
- Information aspects: insufficient and distorted information
- Social aspects: public passiveness, social dependence, outdated thinking, lack of feeling of ownership, low priority of forestry, antagonism between stakeholders, loss of aboriginal skills

We should note that a number of *krai* laws as well as official and public *krai* programmes envisage, directly or indirectly, involvement of the local population in forest management.

Recommended measures

Recommended measures for involving local populations in forest management are described by the parameters of the target type of population, executor, term of execution, and financing source. They form the following groups:

- legal (3 measures)
- institutional (2 measures)
- financial-economic (2 measures)
- informational (2 measures)
- social (9 measures)
- raising educational level (6 measures)

The proposed measures are distributed according to the competence level of their executors in the following way: *krai* (province) level; *raion* (district) level; level of rural municipal formation; level of parties, other NGOs, enterprises, and institutions.

Some examples of the comprehensive guidelines are listed below.

- Social obstacles:
 - public passiveness of the population, which is caused first of all by loss of trust in authorities;
 - preserving of outdated thinking under new socio-economic and ecological conditions;
 - population alienation from forest management over many years caused people to not consider forest resources as their own; and
 - complicated relations among forest users and forest holders, among big and small firms, as well as among firms and the population.
- Measures:
 - Develop special programmes to involve the population in forest management, including forming constant activities for the local population and city-dwellers to participate in forest management.
 - Organise public hearings on projects related to the use of forest resources and control the public hearings conducted.
 - Carry out public environmental assessment of developed projects with the purpose of using the results for the state assessment.
 - Conclude “agreements of social responsibility” with forest firms and associations with municipal administrations simultaneously with permitting the use of local forest resources.
 - Establish local population working groups and organise their dialogue with forest users, the *krai*, and federal forestry officials.

The conclusion states that the recommendations cannot be implemented only within the framework of the forest sector. Implementation depends on the level of the population’s public-political activity, change of natural resources property rights, the degree of democracy, maintenance of law and order, etc. Citizens should be assured that their efforts for sustainable forest management will be worthwhile. Only in this case will the population’s participation in forest management become active and permanent.

1.2.4. National policy recommendations (NPR) for three countries

Considering the measures suggested in the results of the first phase of research, in particular those related to ensuring the participation of local people, in the second phase we developed national policy recommendations for each target country.

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The research identified several elements that need to be ensured:

- access to information
- the opportunity to make comments, opinions, and objections
- equitable sharing of benefits, in particular local people
- prior informed consent

These elements can be realised by employing supporting measures, which are classified into legislative measures, administrative measures, judicial measures, and others. Legislative measures provide a basis of participation by stipulating elements as rights or a duty of the government, while administrative measures develop policies, provide support to local people, and disseminate information for the purpose of ensuring the rights authorised by the legislative measures. Then the rights of participation need a judicial mechanism for protection from violation of the rights. Research on the target countries clarified the necessity of elaboration for effective implementation of the system related to participation, because people most often don't use their rights to participate, even though, these rights are ensured by law.

The results of the second phase indicated nineteen detailed measures for ensuring the participation of local people, such as authorisation of local people's rights to forest and use of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) system. Moreover, the results indicated the necessity of coordination among relevant ministries and departments to ensure public participation, and they also pointed out the importance of making and showing clear instructions or directions for the process of participation. Finally, they emphasised the importance of having a dispute settlement mechanism for ensuring the rights of local people.

1.2.5. Other outputs

The FC Project published a series of policy trend reports (PTR), which contained reports written by individual collaborators from a number of Asian countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. These also contained an analysis of UNFF discussions and standards from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in the field of forest management and related industries.

The FC Project also published country reports that contain our main research reports on the three target countries (Indonesia, Laos, and Far East Russia).

Two commercial books were also published in the second phase:

- Makoto Inoue and Hiroji Isozaki, eds. 2003. *People and Forest: Policy and Local Reality in Southeast Asia, the Russian Far East, and Japan*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, 358pp.
- Makoto Inoue, ed. 2003. *Deforestation and Forest Conservation in Asia* (in Japanese). Chuouhouki Publishers, 324pp.

Project staff participated in the first and the second substantive meeting of the UNFF in New York in June 2001 and March 2002, and in COP6 meetings of the Convention on Biodiversity at The Hague in April 2002. One of the staff was dispatched to the First Conference on Public Participation of the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM) in June 2002 to make a presentation based on the results of our second phase of research.

1.3. Degree of attainment of the objectives

1.3.1. Modifications of the outputs

In the first half of FY2002, we decided to modify the planned final outputs, as described below.

- **Village level:** In the initial plan, we were going to develop “local guidelines.” We changed the name to “village action guidelines” (VAG) in order to make the scale of the target clearer.

- **National level:** In the initial plan, we were going to develop “policy recommendations.” We changed the name to “national policy recommendations” (NPR) in order to make the scale of the target clearer. But it is very important that local governments as well as stakeholders at the local and national levels can make full use of these recommendations in order to promote the process of decentralisation.
- **Local government level:** In the initial plan, we were going to develop “national guidelines” as an integration of the local guidelines and policy recommendations. We noticed, however, that it was more reasonable for us to develop the guidelines at the local government level rather than the national level in order to be more relevant in the context of dynamic changes in the state of participatory forest management that are occurring so far as a result of decentralisation policies. Thus, we shifted our focus from the national to the local governments to develop the “local policy guidelines” (LPG).

1.3.2. Attainment of research outputs

As shown in Section 1.2, we developed village action guidelines (VAG) and district policy guidelines (DPG) for West Kutai District in Indonesia, village action guidelines (VAG) and local policy guidelines (LPG) for both Savannakhet Province and Oudomxay Province in Laos, and comprehensive guidelines for Khabarovskiy Krai in Far East Russia. We also developed national policy recommendations (NPR) for the three countries. In this sense, almost all objectives were successfully attained after modification of the concrete outputs mentioned above.

1.3.3. Remarkable attainment of expected outcomes/impacts in Indonesia

a. The importance of West Kutai District, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

It is important to recognise the strategic significance of the district of West Kutai in East Kalimantan, because the area is covered with the largest and tallest forest in the Asia-Pacific region. West Kutai District is located in the upstream region of the Mahakam River, and the provincial capital city, Samarinda, is located downstream. It is important to conserve forests in the upper Mahakam watershed in order to maintain a good environment and water for the city. In this context, as many other cities share similar concerns about forests and water supplies, West Kutai should not be regarded merely for its significance as an Indonesian district, but also as a valuable area to learn more about sustainable forest policies in Asia.

b. Contribution and involvement in the process of policy reformation

West Kutai District, East Kalimantan, has actively established milestones in managing the forest since its establishment in 1999. Some of the milestones, among others, are the formation of the Working Group for the District Forestry Programs (*Kelompok Kerja Program Kehutanan Daerah*, or *KK-PKD*), issuing the “Portrait of West Kutai Forestry” and developing the Programs for West Kutai Forestry, developing the District Regulations for the District Forestry and for the Implementation of Community Forestry Programs, and preparing the District Forestry Database.

Most notably, the Forest Conservation Project (FC Project) made substantial contributions to the process of revising a local ordinance, Implementation of Community Forestry Programs, by offering comments on the draft of the ordinance, which was issued in June 2003.

Also, as a part of the forestry reform process, the FC Project—together with the Center for Social Forestry at Mulawarman University (CSF-UNMUL), the Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI), Jakarta, and the West Kutai District Forestry Service—added two new milestones to support community participation in managing forests: the village action guidelines (Guidelines for Forest Management in the Village) and the district policy guidelines (Guidelines for Community Participation in Forest Management at the District Level) outlined above in Section 1.2. The West Kutai District Forestry Service indicated its intention to carry out pilot implementation of the guidelines in cooperation with the IGES-FC Project.

2. Self-evaluation of the project

2.1. Evaluation of achievements

2.1.1. Positive aspects

- Research activities that employed participatory action research (PAR) methods were timely for the main target stakeholders of our project, including the local people and local governments. They needed direct facilitation, support, and collaboration from outsiders, including development specialists, academics, NGOs, and international organisations, in the face of decentralisation policies. Poverty eradication of the local people was a very important issue to be tackled in cooperation with other stakeholders. Our research focus on local participation was very timely in this regard.
- Research activities of the international approach were also useful for the local people and local governments, in that these helped them understand the international obligations that their national governments should undertake. The interpretation of international and national policies to local governments and the local people is important, because they have only limited access to information in the international arena and often lack the capacity to properly analyse the implications of international conventions.
- The positioning of the guidelines, our outputs, was distinctive compared with the guidelines developed by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The ITTO guidelines are a kind of international benchmark developed by scientists that cover various aspects such as natural forest management, conservation of biological diversity, planted forest management, and fire management. In contrast, the characteristic features of our guidelines include the facts that (1) the aim was mainly the promotion of local participation and (2) that the guidelines would be elaborated by researchers in cooperation with the local people through a bottom-up approach.
- As mentioned in Section 1.3, we had a significant influence on the process of policy reformation in West Kutai District in Indonesia.
- There is a strong possibility that the local stakeholders in the three target countries will make use of the guidelines, because they were directly involved in the process of drafting them, were engaged in the participatory action research, and attended the workshop series at the village and local government level.
- As mentioned in Section 1.3, West Kutai District is eager to launch a pilot implementation of the guidelines in cooperation with the IGES-FC Project.
- Fortunately, Mekong Watch, a Japanese non-governmental organisation (NGO) that cooperated on the FC Project's research in the second phase, has just started preparing follow-up activities of the guidelines in Laos. Mekong Watch will carry out pilot implementation of the guidelines and revise them in cooperation with the IGES-FC Project.
- We disseminated valuable information on forest policy by publishing policy trend reports, country reports, etc.
- We took part in the meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), made an intervention to input our research results into the international arena at the beginning of FY2002, and distributed a paper at the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

2.1.2. Negative aspects

- It was often suggested that we should generalise the guidelines. It was, however, very difficult to do so because they were basically specific to each research site, although we were able to examine the applicability of the guidelines in other places. Actually, from the beginning, we did not intend to generalise the guidelines because we thought that it was more important to examine the applicability of the guidelines than to generalise them. We were concerned that the originality of our guidelines would be decreased, compared to the ITTO guidelines, if they were generalised.
- We also often received the criticism that our activities were too focused on the local level to make our presence felt in the international arena. It is true that we did not produce enough contributions in the international arena as desired. But actually, contributing to international negotiations on world forest issues

was given secondary importance in the second phase from the beginning because we followed the suggestions of the IGES Board of Directors and Trustees in the first phase.

2.2. Evaluation of project management

2.2.1. Positive aspects

- Job allocation and collaboration among the project leader and full-time staff, which included a project manager, visiting researchers, and collaborators, was effectively carried out. The cooperative spirit and cohesiveness of FC Project members was very strong, which resulted in good teamwork.
- The budget was allocated to the activities carried out by full-time staff, collaborative organisations with whom we concluded memorandums of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in the three target countries, and individual collaborators whom we commissioned for research. The budget allocated was utilised very efficiently in order to produce the guidelines, recommendations, policy trend reports, and country reports.
- Full-time staff as well as the project leader contributed to procure external competitive research funds from organisations such as the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID), Sumitomo Foundation Grant for Environmental Research Project, and the Aeon Foundation.
- We always met the deadlines for the submission of documents requested by the IGES Secretariat.

2.2.2. Negative aspects

- During the second phase, IGES Directors and Trustees often asked FC Project staff the reason why we focused on local participation and its significance. We were confused and puzzled how to handle the question, because our focus on local participation was accepted by the Board of Directors and Trustees in the first phase—it was even suggested by the Board members. We have been struggling with this situation for almost two years. The opportunity cost on this matter was too much.
- A full-time staff member in charge of the international approach took a long-term sick leave due to the sick-building syndrome. We made great efforts to attain the objectives, achieved by the international approach, by asking visiting researchers to supplement it.
- A research secretary who also suffered from the sick-building syndrome took a long-term sick leave, and we experienced difficulties in employing a few research secretaries on short-term contracts.

3. Conclusion

The support and assistance kindly provided to the second phase of the Forest Conservation Project are greatly appreciated. The negative aspects of our research achievements in the second phase led to a request to design a third phase of the research project in order to effectively bridge the gap between our field experiences and global issues. The members of the third phase FC Project will make the utmost efforts to produce excellent research results.

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