

# Ecosystem restoration on peatlands: what are gender implications for involving paludiculture and other alternative developments on peat?

Final Project Report Summary

## I. Introduction

Peatland ecosystem is one of the most unique wetland types located in south East Asia. Its formation from non decaying organic materials such as those from parts of tropical plants leaves, branches and tree trunks is what makes tropical peatland differ than peat from boreal countries. Indonesia has the largest tropical peatland in the world and ranked no 3 as country with largest peat area. These peatlands are mostly located in coastal areas and provide opportunity as well as threat if not managed well. Due to its accessibility and low fertility of peatland area, peatland conversion came quite late in Indonesia, mostly started in the 90's. Large areas of peatlands in Indonesia have been drained and heavily degraded in the past few decade. The forest above the peatland is mostly converted to palm oil and pulpwood plantation and in some areas into settlement or even a town.

Ecosystem restoration of drained peatlands in Southeast Asia has many environmental benefits including reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, peat soil subsidence and biodiversity conservation. Many Ecosystem restoration projects already regards socio-economic aspect and well-being of community as an integral part of the project. However, the social dynamics and implications of it (the impacts of restoration on communities living in and around, and being dependent on these ecosystems), are less understood. Wetland International advocate an integrated landscape approach to ecosystem restoration that not only includes peat, but also the surrounding mineral land, rivers, buffer zone and also people who live in this area. This approach allows to take into account opportunities for sustainable development of the landscape and land use

Buffer-zones and areas in the vicinity of villages can benefit from peatland land-uses that involve economically interesting crops of indigenous peat swamp species that are adapted to the specific conditions of wet or rewetted peatlands (paludiculture). Integrated sustainable development in peat landscapes may also include alternative livelihood development.

Wetlands International has over the last 10 years been working successfully with Bio-rights micro-credit facilities to provide opportunity and incentives to women groups, farmer and fishermen groups in communities to invest in sustainable alternatives for peatland management. Bio-rights is a micro-credit finance mechanism that combines poverty reduction and environmental improvement. The Bio-rights micro-credits are provided to beneficiaries at no or very low interest rates. The low interest is augmented by commitments of the Bio-rights beneficiaries to contribute to environment/nature restoration activities, which in turn contribute to the rehabilitation of natural capital. In this way the community is enabled to break the vicious circle of environmental

degradation and poverty and create a positive development that rebuilds the natural productivity of wetland ecosystems and ecosystem services.

## II. Gender aspect

Gender issues in forest governance and land is one of the important issues of Development. The range includes, among other, the issue of gender-based segregation in the division of labor in forest and land management, gender difference in access and control of the economy, to the limited access and control of women in decision-making in Forestry practices (CPF, 2012). And unfortunately, women are often latches in a disadvantaged position associated with the value and practice of economics, culture and institutions that affect access to and control of land and forest resources and the availability of economic opportunities. Women's knowledge of forests, species diversity, management and its use for various purposes including conservation practices is a testament to the knowledge and contributions of women who shared the knowledge of man, forming the community knowledge on forest and natural resources (World Bank, Gender and Forestry, *undated*).

Indeed, compared with men, women's knowledge more directly related to the interests of compliancy with food consumption and health for families, who will also be a lifesaver in a crisis situation such as the food crisis and climate change. This can be understood, that in the economic structure in which access to and control of resources for women's formal economy is more limited, the natural sources become the main source for women. This situation makes women as one of the owners of valid knowledge about the identification, collection and preparation of food sources from forests that are meaningful to the community food security, and may also be an alternative source of family income.



An agencial framework analysis is important to detect how women submissive and obey to patriarchal thinking, and how social changes can be driven. Fundamentally, the agency approach viewed the duality relationship between actors and structures: where the structure influences the actions of the actor, provides options and restrict actions by constraining structures (Giddens, 1997). Studies with this approach becomes important to capture how intervention of an empowerment program could be a part of encouraging a growing number of agencies that can work to encourage a shift towards more sustainable and equal management of the environment.

Gender is also often associated only with women, so that gender issues could potentially become an issue considered important only for women, and therefore, not become public issues where priority should be given. Likewise, initiatives to promote gender equality and justice through efforts such as the involvement and leadership of women in forest governance and land, also remains a concern that is limited in nature. Therefore, this study conducted by Wetlands International and Puter Foundation, is very strategic because it will trigger awareness and practices on how gender mainstreaming is done in ecosystem restoration program.

### A. The objectives of the study

There is little understanding of the gender aspects and the implications of ecosystem restoration approaches on gender equality. However, pilot ecosystem restoration projects are currently being implemented in a number of peatlands in Indonesia. Therefore, SPPC Project intend to review existing gender aspects and implications of various ecosystem restoration activities in Katingan project, including implementation of various forms biorights mechanism and integrated landscape planning and development. Therefore this study has objective to:

- Collect baseline information on traditional livelihood activities in relation to the restoration area as well as current and planned development activities of RMU related to community
- Understand the traditional roles of women and men within the community involve in the restoration activities and assess the impact
- Evaluate current progress of community acceptance to the program and implementation of socio economic development, with respect to gender issue
- Identify options for future improvement including alternative development activities, possibilities to carry out bio right approach and bottlenecks

Based on the above objective, a question was derive as key research point, i.e.:

*“Which gender aspects need to be considered in peatland ecosystem restoration, including paludiculture, to provide equitable socio-economic development and how? How can these be best addressed in the Bio-rights approach?”*

### III. Methods and Techniques

This study is a qualitative study using gender analysis approach to look at the implications of peatland Paludiculture program toward existing gender relations. The method use a participatory approach in extracting data and information, such as focus group discussions, observation and interview by using PRA as a selected tool.

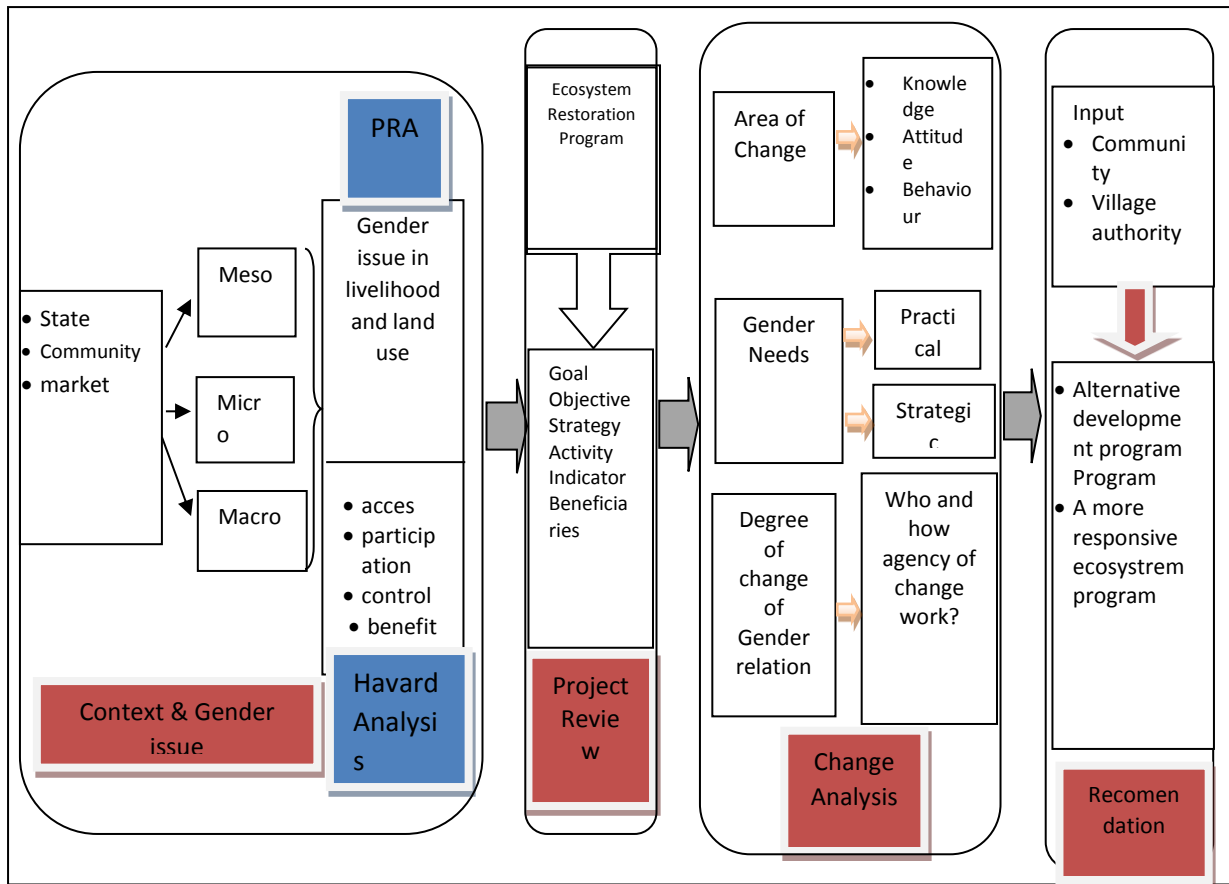
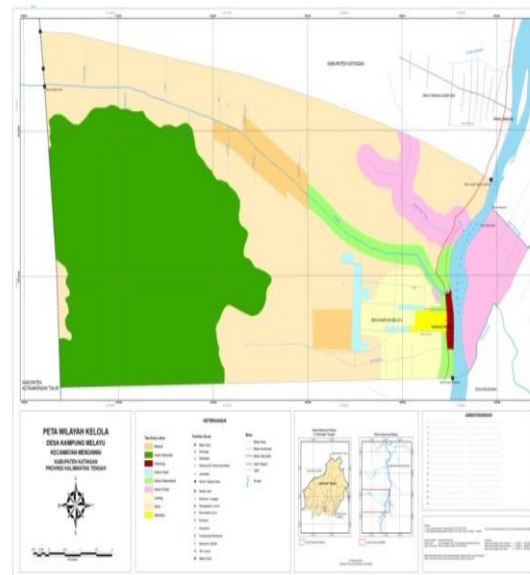


Figure 1. Research Framework

### A. Study Location:

The study on the implications and dynamics of gender was carried out in Kampung Melayu village, District of Mendawai, Katingan Region, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. This village is surrounded by tropical peat, located in the Katingan river basin where the river plays an important role in the livelihoods of the native Dayak tribe which lived in this region for centuries. Community livelihoods rely on rice and vegetables, poultry and beef, fresh water fishing, a variety of processed rattan, and some began to develop rubber plantations. Desa Kampung Melayu is one of the villages assisted by Puter Foundation with some programs that have been implemented. Most programs also involve and encourage the organization of women through various groups in the community.



Dayak and Banjar ethnics make up the majority of the villagers of Kampung Melayu. The village Profile documented does not describe population number and population composition according to sex

nor age, only stating number of 213 household. But based on data from Figures of Mendawai district in 2013, the the number of household in Kampung Melayus at least 138 household, consist of 555 people, with a balanced composition between Male and Female

## B. How bioright models developed in this region

In relation to the gender aspect, this study obtained information on the development of Bioright mechanisms. The bioright research that was conducted to answer following major questions:

- What is the Biorights Program?
- Why is the Biorights program conducted?
- Where can the Biorights program make a difference?
- Who should be involved in this Biorights program?
- What are the advantages for people who join this Bioright program?
- The sources of funding for the Biorights program?

During the assessment, the community had a diverse but generally supportive attitude towardsthe BioRights Program. Most believe that the Biorights model can be very helpful during difficult times, not only because of the capital incentive but also environmental benefits such as tree planting in peat forest. Some stressed the importance of inclusion of the entire community not only a small or selected group to avoid social conflict, and create social responsibility among beneficiaries. Many tree crops can be planted using local species that have good and long term value to the community. Several also stressed the importance to carry out the programme immediately as they are in need of the forest resources for their future use. They also indicate problems on obtaining seedlings nowadays, as most forest has been burnt.

## C. Perspective of the community towards ERC

Generally people do not have a good understanding of in REDD+ schemes in the Ecosystem Restoration initiative by PT RMU. Currently, there are still quite a lot of people who use the forests in the region to support the economy of the community including logging, fishing, and various forest product. As a result, there are concerns that the restoration project will eliminate the current benefits without proper compensation. It is very visible stated by community groups whos life is still depend on logging. This should be combined with quite strong desire of people to use the area of the village and forest for oil palm production. Yayasan Puter has carried out assessments on various issues related to the ERC and REDD concepts within communities. Through various discussions and intense socialization with surrounding villages of PT RMU, eventually surrounding villages can accept the existence of ecosystem restoration in their territory with some important issue to be emphasis, among others:



- Clarity Boundary between PT RMU and Village



- RMU need to accept and guarantee existing management and ownership rights that have been owned by the communities
- Opportunities for collaboration with PT RMU

In 2014, MoUs and cooperation agreements in the context of ERC between PT RMU with 13 villages in Katingan side was signed by both parties. With this legal binding framework both the community and village governments have declared to participate and work together to realize the management of ecosystem restoration initiated by PT RMU.

#### D. Findings on Gender issues

The study found some gender issues in social life of the community. Gender issues are defined as issues about the gap between men and women due to the standardization of their role, position, status and position of men and women in life. The process of identifying gender issues is done either through the FGD process, interviews, and observations in the field. These gender issues are mapped as follows:

##### 1. Women double role

In general, gender-based division of roles shows clear distribution of both domestic and public sphere. However, some roles are changing, as can be seen in the domestic sphere, men also take on roles such as helping care for children and a small percentage admitted that they sometimes cooking. Nonetheless, there is a role that are "forbidden" to be done by man such as washing family clothes, as mentioned by men and women present in the FGD. Although men can also cook when they are at home, the responsibility of providing food for the family is in the hands of women. Even when women run the same activity with man, like gardening or farming, activities like cooking and housecleaning remains responsibilities women. Women who has a job and are engaged in public activities also still have to run their domestic obligations first before doing her productive activities / public role.



##### 2. The low participation of male community organization

Women are more able to manage funding for the groups such as through SPP-PNMP and SPP-Puter. Low ownership and demoralization on men KSM become the main factor for inefficiency of men KSM. It may also be caused due to the institutional development of men KSM are made after the joint venture activities was already executed. Besides economic groups, in community activities, activities of women's groups also went well and maintain its routines, spirit and membership. Health centre and Fardu group Kifayah still exist and work well until today. In religious activities, such as yasinan held every Friday afternoon, the participants was only women. It could be, because it is considered that it is women who have the duty to maintain and responsible for public morality.

##### 3. Room for Public policy decision

Although women have plenty of room and involvement, but in the context of formal politics, the involvement of women is still very limited. In this village, women have started to occupy positions in the village administration and village Board (BPD), but this remains limited. In Kampung Melayu, as many as two women had attended Musrenbang (village development coordination meeting),

although in recent years no Musrenbang has been done at the village level. Public participation in decision-making processes of the village has been recognized improved recently, where the process of decision making was done through meetings involving village government, BPD, and community leaders already started to involve women .

The village chief admitted that the involvement of women as village office staff and during decision making process is important to ensure women's voices are represented and to ensure women's needs can be accommodated in the development carried out in the village. This is in line with the quota on women in regulations, though not meet the 30% but there is a minimal representation of women in village institutions and social organizations in the village. According to the village head, women's involvement also allows the government to coordinate and negotiate the interests of the village government.

#### 4. Access and Quality of Education

Establishment of high schools in Mendawai, significantly has increased public awareness about the importance of education, especially for girls. The schools are relatively close, only 5 to 10 minutes by motor boat. The proximity of physical access like this, provide children especially women, of Kampung Melayu, a better chance to obtain secondary education. Previously, high school was only available in Katingan 1 or Pegatan which are located far from the village and the children had to leave their families or join relatives nearby. At that time, parents hesitate to release their daughter go to school considering the safety and security of girls.



#### 5. Economy productivity

There are some dynamic shifts on the role of both male and female related to livelihoods. At the time of the illegal logging, men provided the income while women simply "received", although there is no doubt that there are also women who work in the timber industry. Nowadays men and women work together on the fields and gardens and fishing which sometime some women consider as leisure and relaxing but the results of fishing is used as a side dish which reduces expenditure or sold as an additional family income.

The opportunity to develop a career are nowadays more open to women. The increasing number of women with education can open career opportunities for women in government in the village, such as kindergarten or work outside the village. Although this is limited in number, it demonstrates the improving employment opportunities for women.

Like stated above, women groups relatively run economy activities better than most men groups. This could be interpreted as an increase in the bargaining position of women because discussion then need to be set between husband and wife.

## IV. Overview of the Current Community Development Program

With reference to the data and information obtained during the review process, it appears that the development and implementation of the Community Development program on Ecosystem Restoration in Katingan Project is still using the approach of **gender neutral**. This implies that gender

is not a consideration in the development of the program, or the program has not departed from the understanding that there are issues / gender issues that need to be addressed in the program. Therefore, It is reasonable that in the implementation of the program the approach is still not taking into account the gender aspect. Similarly, various gender issues found in the implementation of the program, has not yet triggered a response in the form of steps that systematically intended to address gender issues and encourage gender equality and justice. However, this does not exclude the fact that there are some activities in terms of approach actually has role in gender responsiveness, although not developed sufficiently using gender considerations. An example is The Loan Saving Program (SPP) or encouraging representation of women in decision-making process are steps that is responsive, however still inadequate as it is not trying to reduce gender-based barriers found in the field.

Program objectives were defined as still very strong describe gender neutrality. The formulation of the benefits has not been clearly defined, especially the benefit of what will be achieved and targeted achievement to minimizing gender gap.

Although the impact of this program is expected to reduce overall poverty, it could be different between men and women because of different access, participation, control and benefit of the resources.

In general, the determination of beneficiaries is done based on the presumption that there are no gender issues that need to be answered. Beneficiaries formulated in this kind, mostly happens in a plural gender-neutral program.

In line with efforts to promote equality, the formulation of this kind can be risky to widen the gender gap, because marginalized groups may face barriers distinctive that will affect access to and the benefits of the program are more limited. Not all community members can be involved in the saving and loan groups or other formulated community groups. This creates imbalance and conflict among communities if its done without clear communication.

Although this program was developed with a gender-neutral approach, interestingly, there have been early initiatives in activities and the approach taken when the programs are implemented, which actually have the potential to be part of gender mainstreaming. Some of these initiatives are:

- Encouraging women to also take part in capacity building activities. Meetings, although not designed with a gender-responsive approach, is part of capacity building itself, which enables the women became part along with men.
- Encouragement of the representation of women in activities and decision-making process. This is a breakthrough in which women taking non-traditional roles, and men also learn to share space, aspirations and interests of women. On this side, the role Puter Foundation through the program actually not be a single actor, because the initiative is actually more encouraged by the village government.
- Activities specific to women, such as KSM of savings and loans. Although gender considerations are not the main motive but rather on the view that women are more responsible in the management of activities. However, this does not reduce the substance that these activities contribute in addressing gender issues related to economic and family subsistence
- The commission of this gender study, to some extent shows that although that this project is gender-neutral design program, but there are early efforts to make the program more responsive to improve the focus of the development of future programs.



In terms of project staffing, limited staff has understanding gender resulted that the planning of programs have not been sensitive to gender as a priority issue, even though equality became one of the principles in this program. On the side of the staff in the field, there is awareness that gender is not considered an important issue in the program. The majority of staff, sometimes even still gender bias, female staf is considered to have limited mobility and physical performance. Lack of gender analysis capacity or knowledge and skills on how to mainstream gender into programs owned by the staf is recognized as one of the conditions which affect the gender charge in the implementation of the program.

In the structure of the program, also looks very masculine, in which none of implementing the program are women, even though in this program there are specific activities for women. In the future it should consider for placing women as program managers, since there are specific activities for women and to adapt with local cultural factors.

## V. Conclusion

The relevance of gender in the program shows the importance of the integration of gender issues in the design of the program. Aim to encourage economic independence and poverty alleviation is intimately linked to gender, for several reasons such as: poverty can have different effects on women and men, as well as the need for capacity building and promoting self-reliance are different for women and men, and access to and control resources are also different. Formulated objectives should be set out on an understanding of gender issues, then should be followed by the formulation of indicators, activities and approaches that also seeks to reduce gender-based barriers and encourage the more equitable and fair benefits of the program.

Programs with gender-neutral approach, in the implementation phase, are often faced with challenges to make women and men face different situations and challenges in relation to the social context occur. In fact, it seems that gender integration efforts within the program approach provide many benefits, as evidence that women have the potential as well as men to take part in social change, especially when they get equal opportunity

The development program, including its monitoring and evaluation program, has not made gender as an issue of priority. Various initiatives found in the domain of the program, but no sufficient evidence for the integration of gender issues and gender mainstreaming strategy are found in the program development aspect.

Program implementation structure that is considered to be very masculine and requires sufficient scrutiny, because the program should work for both women and men. Gender balance will make the approach provide a more potential program and build a wider acceptance of women as well as men.

## VI. Recommendation

### A. Gender Relevance

Based on this study, several further recommendations and follow-ups are needed to be addressed by the project in order to improve its gender performance:

1. Incorporate gender issues into the background and the formulation of a problem when reviewing future direction of the development program
2. Include gender indicators in the objectives, outcomes and outputs that need to be achieved by the program

3. Ensure beneficiaries by presenting a target beneficiaries disaggregated by gender. This effort also includes encouraging more women to become beneficiaries for non-traditional activities such as encouraging women's leadership, involvement in policy-making process, and efforts to increase capacity
4. Review of planning documents constructed in the village, to ensure gender issues has been adequately integrated

## B. Program Approach

As for the approach of the Community Development itself, several recommended activities are proposed, as follow:

1. Capacity building for women. This will be a way to level their capacity to men, especially in the aspects related to organizational skills, social analysis, to the more technical aspects such as group management and financial management.
2. Women involvement in activities. Although these efforts have been initiated, but the attention to the obstacles faced by women have not become part of the activities design. Some examples of concrete steps to encourage this involvement, for example, choose the correct timing and implementation of activities, or encourage a more seamless gender-based roles division between women and men.
3. Women leadership. Women have the potential and capacity, but often do not have enough opportunities. Women leaders also faced with more severe challenges, such as demands for reconciliation of public and domestic affairs at the same time, something that is not faced by men. Therefore, in addition to strengthening women leader candidates, these efforts should also include raising the support of men. Also included strengthening potential women who are open to taking on new challenges.
4. Men and gender relation changes. Because gender is about relations and social construction, its formulation formed together by women and men. Efforts to promote equality will not be enough if directed to women only, especially consider that policy makers are still dominated by men. Involving men by making the issue of gender as a common need, is a strategic step that should be encouraged in this development program.
5. Gender Mainstreaming in the Activities. Activities, regardless of its form, should certainly consider access and equal benefits for both women and men. Does adequate socialization activities have been carried out for women and men? Do activities such as planning consider the aspirations of women and men? In this project, effort that has been done is still limited, and therefore, should be an important agenda forward.
6. Integration of equality agenda within village policy planning, budgets and institutional. Another strategic area, following the implementation of National Village Law is the event of village institutional planning and budgeting. Incorporating gender mainstreaming agenda in this area will have a broad impact and great potential to promote sustainability

## C. Program development and monitoring

1. The consultation process with the community in the development program need to ensure women's involvement in the process
2. Incorporate strategies to promote gender equality, together with gender indicators as indicators of program.
3. Integrating gender indicators in the Monitoring & Evaluation system. These efforts will measure changes in gender relations and dynamics that occur in the program. In the process of monitoring, data and information is important to adjust the approach of the activities to be more gender responsive. While within the aspect of evaluation, the impact and

achievements of the program on gender relations needs to be assessed, through the measurement of indicators that have been priorly defined.

#### D. Improvement to the project structure

1. Encourage more female staff in the program implementation structure. Various obstacles like cultural views is not something fixed, as lot of strategy can be done to address this challenge, especially because in fact society is relatively open toward equality.
2. Capacity building for the Program staff on the Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming. This recommendation will have wider benefits as it will also contribute to increase the effectiveness of the program in general.

