Biodiversity, landscapes and local interests & Understanding local peoples' perceptions of what is important in the landscape

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I provide 2 brief descriptions as each address different audiences, each of which seems suitable in this discussion (1. research and 2. local community).

Site: **Malinau (previously called "Bulungan"), East Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo).**
Principle funder: **ITTO.**
Lead research: **CIFOR (D. Sheil).**

Main Collaborators: FORDA, LIPI, BIOMA, Mulawarman University, Bandung Insitute of Technology.

People involved: Afriastini, Akhmad Wijaya, Chrisandini, Debora Kristiani, Djoko T. Iskandar, Djunaedy, Edi Permana, Eddy Mangopo Angi, Franz Gatzweiler, Herland Somantri, Ike Rachmatika, Imam Basuki, Ismail A. Rahman, Ismayadi Samsoedin, Kade Sidiyasa, Kamaruddin, Kim Wan, Kusnanda, M. Agung Sardjono, Miriam van Heist, Nining Lisawanti, Rajindra Kumar Puri, Rukmiyati, Sigit Budiarta, Sunaryo, Syaifuddin, Yohanes Purwanto, Zainal Arifin, with help from the people of Paya Seturan, Long Lake, Rian, Langap, Laban Nyarit, Long Jalan, Lio Mutai and Gong Solok

Summary 1 (adapted and updated from CIFOR Annual Report 2000)

Biodiversity, Landscapes and Local Interests

The characteristics of forest landscapes, including their biological resources, are critical to the people living there. But the importance of these is generally not well represented in planning for interventions such as timber concessions, conservation and other types of forest use led by outside agencies. A part of the problem is the nature of standard biological survey methods, which are not well designed to 'capture' the local and environmental values of a forest in a way that is useful for decision makers. To improve the situation a multidisciplinary team of scientists has been working in Bulungan Forest to develop a more broad-based approach, which they call Multidisciplinary Landscape Assessment. Doing the surveys at a landscape level is important because effective land use planning requires looking at a forest and its resources as part of a broader agro-ecosystem that provides a variety of community needs. The last phase of fieldwork was completed in December 2000. The team is now reviewing the data and compiling a comprehensive manual on the methods (at time of publication of this website/cd rom this has been published as 'Exploring biological diversity, environment and local people's perspectives in forest landscapes, this document can be downloaded at http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/books/exploring_bio.pdf). Several of the methods employed seem to be novel (e.g. an account of the tree plot method has already been accepted for publication in Tropical Forest Science). From the project has come a comprehensive description of 200 plots in the study area, which encompasses seven communities in the Malinau watershed. The collected data include extensive records on local vegetation, soil characteristics, animal species and other biophysical features, along with socio-cultural information such as the history of settlement, people's attitudes toward the forest and its resources, and traditional uses of those resources. The CIFOR-led field team of a dozen scientists included ethnobotanists, anthropologists, biologists, soil experts and economists, to insure that a broad range of forest values was represented in the surveys. Local inhabitants worked closely with the researchers to

acquire the data. As part of the surveys, villagers were asked to score the various features of the forest and surrounding land in various ways according to how highly those elements were valued by the community.
Among the data, about 3,000 plant species were recorded, of which 10 percent have not yet been fully identified. The information about local use of forest-based resources is still being processed, yet initial results indicate their importance to the inhabitants' way of life. The aim is to develop the novel survey approach into a method that will eventually be applicable to different locations. For now, the project is revealing site-specific information that could help guide policies on local forest management and land use. The initial surveys show, for example, that many people in the region are troubled by a perceived decline in some highly valued resources, especially animals they hunt for food and plants they rely on for both daily needs and trade goods. One important resource that has become scarce is rattan. A significant factor in its decline, according to the villagers in some areas, is government logging regulations that require timber companies to slash all undergrowth and climbers (which include all the rattan species), in a misguided effort to encourage regeneration within the concessions. While the practice has clearly hurt local communities, its silvicultural benefits are debatable and the policy should be reconsidered. This we propose, is the kind of information that's needed to make more informed and balanced decisions about forest conservation and land use - and which the survey approach aims to elucidate. Systematic assessment of local attitudes to landscape and biota by a range of techniques should make it possible to take those values into account in any decision-making that may affect the area. If we can demonstrate that local biodiversity matters to communities, and why, it is harder for decision makers to ignore than in policy making and land use planning. The experimental approach was also used to conduct a series of more limited zoological surveys in the study area. Among the fish, amphibians and reptiles reported - along with information about their habitants and their significance to local Dayak communities - are some species that may merit consideration for conservation. A detailed account of our methods has been drafted and is currently under review for publication … hopefully in the near future (at time of publication of this website/cd rom this has been published as 'Exploring biological diversity, environment and local people's perspectives in forest landscapes, this document can be downloaded at http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/books/exploring_bio.pdf)

Summary 2 From short info' flyer for local communities and local government representatives etc. (from Indonesian):

Understanding local peoples' perceptions of what is important in the landscape

Our concern: the importance of many natural resources and sites to local communities is generally not recognised in activities led by outsiders. The activity titled 'Multidisciplinary Landscape Assessment' attempts surveys of community perceptions of the landscape and natural resources and how they relate to peoples needs, preferences and value systems.

Aim:

1. To understand what aspects of the landscape local people care about, how much and why
2. To provide a diagnostic baseline of information to guide future research and develop deeper dialogue.

Methods:

1. Village based surveys: histories, attitudes, traditions, uses and diverse measures relating to the land and natural resources.2. Plot/field based surveys: examines various sites and makes direct assessment of plant and soil resources and documents both scientific and local perceptions.

Methods documentation to be published.

Seven villages covered: Payu Seturan, Punan Rian, Langap, Laban Nyarit, Long Jalan, Lio Mutai, and Gong Solok.
More limited zoological surveys in the Seturan camp study area for fish, amphibians and reptiles - all includes evaluation of local significance.

Results: Vast range of information about what matters to whom (in terms of local communities) and why .... reports in prep.