

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Name: Indonesian Ecotourism Network (INDECON)

Project Title: Ecotourism Product Development as a Means to Supplant Illegal Logging in the Tangkahan Area of Leuser National Park

Date of Report: April 15, 2004

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

From 11 to 16 March 2004, Tangkahan ecotourism products and other information related to this project were promoted and marketed at the 38th Berlin International Tourism Trade Fair (International Tourismus Borsche-Berlin), the largest international tourism expo conducted in Europe. More than 500 brochures on ecotourism in Tangkahan were distributed. This is a significant indicator that the community's products have been promoted in the international market.

Indecon deliberately chose to target the European market, as surveys show that many of the visitors to Tangkahan come from Western Europe. This activity was financially supported by the State Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the European Union.

All processes arranged in the project plan were implemented well and without any serious obstacles. The community members involved in the Tangkahan Tourism Institution (*Lembaga Pariwisata Tangkahan*, LPT) participated enthusiastically in several training programs. Several important achievements during this short-term period are:

1. The memorandum of agreement between the National Park Authority and LPT about delivering ecotourism management in the Tangkahan area and an agreement on fees and allocation of benefits between stakeholders
2. The community from two villages supported conservation in the Tangkahan area through village regulations on ecotourism management in Tangkahan, which have been developed through a participatory process.
3. Interpretative trails, with interpretation sign boards; a river tour, which provides safety with life jackets; an elephant attraction; and art performances are among the tourism products that have been produced and are ready to be marketed.
4. Well-trained interpreters have been developed and provided with a guidance book and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure visitors' safety.
5. The project has received matching funds from the National Park for communication equipment, interpreters' uniforms and information sign boards.
6. Produced promotional materials such as CD-ROM and brochures.
7. Conducted an ecotourism product launch, which was attended by the Deputy of the State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, regional government authorities, local and national media.

8. The area covered by the ecotourism management is 500 ha, and the area protected from illegal logging is up to 10,000 ha.

There have been no significant obstacles to the program, but weather conditions during the rainy season have caused some changes in the field activities. Some activities needed to be rescheduled and the program needed to be extended. The attention of many stakeholders toward the Tangkahan area has increased; we assume that this situation may create some obstacles in the future if it is not managed properly. For example, we have to support the community with a pro-community investment mechanism that provides benefits to the community. We also still have to improve their capacity to reach to the next level of achievement, especially in managing the area.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: Communities of Tangkahan village are able to manage ecotourism in Gunung Leuser NP, in order to slow down forest degradation from illegal logging.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
1.1. Ecotourism generates income sufficient to support Tangkahan without supplemental income from illegal logging.	Some of the revenue and benefits of ecotourism were gained from ecotourism products that have been developed together with the community. These products were jungle trekking through interpretive trail, upstream boating, tubing and safari by elephant. Community members were directly involved in ecotourism activities, and received benefits directly from guiding, river-crossing services and working at ecolodge. Meanwhile, LPT received benefits directly from entrance fee. The community also received benefits from food and beverage sales in the restaurant. In the fifth month of the project, the interpretive trail was officially declared open by the national park authorities. In two months, LPT has recorded 43 visitations from domestic and foreign tourists for tubing, and 20 visitations for the interpretive trail. 10% of income was donated to LPT. LPT also received income from souvenir sales.
1.2. Tourists are buying as many ecotourism products as Tangkahan can produce.	Number of visitors has been recorded since the initial product development program facilitated by CEPF was

	implemented. From July to November 2003, 50 tourists were recorded visiting Tangkahan. Tourists came mostly from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, England, Denmark and Australia. At the same time, 4,069 domestic tourists were recorded visiting Tangkahan for one-day tours. Other products sold were souvenirs, such as bracelets made from fern leaves and necklaces made from pieces of coconut shell. However, income and benefit from souvenir selling was not recorded well.
1.3. Local people and National Park staff are developing and managing small scale enterprise and sale of ecotourism on their own and in ways that are sustainable and profitable.	By the end of the project, a rotation system for the interpreters and the visitors had been developed by the community members in the interpreter group. There is an agreement with the National Park authority that the park staff will not be directly involved in visitor management; they will focus on monitoring activities. Shared profits received by the National Park from the co-management are used for conservation and monitoring actions. Marketing activities are conducted by LPT in cooperation with several tour operators in Medan, facilitated by Indecon.
1.4. Monitoring system to ensure sustainability and profitability implemented by community.	The development of monitoring system was only performed in the sixth month of project implementation; therefore data collection from the monitoring system was only accomplished after a test tour was conducted in the sixth month of the program.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

One significant result from this project is the development of village regulations on ecotourism management, focusing on conservation efforts. Village regulations, as a higher policy at the local level, are a legal tool for LPT and villages to enforce the law at the local level. Other successful results are the signing of an agreement between the National Park authority and LPT about LPT's authority to manage ecotourism in Tangkahan, and a new policy on entrance fees and benefit distribution. These innovations are a great achievement in the national park management system in Indonesia, as the community has access and has been legally empowered to participate in conservation and utility of the conservation area. These actions have increased the confidence of the community in the National Park authority and increased their spirit to develop the ecotourism business.

Through the MoU between the National Park authority and the community, which was facilitated by this project, illegal logging has been halted. The area conserved by the community covers more than 10,000 ha.

In order to increase the sustainability of the ecotourism program in the community, the project has been asked by the National Park to participate in community capacity building, both for fiscal year 2003 and for 2004. In fiscal year 2004, the Regional Tourism Office has also allocated some funds to conduct training programs.

The numbers of visitations and of buyers of Tangkahan ecotourism products are also indicators of the success of this project. Tangkahan ecotourism products have been marketed at the provincial, national, and international levels in early 2004. This is a significant result that goes directly to the community, although the number and quality of visitations still need to be increased.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

In early November 2003, Bahorok, one of the well-known nature tourism destinations in north Sumatra, was destroyed by flooding. Ecotourism in Tangkahan can be an added value for north Sumatra, a competitor for Bahorok. Renovation and revitalization of the Bahorok area will take time and money. The Bahorok tragedy is a blessing in disguise for Tangkahan. The positive impact from Bahorok is that more tourists are now coming to Tangkahan.

The increasing trend of investment, both from Bahorok and from new investors in Tangkahan, is a negative impact. It is negative because the community is not ready, while the price of the land is rising. The tendency toward investment in Tangkahan is strong because the regional and central governments have provided a lot of support and promotion. One of the solutions is to develop an investment system in the Tangkahan ecotourism area that will provide opportunities for the community to participate.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Potential product(s) and tourism attraction(s) in Tangkahan identified	
1.1 By the end of first month, potential product and tourism attractions are identified	Identification of potential tourism products in Tangkahan was conducted together with the community on July 28-30, 2003. Three main components were identified in this survey: (1) natural attractions, (2) cultural attractions, and (3) traditional Karo knowledge and handicrafts. Tangkahan

	<p>has huge and fantastic natural resources with great potential for tourism product development. More than three waterfalls and two hot spring locations were identified, as well as two karst caves and the Gambir River. In general, the main tourism attraction of Tangkahan is the lowland tropical rain forest with its high biodiversity, which has great potential to be developed as interpretative trails. Orangutan and the Leaf Monkey are the most attractive species, along with other primates living in Tangkahan, which will attract people to visit. Meanwhile, at least three kinds of Karo traditional dances were identified as having potential as tourism attractions (see pictures). There is a big opportunity to make more value of local handicrafts and the local community's traditional knowledge in ethnobotany for tourism packages, in order to educate both the community and visitors. Many tour products can be developed in Tangkahan, based on natural attractions, culture, or traditional knowledge and/or combinations among these. Besides offering visitors forest and village experiences, Tangkahan can also offer visitors river experiences by pedaling or boating in Batang Serangan river or "tubing".</p>
<p>Output 2: Potential market(s) for Tangkahan product(s) are identified</p>	
<p>2.1. By the end of first month, potential markets are identified</p>	<p>A survey of the tourism market was conducted concurrently with the survey of potential tourism resources. The survey team visited the Bohorok tourism center and the Langkat Regency Tourism Office to gather data. The foreign tourism market to North Sumatra has declined since Indonesia suffered the economic and political crisis in 1998, but visitations began to increase again in 2001, from 84,301 in 1998 to 94,211 in 2001. Sixty-eight percent of foreign tourists came from ASEAN, 13% from Asia outside ASEAN, 14% from Western Europe, 3% from the USA, and 2% from Australia. The average length of tourists' stay in North Sumatra is 12.2 days. The numbers of domestic tourists during this period were more stable than those of foreign tourists. People from Medan and the surrounding area have the most potential as a domestic tourism target. Based on analysis of potential in North Sumatra, Tangkahan has a huge potential to compete with other destinations, especially with Bohorok Rehabilitation Center, as the places most often visited by domestic tourists. However, interviews with visitors to Bohorok indicated that many were concerned about the environmental degradation in Bohorok, especially about garbage problems and poor maintenance of accommodation. Tangkahan therefore has an opportunity to play an important role in tourism destination development in North Sumatra, as a new destination that</p>

	develops local-level regulations on environmental conservation. Besides that, Tangkahan is located in a strategic position among the natural tourism destinations in North Sumatra.
2.2. By the second week of the second month, marketing strategy is developed	The marketing strategy of the Tangkahan area is focused on both domestic and foreign tourism, based on data of market and tourism potential. The main marketing strategies recommended are: (1) to create innovative, competitive and marketable tourism packages; (2) to develop a marketing group at the community level; (3) to build a good image by conducting press tours for national newspapers and television; and (4) to open a marketing branch office in Medan. The marketing strategies that can be arranged are: (1) to build partnerships with schools, churches, and youth groups in Medan; (2) to distribute posters and brochures in tourism destinations, restaurants, and hotels; (3) to create a website and collaborate with national and international web; this is one strategy for foreign tourists, as well as the link with the Indecon website; (4) to build partnerships between tour operators in Medan and Jakarta based on a contract-rate system; (5) to produce a VCD and collaborate with radio and broadcast stations to promote Tangkahan; (6) to be actively involved in tourism exhibitions at both provincial and national levels; and (7) to send updated information about Tangkahan to guidebook publishers such as Lonely Planet, Periplus, etc.
Output 3: Tourism product(s) of Tangkahan based on ecology and market demand developed	
3.1. By the end of the second month, design of Tangkahan ecotourism product is developed	Based on survey analysis, a two- to four-day tour package is the best length of stay for tourists to visit Tangkahan. Tourism products should be safe and comfortable for the tourists. For domestic tourists, tourism activity will focused on educational tourism combined with traditional knowledge and river experience, while tour activities for foreign tourists will focus on adventure tourism and cultural tourism. Adventure tourism activities that can be offered include trekking, caving, and white water rafting. Some strategies that can be implemented in designing the tourism products are: (1) creating standards for products; (2) creating environmentally friendly product criteria, i.e. low impact on the environment and the community; (3) product packaging; (4) preparation of good interpreters.
3.2. By the end of the third month, interpretative trail is established	Training and assistance in developing the interpretative trails was conducted throughout September. Twenty-five participants from the community and park staff were actively involved in the training, and produced three loop trails. Each trail has a different category. The first trail is

	<p>the easiest trail, and can be walked by family groups or even children; the second trail is more challenging and intended for teenagers or anyone who likes adventure; and the third trail is the most challenging, and is combined with caving and white water rafting. To create an accurate map, the interpretative trail was mapped with help from an expert cartographer. The present trekking map is the combination of the results of field navigation conducted by the local people, put onto the topographical map. Points of interest were identified, including traditional knowledge of the Tangkahan community, and prepared as a resource for the guidebook.</p>
<p>3.3. By the end of the third month, information board and interpretative sign of ecotourism trail are in place</p>	<p>The sign making of the point interest was done in the last of September. The first signboard was installed in September 30. CEPF's grant has stimulated National Park to fund a supporting grant for rest and SAR shelter, ethical code signboard, and welcome gate. INDECON through grant from CEPF has made 5 of point interest signs, and an information sign, which contained a map of interpretative trail. The installation of interpretative sign and welcome gate will be carry out together with the head of Gunung Leuser National Park and head of Langkat regency on October 9, 2003.</p>
<p>3.4. By the second week of the fourth month, the interpretative trail guidebook of Tangkahan is written</p>	<p>A guidebook containing information on flora and fauna found along the interpretative trails and other interesting information that could be conveyed to the visitors was written in cooperation with the interpreters. The production of guidebook for interpreters has been the community's priority for several reasons: (1) Interpretation was a new topic for local guides in Tangkahan, thus requiring time and effort to study; (2) Local guides have not fully mastered the technique of story telling; and (3) Local guides' knowledge of forest ecology was still limited. The book was produced jointly; story materials were obtained from the community and combined with forest ecology materials provided by Indecon. The book was then designed by Indecon team and returned to the community for corrections. Finally the book was printed and laminated for maintenance</p>
<p>3.5. By the end of the fourth month, booklets and CDs are printed</p>	<p>Brochures of Tangkahan were printed in two languages (Indonesian and English) and designed by the Indecon expert team. General information, activities, tourism attractions in Tangkahan, and an interpretive map were presented in attractive, colorful brochures. 1000 high-quality brochures were printed. In March 2004, some these brochures were distributed to International Tourism Trade in Berlin (ITB), Germany by Indecon. 200 copies of an interactive CD were also produced. The CDs present the tourism potential and attractions of Tangkahan. The community participation process during the assistance program funded by CEPF was also presented in this CD,</p>

	including the familiarization tour and product launch at the end of the program.
3.6. By the end of fifth month, the interpretative ecotourism trail is tested	Test tour/familiarization tour and launching of ecotourism product were conducted from 8 to 10 January 2004, attended by Mrs. Myra P Gunawan as Deputy of Product Development from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, National Park authorities, Conservation Monitoring Unit (Flora Fauna International), Medan Culture and Tourism Office, and the local media.
Output 4: LPT member capacity on tourism services is increased	
4.1. By the end of the second months assessment of training needed in order to carry out product development is conducted	Identification on training required by the community was conducted at the same time as the trail construction. The results of the identification are as follows: (1) Interpreter training: based on the capacity of the community in Tangkahan, it is recommended that interpreter training be conducted in four stages: (a) comprehensive stage, (b) technical guide stage, (c) intensification on training material, and (d) foreign language; (2) Training on the tourism package: the community will be assisted up to the price determination stage, calculating the benefit and financial loss of the product; (3) Training in safety procedures, and formulating the SOP; (4) Training in tourism services, focused on hygiene and waste management; (5) Training on how to make handicrafts or souvenirs, conducted through community assistance in the area surrounding Tangkahan and comparative studies with other tourism destinations in North Sumatra; (6) Training on ecotourism management: This will be conducted in two stages: (a) management of stakeholders, including the whole-system management and benefit distribution, and (b) group management, including daily operational technique and benefit distribution within the groups; (7) White water operation management training; and (8) Monitoring training.
4.2. By the end of the third month, training modules completed	Training modules are created based on the capacity of human resources of the Tangkahan community and the stages in creating the tourism package
Output 5: Capacity of LPT members and National Park staffs on ecotourism development are increase.	
5.1 By end of the second month, ecotourism training for community and National Park staffs is implemented	Training on ecotourism and its development principles was done in late September and followed by park staff and LPT management. This training aimed to review the commitment between the communities for tourism development in Tangkahan and to brainstorm the perceptions of tourism development and financial

	<p>distribution for community members who are not involved in tourism activities. As follow-up to this training, the local community and park staff actively developed the detailed operation agreement, including agreement on price of entrance fee, benefit distribution, and collection system.</p>
<p>5.2 By the beginning of the fourth month, minimal 60% of LPT members are trained in product management and ecotourism services are implemented</p>	<p>Training on ecotourism product management was conducted after Tangkahan ecotourism products had been developed, including the interpretive trail. Members of LPT, interpreters, and ecolodge management were trained to calculate the cost of each ecotourism product, and define guide service fees, river crossing fees, and the cost for using rubber boats on the river. Community members were also trained to develop a rolling system for interpreters, understand tourist flow, and keep records of visitations in Tangkahan.</p>
<p>5.3 By the end of the fourth month, 10 LPT members are trained to be ecotourism guide/interpreter</p>	<p>Based on recommendations from the assessment, the guide and interpreter training was conducted earlier than originally planned. Ten selected LPT members were sent to Sibolangit Conservation Education Center (which belongs to Conservation International Indonesia) to receive guide training. This training was the first stage of the guide training, which is recommended to be conducted in series. This training was very valuable to all participants. Besides learning how to be good interpreters, they also studied safety procedure techniques in the forest. Three other training programs for guides were agreed to be conducted during the next quarter: first, guide training (indoor and outdoor training); second, self study using reading material (November); and third, a guide training test (to be conducted in December), with certification endorsed by Indecon and the National Park. There is an agreement among the National Park authorities, Indecon, and LPT that only guides with certificates can guide tourists on the interpretative trails.</p>
<p>5.4 By the end of the fourth month, minimal 60% of LPT member are trained in health, safety and security procedures</p>	<p>The training on health, safety and security was conducted involving people from the interpreter group, the SAR team, and the accommodation management group. The priority target of this training was to create a group of women who were used to cooking and to managing accommodation. The health and safety training involved hospitality experts from Medan. The training was conducted over three days, with materials covering hospitality, food and beverage serving, room maintenance and arrangement, and physical appearance. The community also learned to provide aid in case of accidents on forest trails or in water. The results of the training were used to revise and complete several rescue procedures that had been included in the first aid guide book</p>
<p>5.5 by the second week of the fifth month ,</p>	<p>The training on ecotourism management helped LPT staff to focus by discussing the management of ecotourism in a</p>

<p>minimal 60% of LPT member are trained in ecotourism management</p>	<p>macro level and in an integrated way that coordinated different groups, such as members of water tourism operation, art, handy-crafts production, and management. In addition, the training also discussed the community investment system, as well as an investment system that would be applied to outside investors. The investment issue was given special attention to reduce land sale activity by the community and to provide an investment system that was more beneficial to the community in the long term. The training also improved LPT staff's insight into the development of management systems, the relations between management groups, and the benefits of such systems for LPT.</p>
<p>Output 6: . Monitoring system and Program Evaluation of environmental impact that can be implemented by community is designed</p>	
<p>6.1 By the second week of fifth month, design of monitoring system is completed</p>	<p>The Tangkahan ecotourism monitoring system was arranged through participation of LPT members. The methods adopted were simple yet able to accommodate the data and results needed for analysis and the decision making process. Two important aspects would be monitored: (1) visitation impact monitoring (the impact of visitations and ecotourism activities on the natural environment in Tangkahan, including the forest, river, and the community); and (2) service monitoring, including collection, analysis, and evaluation of information on satisfaction of visitors' needs. The monitoring system would ideally be implemented continuously by LPT members</p>
<p>6.2 At the end of fifth month, minimal 10 member of LPT are trained in conducting monitoring</p>	<p>The training on monitoring, for 15 members of LPT, was undertaken at the end of December 2003. In this training, participants were trained on methods of ecotourism monitoring. The training was completed in three days (two days for indoor training and one day for field training). The methods introduced were basic data gathering methods that could be applied by the community</p>
<p>6.3 By the end of program, initial result of monitoring is completed</p>	<p>The initial monitoring was carried out in early January 2004. During the initial monitoring, significant changes have not been identified. The environment condition, especially the presence of wild animals such as Kedih and Orangutan, was relatively the same as the condition before ecotourism activity started. Visitations have not noticeably disturbed the wild life of Tangkahan</p>

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

Tangkahan ecotourism product development, which has been done through a participatory approach, has increased the abilities of the best interpreters. They are learning not only how to guide but also how to identify interesting things, develop material to tell stories, and put it in a guidebook. The interpreters are also learning navigation and tourism trail development. Their experiences are an added value for their work as guides.

The development of the interpretative trails, including signs and information boards; purchasing of life jackets; and the guidebook, the standard operating procedure book, and the brochures have all increased the spirit of the community to participate in ecotourism activities. By the end of the project, the number of community members in the monitoring group had increased. This shows that the project has had an impact in changing the community's perceptions.

The combination of community capacity building and government facilitation (both regional and central) has strengthened the community's motivation. Support from the village community, the village legislative institution, and the district government has increased awareness of and pride in their area. This is the strong foundation for developing a collaborative commitment to developing Tangkahan as an ecotourism site.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

One output that has not been produced is the monitoring compilation. Monitoring results are still in the early stage; data is limited because the number of tourists is limited. However, this result has not had any impact on the project as a whole.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS
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Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

One of the innovative successes of this project is the development of village regulations focusing on conservation of the area. This local policy consists of prohibition of certain activities in the area, and limitation of development. The village regulations also contain penalties, including social penalties.

Karo traditional culture as the community identity is also recognized in the village regulation. The regulation adopts good management practices that are in line with Karo social and traditional norms. LPT also produced a "code of ethic for visitors", which was named "community messages". The message was written on a 2x1 meter signboard and posted on the way into the Tangkahan area.

The MoU between LPT and the National Park authority on pricing policy and benefit allocation is one successful result of this project in minimizing the potential for conflict which could arise if the benefit distribution were not equitable.

Some local policies developed by this project have given tremendous benefits. This has increased the community's confidence in the National Park, and has set the basic foundation for the sustainability of the community ecotourism business.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

The lessons learned from the project are:

1. The project has strengthened the relations between the community and other stakeholders such as the Park management, the FFI Elephant Monitoring Project, the district tourism office, and the palm oil plantation, both directly and indirectly;
2. The Village Tourism Master Plan (*RIPDES / Rencana Induk Pariwisata Desa*) is the first tourism master plan in a conservation area made together by local people at the village level;
3. The project has succeeded in facilitating the park management and the community in producing local regulations and policy, such as price policy and agreement of distribution of benefit. This is an innovative approach, and a first for Indonesia, whereby the park management is giving authority to the community to manage some park areas in a utilization zone based on the village tourism master plan;
4. The local initiative in establishing LPT as a community institution for tourism development is an important achievement, as 32 of LPT's 55 founding members were former illegal loggers. The membership of LPT grew during the project implementation, showing the spirit and commitment of the local people to work together to manage and gain from ecotourism activities;
5. Furthermore, the capacity building of community through appropriate approach has led to a positive impact, in that the community's effort in conservation have increased by establishing the conservation and monitoring unit in the organization structure of LPT. The Monitoring Unit has succeeded in capturing and imposing social sanctions on community members who use dangerous methods in their fishing activities;
6. Tangkahan is the only tourism area in North Sumatra that has been equipped with a guidebook for interpreters and a rescue guidebook for emergency situations. A participatory process in planning and implementation of product development was beneficial in improving the sense of belonging, pride, and awareness in nature conservation and giving additional knowledge to the community in understanding the concepts of ecotourism business;
7. The program funded by CEPF has been successful in influencing the National Park management to provide not only moral but also financial support. In fiscal year 2003, the National Park contributed through the development of information boards, the provision of facilities such as search and rescue posts and communication devices, to the amount of around 100 million Rupiah. Meanwhile, the district Tourism Office and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism committed to putting efforts into continuing the community capacity building program, which we realize needs to be continued to optimize the quality of products and services;

8. Mapping data analysis showed that ecotourism activities in Tangkahan have been able to stop illegal logging in the ecotourism site and has protected an estimated 10,000 hectares of the National Park from illegal logging activities.

The approach of community based ecotourism assessment and planning in this project can be replicated in facilitating community-based tourism in protected areas in other sites. This project succeeded in achieving its goals within a very short time period, but it needs to be remembered that this project was not started from scratch. The CEPF project started when the local people in Tangkahan were already prepared and committed to running ecotourism to gain alternative income. People in Tangkahan were already prepared a year before the product development project came.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

As mentioned in the process document, the project was designed based on the community need assessment using a participatory approach.

The community capacity building needs a proper methodology and must be based on the community resources that are the target. Training modules are developed based upon the needs of the community. Field practice, combined with ecotourism theory, is the main focus in training activity. In the beginning, ecotourism knowledge and perspective are carried out for every target. In the next step, more specific training is assigned for each target. The community is required to be actively involved in the training and this creates interaction.

Another important aspect in project design is the combination between implementation and the policy development program at the village and district level. This enhances the rapid success of the program. Involvement of other stakeholders at the village and district levels from the beginning of the project was part of the effort to get a commitment from regional and central government recognition. Government recognition plays an important role in supporting the community's commitment to participating in the program.

Increasing the capacity of the community was also designed to produce tangible output, as a real product that can be seen by the community. Outputs such as the interpretative trails, the guide book, brochures and equipment that support ecotourism business have fostered the community's trust in the government and Indecon (as a facilitator institution).

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

To achieve the project's purposes, the strategic implementation is to set up the project as a part of the community project. The strategy was to provide all project information to the community from the start of the project. This strategy was implemented in order to get the community's commitment based on the time limit and to know all roles and responsibilities.

Follow-up of the training programs is one of the development aspect that we need to be concerned about. Indecon used training as a method to trigger the development of community skills and to conduct real activities in the field. By the end of the training, the target group was given assignments to implement their program. In the next training, we evaluated the results. During the implementation phase, the target group was assisted by the program facilitators who guided the group's agreement to the program.

In designing the implementation schedule, the community calendar has to be considered, such as their routine schedule for rubber tapping. Another factor is weather; the rainy season is one factor that can delay all the duties assigned to the target group.

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key to the success of this product development is the community preparation and a master plan that was developed before the project started. If the program is to be adopted or replicated elsewhere, additional time – approximately six months – will be needed to prepare the community. In other words, a full year is needed to facilitate the community in ecotourism development to become strong enough to run the business.

Indecon recommends a short-term continuation program (up to three months) to develop an investment system together with the community. The reasons behind this recommendation are:

1. Tangkahan is the only nature tourism site in North Sumatra which has a landscape similar to Bahorok's and is managed by the community;
2. Tangkahan has the opportunity to attract Bahorok's former tourism market, which is seeking new places to conduct tours;
3. To anticipate the increasing numbers of tourists, which will increase investment in Tangkahan;
4. The opportunities for investment in Tangkahan will raise the price of the land very quickly. This will influence community members to sell their land. This selling action has a great risk, because the village master plan will not be implemented properly, and the mission to protect the area will become degraded.

To anticipate the increasing rate of investment in Tangkahan, we need to develop a local investment system that gives opportunities to the community to earn long-term benefits from their land. This includes an investment mechanism that provides a win-win situation for both the community and the investors. It is one of the effective ways to protect the quality of the biodiversity in Tangkahan and to achieve the main goal of ecotourism development in Tangkahan.

If CEPF agrees with this idea, we would like to conduct it very soon.