

CEPF Small Grant Final Project Completion Report

Complete the following report worksheet to provide CEPF with an overall summary of the results of your project. Within the narrative section, responses should be concise, but include sufficient detail to present a clear understanding of the development and progression of this project.

Date of Report (MM/DD/YY)
06/30/2003

Organization Information
Organization Name
Alam Sumatera Foundation
Project Name
Organizing Local Communities to Advocate for Cancellation of Forest Concession in Buffer zone of Bukit Tigapuluh National Park.
Project Dates (as stated in the contract agreement)
Effective from 1 November 2002 to 30 April 2003
Partners
Conservation Community Indonesia WARSI and Sialang Foundation. In addition as part of advocating cancellation of tentative permits for timber plantations, a network of NGOs has been engaged, comprising WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia), Jakalahari (Jaringan Kerja Penyelamat Hutan Riau), ATTR (Aliansi Tata Ruang untuk Riau), WWF Tiger and FKLI (Forum Komunikasi LSM Indragiri Hulu), which was established by Alam Sumatera and Sialang.

Project Description – Provide a brief description of the project your team implemented.

The establishment of district autonomy and the economic crisis in Indonesia has increased the rate of forest destruction because district governments are able to issue logging licenses to companies with reference to the urgent need to raise local revenues. In Indragiri Hulu district there are at least six companies that have received logging tentative licenses for logging or clear felling for timber plantation development, two of these being issued to the companies PT Sungai Pahang and PT Bukit Batabuh Sei Indah for a total area of 22.450 ha, most of which is located within the lands and forests of the Talang Mamak tribe. For this tribe their lands and forests constitute a very important economic resource for the coming generations.

Furthermore, the areas proposed for plantation development are part of the remaining lowland rain forest that connect Bukit Tigapuluh National Park with the protected forests of Bukit Sosa and Bukit Betabuh. Within this area there are protected species such as Sumatran Tiger, Tapir, and Elephant. The forests are part of the Teso-Nilo Bukit Tigapuluh landscape which has been agreed upon by NGOs in Riau and Jambi. The process of obtaining permits has almost been completed by the two companies – they already have received tentative or preliminary permit - but there still is an opportunity to intervene because the process has not involved the local communities and so has contravened decree No 8 2003 by the Head of Environmental Impact Control Agency on the involvement of communities and ensuring open information in the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Against this background the tentative permits of two above-mentioned companies should be cancelled because apart from involving the destruction of a remaining area of lowland rain forest the also affect the subsistence security of the Talang Mamak tribe. To achieve this, an important output from the project will be the organizing of Talang Mamak and Malays to reject the presence of the two companies and demand cancellation of the tentative permit issued to them by the Indragiri Hulu district government. To achieve these ends require the following steps:

- ◆ Providing the community with an understanding of industrial timber plantations (based on *Acasia mangium*) and their impacts by means of arranging study visits for representatives of the Talang Mamak and Malay communities to the Sakai tribal areas where large scale industrial timber are already well established.
- ◆ Facilitating participation of Talang Mamak and Malay representatives in lobbying, hearings, and dialogue with the government and representative assembly of the district and province, as well as meetings with influential figures at these levels.
- ◆ Carrying out advocacy involving NGO networks and mass media. NGO networks at district and provincial levels are involved in hearings and make use of mass media to bring attention to the activities undertaken by community and NGO representatives on a continual basis. Expeditions to the conflicts areas by regional and national media are arranged to put pressure on decision makers representatives to cancel the tentative permits issued to the companies.

These activities have been carried out beginning December 2002 and ending April 2003.

Narrative Questions

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

The aims of this project are:

- a. Organizing and empowering Talang Mamak and Malay communities to resist the presence of large-scale timber plantations in their territories
- b. Cancellation of tentative permit for clear felling and establishment of timber plantations by the companies PT Sungai Pahang and PT Bukit Batabuh Indah on an area totaling 22,450 ha.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

The project aims have not been changed.

3. How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

The achievement of project aims was initiated by arranging a study visit by the Talang Mamak and neighbouring Malay community representatives to an area with established timber plantations, namely Mandiangin and Belutu villages in Minas subdistrict of Siak district in Riau, where they were able to witness directly the effects of such plantations on the lives and livelihoods of the Sakai and Malay communities. The visitors had an opportunity to discuss and exchange experience with the Sakai in particular and, as an expression of solidarity among tribal minorities in Riau, jointly declared rejection of presence of large-scale timber plantations in their traditional territories. The project team then facilitated discussions and awareness raising among groups in Durian Cacar village about impacts of timber plantations. As part of this effort video recording of the visit by their representatives to the Sakai areas was shown. On the basis of their experiences, Talang Mamak representatives rejected the Environmental Impact Assessment of PT Sungai Pahang at the second environmental impact assessment meeting at the Indragiri Hulu district chief's office on 16 January 2003. (At the same time, however, the neighboring Malay community of Anak Talang decided to cooperate through a cooperative (Cipta Bina Karya) with the paper pulp company PT RAPP to produce wood chips on a 2000 area and with another paper pulp company PT WKS on some 1500 ha.)

Talang Mamak and Malay community representatives in cooperation with Alam Sumatra Foundation and supported by the local Sialang Foundation went onto lobby government officials, environmental impact assessment team members, and influential persons at district and provincial levels. Inputs from some of these persons were helpful to the effort to cancel the timber plantation permits on Talang Mamak lands. Community resistance at the environmental impact assessment hearing was given news media coverage at both provincial and national levels. News coverage was made continual and diverse by having an NGO network participate in hearings of the provincial representative assembly and media events such that wide public attention was achieved. This greatly assisted efforts by Alam Sumatra and Sialang to lobby directly members of the district level assembly for support of permit cancellation. As an additional means of advocacy support in line with district level autonomy, Alam Sumatra and Sialang also formed Indragiri Hulu NGO Communication Forum.

The last part of the present advocacy effort has consisted of facilitating national media (Kompas, Jakarta Post, Metro TV) and provincial media (Riau Pos, Media Riau, the tabloids Intermezo and Horas Plus) to visit the Talang Mamak to document their predicament and meet the district government of Indragiri Hulu to elicit a commitments, especially from the district chief, regarding the two tentative plantation permits affecting Durian Cacar village forests. The media visits were facilitated with the cooperation of the NGOs Jikalahari and FKL. As a result the Indragiri Hulu district chief on 28-29 April 2003 before the assembled mass media and NGOs declared a commitment to cancel the permits in question, and later actually did so, while also suspending the operations of the oil palm plantation company PT Meganusa Inti Sawit reportedly encroaching on Talang Mamak lands. He also declared that the permits of other companies with land development plans affecting the Bukti Tigapuluh National Park buffer zone, such as PT Sumber Maswana Lestari and PT Artelindo Wiratama, would be reviewed. A article reporting the district chief's statements is included in the collection of newspaper clippings.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

In carrying out advocacy our team was somewhat overwhelmed when initially a number of articles appearing in the media as a result of rather strong statements made by various members of the NGO networks generated conflicting reactions at the local level. Some of the members of the network were inadequately familiar with traditional relations between the Talang Mamak and the Indragiri kings, of whom the district chief is a descendant and as such was given a special honorary title by the former. As a result the sensibilities of both the district chief and the Talang Mamak chief were offended such that Alam Sumatra as the lead NGO lost their confidence. Good relations with the Talang Mamak chief were restored only by a personal approach by the Alam Sumatra coordinator, who had earlier been given “adopted son” status by the same chief, to explain how the mistakes vis-a-vis the media had come about and to assure that future media releases would be directly controlled by Alam Sumatra to avoid similar embarrassment. Moreover, a new coordinated strategy was designed whereby the chief and his deputies would be in the forefront of lobbying the district government while Alam Sumatra would provide supportive pressure through the media with a more closely controlled involvement of NGO network members.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

- a. The key aspects of advocacy for community rights are a mandate from the community in question and strengthening its position by providing knowledge of how to claim rights and policies in their favors. Communities need to become key actors in the struggle to control forest clearance and plantation development in their territories because they are the ones whose interests are most directly affected.
- b. Advocacy and formation of public opinion can be made more effective by involving a network of committed NGOs whose activities and public statements are jointly planned and coordinated. Involving an NGO network may also reduce risk posed by potential coercive action by companies involved and their allies in public agencies.
- c. Advocacy needs the support of mass media both at the national and regional levels in order to increased pressure on decision makers to take community interests into account in decisions that affects their vital interests.
- d. Negative impacts of advocacy involving NGO networks can result from lack of control of statements made to mass media by members of the networks leading to loss of credibility or even unintended conflict between stakeholders.

Mass media tend to treat news to serve their own interest and sometimes even distort what information they are being given such that advocacy aims are negatively affected. Mass media also need to be monitored and continually provided with updated material such that their coverage may be more or less as hoped for.

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

The next stage is to promote the right of the Talang Mamak to participate fully in managing their forests and lands for a diversity of functions that yield benefits to all members of the community. The activities of this stage would begin with making a more detailed study of the problems involved, carrying out participative mapping, incorporating the information thus obtained in accurate GIS maps, and involving all groups in the village in the finalization of these maps so as to make them consensus based. Such highly illustrative maps can be understood by the Talang Mamak despite their illiteracy and are also well suited as instruments of communication for lobbying and advocacy, in which mass media will again be made use of. Talang Mamak representatives will be at the forefront of lobbying, using the information outputs made by the project. Again a number of NGOs will be invited to visit the Talang Mamak areas so as to consolidate network support for lobbying. Following this a workshop will be held to get the attention of various parties as well as inputs for the planning of multi-use land and forest management. Based on a new consensus, supporting documentation, support from NGOs and media and acknowledgement by the bureaucracy, Talang Mamak representatives will be far better placed to plan and negotiate development for their areas with the involvement of government agencies or private companies as appropriate. It is hoped that these activities will be supported by funds from DFID Multistakeholder Forestry Program.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

Other aspects are:

- ◆ Alam Sumatra has succeeded in forming an NGO network at the district level that will be able to play a continual role in pressing for a better management of the remaining forests in Indragiri Hulu.
- ◆ The Talang Mamak and some of their Malay neighbours have become committed to a struggle for the right to manage their lands and forests, and have gained a sense of solidarity between them and other forest-related minorities such as the Sakai which can be drawn upon in future campaigns. Local community representatives have also established communication with NGO networks at both district and provincial levels that may be drawn upon for support as needed in the future.
- ◆ In addition to the problems related to plantation permits inappropriately issued to private companies, the culture and way of life of the Talang Mamak have also been given exposure in the mass media, producing a better understanding for their specific problems.
- ◆ Alam Sumatra has introduced advocacy for saving the forests in Indragiri Hulu to the Network for Saving Riau Forests as well as its allies, and has established the NGO Communication Forum for Indragiri Hulu in part also for the purpose of working for the cancellation of the tentative plantation permits for the companies PT Artelindo Wiratama, PT Citra Sumber Sejahtera, and PT Sumber Maswana Lestari in the wider buffer zone of Bukit Tigapuluh National Park.
- ◆ The former (retired) Talang Mamak high chief, Laman, has won the Kalpataru Award from the Minister of Environment because of his struggle to save the forest in Durian Cacar. Laman's profile was promoted by BAPEDALDA, the District Environmental Management Agency of Indragiri Hulu, on the basis of information inputs provided by Alam Sumatra.