



Merang REDD Pilot Project (MRPP) Community Development

Participation in the Rehabilitation, Conservation, and Protection of the
Merang Peat Swamp Forest

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In South Sumatra, the Merang peat swamp forest area is a promising location for a REDD pilot project due to the still relatively intact forest cover and the large below ground carbon storage in the peat soil. In close proximity to the protected areas of Sembilang National Park in South Sumatra province, and Berbak National Park in Jambi province, the Merang project area comprises of one of the last contiguous peat forest areas of Southern Sumatra. Yet it is jeopardized by illegal logging and expanding plantations and without conservation measures, this last peat swamp forest of Southern Sumatra could soon be lost.

Cover photo: Living standard of local people surrounding Merang Kepayang peat swamp forest area.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
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- German Technical Cooperation -

Merang REDD Pilot Project (MRPP)
Jl. Jend. Sudirman No. 2837 KM 3,5
P.O. Box 1229 - Palembang 30129
South Sumatra
Indonesia

T: +62 - (0)711 - 353 185
F: +62 - (0)711 - 353 176
E: project@merang-redd.org
I: www.merang-redd.org

District Office
Kantor Dinas Kehutanan Kabupaten Musi Banyuasin
Jl. Kol. Wahid Udin No. 254
Sekayu 30711
South Sumatra
Indonesia

T: +62 - (0)714 - 321 202
F: +62 - (0)714 - 321 202

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Djoko Setijono - Community Development Specialist

Design : Donald Bason

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MRPP is a grant technical cooperation project between the Government of Indonesia and the German Government. Implemented by GiZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) GmbH Indonesia, the project is funded by The German Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). MRPP is part of the German federal government's **Climate Initiative** and for the duration of the project (2008 - 2011) it is financed as a grant scheme for 2.071.036 Euro.



There are no villages or communities inside the project area but the 2 villages of Muara Merang and Kepayang are the most adjacent to the Merang Kepayang peat swamp forest. With their 6 sub-villages, the project can bring benefits to around 5000 inhabitants.

Protecting the Last Remaining Peat Swamp Forest in South Sumatra

The Merang REDD Pilot Project (MRPP) was established to protect and restore the Merang Kepahyang peat swamp forest in South Sumatra. The project contributes to national biodiversity conservation targets and has a strong community development component. It is part of the REDD¹ readiness activities of the Indonesian government.

Overall Objective

Contribute to sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity protection and rehabilitation of degraded peat lands in South Sumatra.

Project Purpose

Protection and part rehabilitation of the last natural peat swamp forest in South Sumatra and its biodiversity through a system of Forest Management Units (FMUs) or *Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan Produksi* (KPHP), and preparation for REDD implementation.

Project Activities

1. Identify measure and monitor peat lands, forest carbon, biodiversity, and areas for rehabilitation.
2. Develop a management structure for the Merang peat lands area and prepare rehabilitation implementation.
3. Integrate fire management with measures to reduce illegal activities through community participation and sustainable natural resource management.
4. Develop and promote carbon trading and management concepts as part of REDD preparation.



To conserve, protect and rehabilitate the Merang Kepahyang peat swamp forest, MRPP has developed a strategy of promoting sustainable natural resource management that includes active community participation, particularly in forest protection, conservation and rehabilitation.

¹Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is a broad set of actions designed to use market/financial incentives in order to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, and that may provide other benefits such as biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation. REDD credits offer the opportunity to utilize funding from developed countries to reduce deforestation in developing countries.



Working Together

The Community Development Component of MRPP

Community development is a long-term process, promoting changes in perception, behaviour and attitudes of rural communities in and around forest areas. Community Development also helps provide the means for these rural communities to actively participate in sustainable forest management, rehabilitation, conservation, protection and sustainable utilization of forest resources.

MRPP community development activities

1. Improving awareness and promoting community participation in the project.
2. Establishing effective fire prevention and developing methods to mitigate illegal activities through the involvement of the local population.
3. Developing alternative income generating activities to reduce and prevent illegal activities (such as illegal logging and fires).

Achievement indicators

1. Village community groups established and strengthened.
2. Awareness and active participation of local communities in the rehabilitation, conservation and protection of the Merang Kepayang peat swamp forest.
3. Alternative income generating activities implemented that help strengthen village economies and reduce dependence on illegal logging and other prohibited practices.

Towards a Common Goal

The Community Development Process

With the active participation of local communities, MRPP has facilitated the establishment of “Community Forest Rangers” (CFRs) or “*Kelompok Masyarakat Peduli Hutan*” (KMPHs) at villages surrounding the project area. Training in management and group dynamics, forest fire prevention, developing nurseries, blocking canals, and preparing forest inventories has been conducted to help raise the capacity of these groups. The project also supports the establishment of selected alternative income generating activities and provides local subsidies to facilitate the establishment of sustainable micro financial services in village communities. Institutional strengthening is being carried out in collaboration with local NGOs.

MRPP Community Development Component Road Map

1. Project socialization.
2. Baseline data collection:
 - Survey/study on lessons learnt from previous interventions to Merang Kepahyang Forest.
 - Socio-economic surveys at villages surrounding Merang Kepahyang Forest.
 - Survey of illegal activities in Merang Kepahyang Peat Swamp Forest and surrounding areas.
3. Village workshop on Gender Awareness in the Merang Kepahyang villages.
4. Target group identification and establishment of Community Forest Rangers (CFRs).
Community Development activity selection.
5. Conduct assessment of existing technology related to selected Income Generating Activities (IGAs).
6. Select IGA Module intervention proposal.
7. IGA Module implementation:
 - Community Forest Rangers group contributions.
 - Procurements.
 - Community Development Training:
 - i. Selected IGA activity management.
 - ii. Basic group management & group dynamics.
8. Monthly/Regular facilitation and monitoring:
 - Facilitation of technical aspects by IGA specialist and related technical government agencies.
 - Facilitation of farmer group institution strengthening by NGOs.
9. Reporting.



Village nurseries in Muara Merang and Kepahyang are being developed with both providing 100,000 seedlings for the swamp forest rehabilitation. Training and technical assistance has already been offered to these villages and the seedlings bought by the project for Rp. 1,000 per seedling, as part of the IGA.



Identifying Existing Resources

Baseline data collection

Participatory village workshops in the Merang and Kepayang villages were part of a rapid rural appraisal that was used to identify the existing available village natural resources, map the existing land use management of the village, and formulate priority actions to enhance the village economies.

| Description | Muara Merang village | Kepayang village |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Area | 169,12 km ² | 132,88 km ² |
| Percentage compared to Bayung Lencir Sub-District | 2,98% | 2,34 % |
| Village status | Self support village | Self support village |
| Potential paddy field areas | 1061 ha | 600 ha |
| Potential dry land agricultural areas | 15851 ha | 12688 ha |
| Total village area | 16912 ha | 13288 ha |
| Population | 3036 people | 1207 people |
| Population density | 17,9 people/km ² | 9,0 people/km ² |
| Total men population | 1724 people | 609 people |
| Total women population | 1312 people | 598 people |
| Sex ratio | 1:31 | 1:02 |
| Health care facilities | 1 polyclinic | 0 |

Source: Bayung Lencir Dalam Angka 2006

Socio economic surveys

Findings from a MRPP survey (March 2009) show that village educational levels are very low. In Muara Merang village only 66% of the population have an elementary school education, 2.4% a secondary school education, 0.5% a high school education, and 0.17% have a vocational or bachelor degree. In Kepayang village 72% of the population have an elementary school education, 0.8% have a secondary school education, 0.2% a high school education, and no one has a bachelor or higher degree.

Health facilities and paramedics are very limited. River water is used for most daily needs leaving villagers vulnerable to potential water borne diseases.

Community's household incomes are very low. Major sources of earnings are from small rubber/oil palm plantations in the village, and from temporary daily work at oil palm plantation companies where workers work in the nursery, or on land clearing, weeding, tending plants and fruit harvesting. Daily labour wages vary from between Rp 32.000,- to Rp 40.000,- per day with 20-22 working days a month.

Though household incomes are low, local villagers are generally not attracted to become what they call "*pembalok*" or "*anak kapak*", i.e. illegal logging labourers under the illegal logging mafia system. A minority of villagers are involved in illegal logging although others may be tempted to join if they have specific financial needs (such as paying for a wedding or health expenses).

The Merang Kepayang villages are surrounded by oil palm plantations, timber estate concessions and state forest-lands so there is no room for expansion. Needing land for village development and for better community access to the forest, 7,250 ha of "Village Forest" or "*Hutan Desa*" concession were granted to the Pancoran sub-village of Muara Merang in January 2010 (Minister of Forestry Decree); and another 6,000 ha of a similar village forest concession are under consideration for Kepayang village.



There is a strong potential for conflict over land tenure issues. Isolated and surrounded by oil palm plantations, timber estate concessions and state forest lands, there is little room for villages to grow or develop.

Community Forest Rangers (CFR)

Through the establishment of Community Forest Rangers (CFR), community participation can play a large part in the fields of forest protection (from illegal logging and fire threats), conservation and rehabilitation.

CFRs established as of November 2010

| No | Name | Group members | | | Chair person | Remarks |
|-------|--|---------------|--------|-------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | | |
| 1 | KMPH "Tembesu" – Dsn Bina Desa | 15 | - | 15 | Guntur | Core CFR/ Fire Crew |
| 2 | KMPH "Petaling" – Ds Kepayang | 15 | - | 15 | Robert Nainggolan | Core CFR/ Fire Crew |
| 3 | KMPH "Medang Kuning" – Dsn Bina Desa | 17 | - | 17 | Nanang | Extension |
| 4 | KMPH "Pulai Gading" – Ds Kepayang | 12 | 1 | 13 | Kosilan | Extension |
| 5 | KMPH "Durian Payo" – Ds Kepayang | 11 | - | 11 | Syahroni | Extension |
| 6 | KMPH "Merante Jaya" – Dsn Bakung | 8 | 6 | 14 | Hasis Handopo | Extension |
| 7 | KMPH "Jelutung Indah" – Dsn Bakung | 16 | 5 | 21 | Hasan Basri | Extension |
| 8 | KMPH "Merawan" – Dsn Buring | 19 | 1 | 20 | Tatang | Extension |
| 9 | KMPH "Wanita mandiri" – Dsn Hijrah Mukti, Mangsang | - | 15 | 15 | Sidiriah Lauli | Extension, Women group |
| 10 | KMPH "Bunga Anggrek" – Dsn Bakung, Muara Merang | - | 20 | 20 | Fitriah | Extension, Women group |
| 11 | KMPH "Jati Merah" – Dsn Bina Desa | -1 | 20 | 21 | Pariyanto | Extension, Women group |
| 12 | KMPH "Mawar Putih" – Ds Kepayang | -- | 20 | 20 | Aminah | Extension, Women group |
| 13 | KMPH "Urip Mulyo" – KTGR, Dsn II Mangsang | 21 | 7 | 28 | Susyanto | Extension |
| 14 | KMPH "Sumber Urip" – Dsn Hijrah Mukti | 24 | - | 24 | Sali | Extension |
| TOTAL | | 159 | 95 | 254 | | |

Before establishing community forest rangers groups, the project conducted one-day **gender awareness training** for formal and informal leaders at the village level. The training was to raise awareness on the equal role of men and women in activities and daily life so that the community groups to be established would be gender sensitive. The training was conducted in the two priority villages of Muara Merang and Kepayang in February 2009, in collaboration with a local NGO and Gender Specialist Ms Yandriani.



Substantial trainings have been carried out to develop the capacity of the CFRs and individuals within them. These include general forestry training as well as agricultural techniques for alternative income generating activities. The CFRs have been provided with regular monthly facilitations in collaboration with local NGOs (particularly Yayasan Kemasda).

Basic Management and Group Dynamic training for each established CFR was conducted to enhance knowledge and basic skills of how to manage a community organization properly. Training materials consisted of:

- a. Motivation, objective, importance and benefit of group formation.
- b. Orientation and basics for group establishment.
- c. Organization structure, roles and tasks.
- d. Basic organization rules (AD/ART).
- e. Funding, organization and financial administration, and
- f. Networking and roles of other stakeholders and/or groups in the village community.

Basic Fire Management training (two sequential trainings) for the two priority CFRs of Merang and Kepayang was conducted under the Forest and Carbon Monitoring component of the project by NGO Satu Hijau and Daops I Manggala Agni Fire Brigade (Muba District) in June 2009. By implementing a community-based fire management approach to fire management, local communities are actively engaged in the development and in some instances implementation of fire management strategies designed to prevent, control or utilize fires in ways that will improve their livelihood, health and security. Fire patrols are conducted within the project area. A typical fire patrol is conducted by a community forest ranger with instruction from the forest manager or MRPP technical advisor.



CFR tasks include fire patrols and initial response to fire incidents that occur during the dry season. Additionally, monitoring and reporting illegal log rafts passing CFR posts are being conducted. CFR groups are also involved and support many MRPP field activities such as canal blocking, rehabilitation, and carbon measurements.

Household Economy Management training helped prepare CFR members to manage their household economy and enter into the micro finance/savings and loan schemes introduced by the project.



Training on Agribusiness was conducted in collaboration with BPTP and the local agricultural extension office of Bayung Lencir, MUBA district.

Alternative Income Generating Activities (IGAs) provided to CFR members are intended as field examples and to reduce illegal logging activities. The process of the IGA selection and its implementation is:

- CFR participatory meeting to select agreed income generating activity to be conducted.
- Competent agriculture specialists conduct assessment on existing technology of selected IGAs to identify interventions needed.
- IGA Module planning/proposal.
- IGA Module implementation.
- Regular monthly facilitation and monitoring.

All technical IGA implementations are facilitated in collaboration with the Agricultural Technology Assessment Agency (*Balai Pengkajian Teknologi Pertanian*) of South Sumatra and the Bayung Lencir Agricultural Extension Agency (*Badan Penyuluh Pertanian, Perikanan dan Kehutanan*). This strategic collaboration is to ensure sustainability of activities after the project finishes.



The project is currently supporting poultry as an alternative income generating activity for all members of two CFRs. New income generating activities and products will be introduced to contribute to continued poverty alleviation.

Local subsidies. The project has disbursed revolving fund subsidies as capital strengthening for savings and loan activities. In March 2010, subsidies were disbursed to four CFRs of Rp 30 million each and later, in September and November, the project disbursed further subsidies to another ten CFRs. Prior to disbursement, MRPP and each of CFRs signed a MoU stipulating rights and obligations of the parties. These were:

1. The subsidy will be used for seed capital of the savings and loan activities of the CFR, and will be for IGA/productive use only.
2. Loans granted are not allowed for illegal loggings and other illegal activities.
3. 10% of the approved loan should be placed as additional saving in the group/activity.
4. Loan interest is 2% fixed/month, with 1-month grace period.

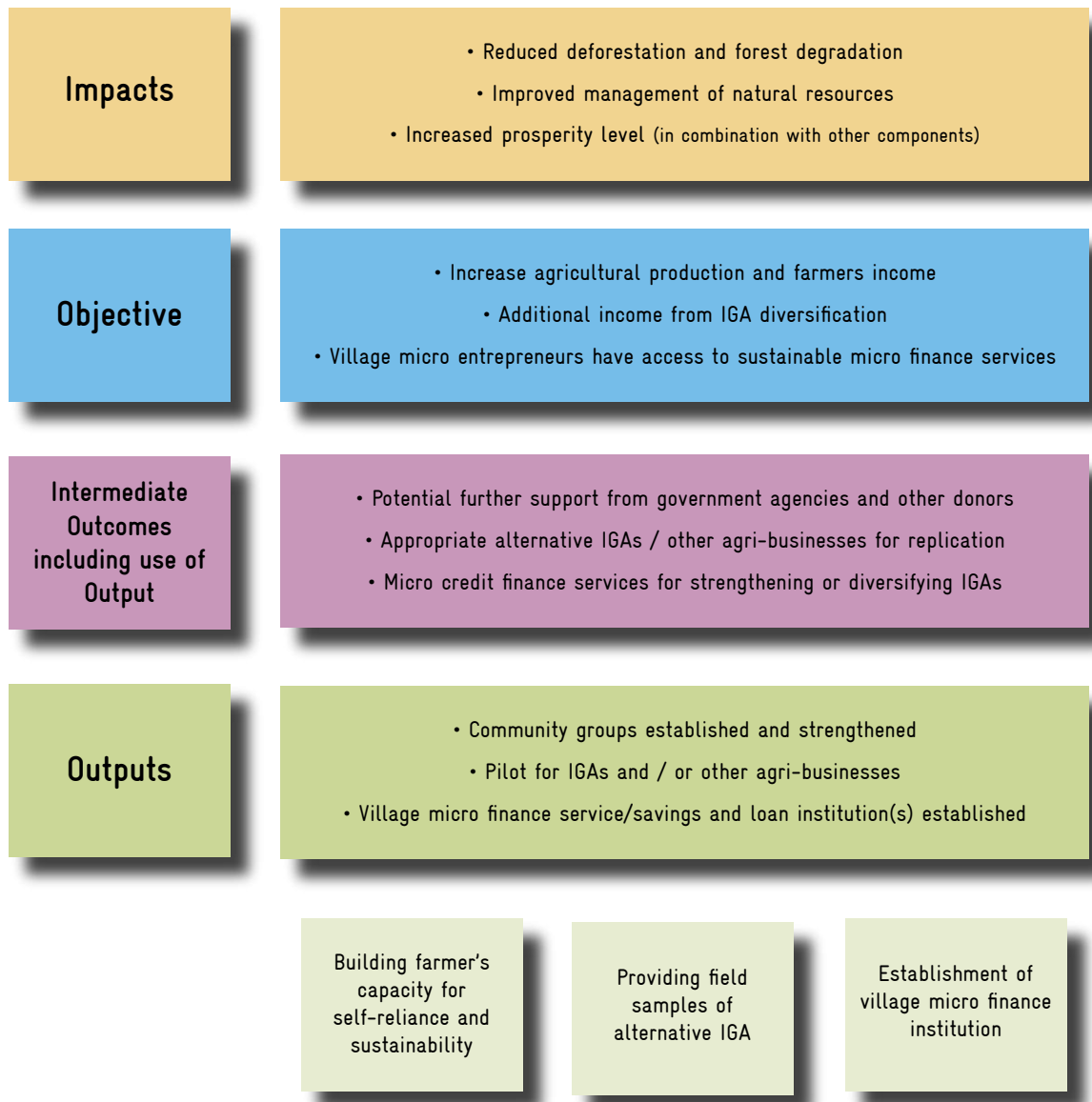
List of Local Subsidies disbursed to CFRs for IGA support in 2009

| No | Recipient CFR | Village/Sub-village | Activity | IDR | Date of disbursement | Remarks |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|
| 1 | Merante Jaya | Bakung | Micro Credit | 30.000.000 | March | |
| 2 | Jelutung Indah | Bakung | Micro Credit | 30.000.000 | March | |
| 3 | Pulai Gading | Kepayang | Micro Credit | 30.000.000 | March | |
| 4 | Durian Payo | Kepayang | Micro Credit | 30.000.000 | March | |
| Total: | | | | 120.000.000 | | |

List of Local Subsidies disbursed to CFRs for IGA support in 2010

| No | Recipient CFR | Village/Sub-village | Activity | IDR | Date of disbursement | Remarks |
|---------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 5 | Merawan | Buring | Micro Credit | 28.700.000 | September | |
| 6 | Medang Kuning | Bina Desa | Gardening tools, Horticulture, Cattle | 28.380.000 | September | |
| 7 | Urip Mulyo | KTGR, Ds II Mangsang | Cattle, Micro Credit, Chicken | 16.497.000 | September | |
| 8 | Sumber Urip | Hijrah Mukti | Cattle, Micro Credit, Chicken | 16.000.000 | September | |
| 9 | Wanita mandiri | Hijrah Mukti, Mangsang | Micro Credit | 10.000.000 | November | Womens' group |
| 10 | Bunga Anggrek | Bakung, Muara Merang | Micro Credit | 26.000.000 | November | Womens' group |
| 11 | Jati Merah | Bina Desa | Micro Credit | 26.000.000 | November | Womens' group |
| 12 | Mawar Putih | Kepayang | Micro Credit | 26.000.000 | November | Womens' group |
| 13 | Petaling | Kepayang | Micro Credit | 15.000.000 | November | |
| 14 | Tembesu | Bina Desa | Fish pond, Goat | 20.000.000 | November | |
| Total: | | | | 212.577.000 | | |

Results Chain of the Merang REDD Pilot Project Community Development component.



Looking ahead, in close cooperation with local authorities, communities, and the private sector, the project will focus on strategies and institution building for peat forest management along with conservation. The institutions are now in place, but funds for REDD activities are lacking. Such funds are urgently needed to implement activities which will address the biggest threat to the forests, namely illegal logging and to bridge the transition from readiness to a true REDD project. Measures to restore degraded peat forest areas will continue to need finance.



Abbreviations:

| | |
|--------|--|
| AD/ART | <i>Anggaran Dasar/Anggaran Rumah Tangga</i> (Basic Rules/Household Rules) |
| BMU | German Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety |
| BUK | <i>Bina Usaha Kehutanan</i> (Directorate General for Forest Utilization Management) |
| CFR | Community Forest Ranger |
| FMU | Forest Management Unit |
| GiZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH |
| ha | hectare |
| km | kilometre |
| KMPH | <i>Kelompok Masyarakat Peduli Hutan</i> (Community Forest Ranger) |
| KPHP | <i>Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan Produksi</i> (Forest Management Unit) |
| MRPP | Merang REDD Pilot Project |
| MUBA | Musi Banyuasin District |
| NGO | Non-Government Organisation |
| REDD | Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation |
| SSFFMP | South Sumatra Forest Fire Management Project |



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