

# **Just in time: Chances for a Holistic Approach for Land and Water Governance in Cisadane sub-Watershed Area, Bogor District**

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## **Introduction**

In the effort to achieve RMI's vision of the manifestation of people's—women and men—sovereignty over land and natural resources, RMI (The Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment) has developed two approaches, that may not seem to directly connect with each other. One might think that using fun-education activities to involve the younger members of the community has nothing to do with community organising activities that are targeted for older generations.

However, for local and indigenous community (i.e. Kasepuhan) who live inside, or neighbouring with, areas that are declared as forest by the State, or those who live around concession areas, both approaches are essential in their struggle to obtain recognition of their rights over land and natural resources. Implementing these two approaches in parallel manner became an important learning for RMI in looking at the environmental governance processes as a large holistic picture which includes coordination of land and water governance.

Through a number of projects that combined these two approaches, it is confirmed that the river is an indicator of the land governance conduct. For instance, the quality of land governance can be seen from the coefficient regime of river water surface--this will be explained later in this paper. Therefore, irrigation activities in these areas will largely depend on the land governance programme—not only because it will directly affect the irrigation distribution, but it also affects the quantity and quality of the irrigation water that the peasants obtain from the river.

This paper will describe the benefit of using holistic approach in watershed management given the evidence that water and land are naturally inseparable component that support human's lives, especially in food provisioning, based on RMI's work in sub-watershed area of Cisadane which located in the Bogor District. In this project site, the river is a main source to irrigate paddy fields besides the rainfall (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2007)

## Background

RMI is a local non-profit organisation that was established in 1992. It was the year when environmental awareness began to become stronger as the world was urged to ratify the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Therefore, opportunities to speak out about environmental degradation, especially in forest areas, took its place. However, due to the then government regime that opted forest exploitation as a main strategy to boost Indonesia's economy, activists faced a significant risk if they criticized the government about the issues of forest degradation. Therefore, the discussion of forest issues as well as other ecosystem issues was channeled through environmental education activities that targeted the younger generations became the main activities of RMI until 1998.

The political situation changed in 1998 as the government regime changed from the "New Order" into the "Reformation Era". During these times, discussions on human rights, including on rights over land, found its way to the center of discussions among agrarian activists that were oppressed more than 30 years during the "New Order" government (see Hirsch, 2012). Taking part in the orchestra of the struggle over land, RMI developed community organising approach that was also based on education: critical education (see Freire, 1996). Nevertheless, the target group of this approach was not young people but adults, women and men, whose professions were peasants, or the landless farmers, who lived inside and around the area of national parks.

These were the paths undergone by RMI that has led to projects implemented with combination of these two approaches in upstream area of Cisadane Watershed. It took form as community organising activities on rural youth using environmental education approach on river's health and biodiversity conservation in the first instance. These approaches have provided opportunities for RMI to observe the link between land and water governance. As an organisation that focuses especially on land rights issues, water, or river in this case, the findings from these observations are used to convey the message to policy makers about the needs for better land governance; these findings are also communicated to a wider audience besides land-rights advocates.

## Upstream Area of Cisadane Watershed

For management purpose, the Cisadane watershed is divided into four different areas: sub-watershed Cianten, sub-watershed Cisadane Hulu, sub-watershed Cisadane Tengah and sub-watershed Cisadane Hilir. The first two sub-watershed areas are located in Bogor District, West Java Province whilst the latter two sub-watershed areas are located in two different districts in Banten Province. The upstream area of Cisadane consists of 27.7% of total area of the watershed (i.e. 154,654 hectares) which is inhabited by 1,048,599 individuals, or about 10% of the total population in this watershed area (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2010).

Precipitation level in this sub-watershed area is 3,395 mm per year (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2010). This precipitation level has provided source for irrigation purposes for local peasants. The coefficient regime of the watershed is 5.13, whilst the ideal coefficient regime is 1.00 (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2011). Coefficient regime is the debit rate of water during the highest water surface compared to the debit rate of water during the lowest water surface. BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung (2011) explains further that this high number of coefficient regime shows that significant amount of vegetation cover and water catchment

area in general have been converted into other function that thwart its original function to absorb water as written in the document of the district's spatial planning (Bupati Bogor, 2008).

In the sub-watershed Cisadane Hulu, forest area and agricultural landscape still can be found (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2011) (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2010) (Rani & Sulaeman, 2013). However, 70% of the total area belongs to outsiders beside the local people (e.g. concession area of resort-based land development, sand mining companies, or even individuals that do not live in the area) whilst 80% of the locals work on farming activities as farm labor or farming on tenancy basis (RMI, 2012).

This fact about land ownership status has hindered (landless) farmers, or peasants, to manage the land based on their own plan that suits the physical condition of the environment. Because most of land area does not belong to the locals, they have to work for other people as farm labours or rent parcels of land on areas that belong to sand mining company or to the resort-based land development company, among other parties.

There are also cases where the farm fields are located inside the Gede Pangrango National Park (GPNP); the farms were developed in 1943 whilst the national park was established in 1981. In these schemes, those who work on farm fields barely have any stake to decide on type of plants that they may sow, among other limitations in farm management and other decision making processes. In the latter scheme, local people do not have the courage to manage their land because they do not have legal access to it, especially to their fruit and coffee gardens.

In the tenancy scheme, peasants need to agree on regulation set by the land owners. For instance, peasants can only plant cassava on steep land that exist this area (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2011). This type of seasonal plants does not provide significant income to the peasants nor give conservation benefit to the environment but it gives advantage to the land owner: they can terminate the contract just after one harvesting season. On the contrary, if they gave permit to the land managers to plant wood, the contract would last for years. That being said, in this type of land topography, it is better to plant woods that will hold soil to better absorb water and reduce the erosion risks (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2011), as farmers have wished to be able to apply it on their farms. The wood itself will be more valuable in terms of economy than cassava plants. As for the locals that own land, they only own 300 m<sup>2</sup> in average—this will definitely not sufficient to support neither farmers' family economy nor family's food demand (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2011). In his effort to advocate for more equal land distribution for peasants for better prosperity level of peasants, De Schutter (2011, p. 258), the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food 2008-2014, puts it like this:

*It is worth noting however that the international community has recognized the contribution more equitable access to land could make to the reduction of rural poverty, particularly at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), convened in Porto Alegre in March 2006.*

Recalling RMI's approach on environmental education, in this MDM area, it is difficult to find places to plant trees, such as bamboo or teak, for water and land conservation conducted by the local school children. Lack of possession over land is impacting various sectors.

These kinds of issues are the ones that are aimed to be addressed through the micro-scale watershed management model of upstream area of Cisadane watershed (the MDM). This programme was initiated by the BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung that leads the management of this watershed.

## **Micro-scale Watershed Management Model in Upstream Area of Cisadane Watershed (the MDM)**

The MDM initiative in Cisadane Hulu was initiated by the BPDAS in 2011 based on their programme to conserve water and land that they have prepared 4 years earlier (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2011) and based on the Directorate General's of Land Rehabilitation and Social Forestry Law of Ministry of Forestry on Micro-scale Watershed Management Model P.15/V-SET/2009 (Direktorat Jenderal Rehabilitasi Lahan dan Perhutanan Sosial , 2009).

The Water and Land Conservation Programme (2007) had several objectives as follows:

1. To increase land productivity therefore increasing community's income
2. To reduce erosion rate and sedimentation rate
3. To control flood, land slide and drought
4. To perform changes in agricultural system into a farming system that correspond with the model of land and water conservation

The recommendation from the project report released in 2007 (p. 35) provides special notes on the land issues and education level. Regarding this former issue, it is highlighted that "...without giving consideration to land ownership issues in this area, therefore any investments performed into this project [of land and water conservation] that comes from the State's budget will only be enjoyed by the concession holder despite the fact that the State's budget should be allocated for people's prosperity, especially for those living under the minimum living standard". In the same vein with that, RMI sees that the four objectives of the project, especially the last one, will never be achieved without proper land use which implies to land conflict resolution. As for the last objective, changes in farming system will only happen if the farmers have control over the system and the planning on agricultural activities to be performed on their farming land, as I have elaborated in the previous chapter.

The latter issue on community's education level issue is emphasised in the report (2007) as a factor that will facilitate the community to understand better ideas, concept and capacity building activities, for instance, to perform innovation on their farming system, given the fact that they do not have considerable amount of land parcel. "The higher the education level is, the faster the community absorbs and implement innovation that is provided [by other parties] through capacity building sessions or to perform any observation that the community may perform themselves" (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2007, p. 23)

As a follow up project, in line with the law P.15/V-SET/2009 (Direktorat Jenderal Rehabilitasi Lahan dan Perhutanan Sosial , 2009), a project on micro-scale watershed management model was commenced to achieve objectives as follows:

1. To provide a media for holistic watershed development model in micro level that involve various stakeholders in participatory manner
2. To achieve a sustainable model of natural resources governance based on local condition of various factors (i.e. biophysical, social, economic, cultural)

3. To obtain data and information about watershed management that are effective with tangible impacts on biophysical, social, economic and institutional to be replicated in bigger scale

Following up the Water and Land Conservation Programme in Cisadane Hulu, the BPDAS determined 1,770 hectares of land as the MDM's project site whereas 1,000 hectares of it is located inside the Gede Pangrango National Park (GPNP). The project site covers 5 *kampung*s (hamlets) that are located in 2 different villages of two different sub-chapters inhabited by more than 1,400 individuals. Three *kampung*s are located quite remote that can only be reached by motorcycles, bicycles or foot.

The MDM project is also complimented with the MDM multistakeholders forum. Five different parties that consist of more than 17 different institutions have sat together in various meetings on voluntary basis to inform each others on the agenda that their own organisations perform in this MDM project area. These parties represent governmental agency, NGO, academia, community groups (i.e. peasants' group), village authorities, private companies as well as local police agency.

The main budget of the project is provided by the BPDAS to finance activities of the forum in form of half-day or one-day meetings. Other expenses are sometimes co-hosted between two or three organisations, which one of them is the BPDAS. Meetings are sometimes hosted by other organisations.

Since the first time the forum was established in 2011, RMI has been elected as the vice chief of the forum. The reason of this election was because RMI has been considered to be an institution that is familiar with community and the field situation. Political reason had laid behind the election of a government agency to lead the forum: to avoid more complicated procedure when it comes to coordination works with other governmental agencies including the Head of Bogor District. Later in 2014, RMI was elected to be the facilitator of the forum.

However, specific common vision of the MDM Cisadane Hulu forum has not been formulated. The forum only follows the defined vision set by the government according to the law P.15/V-SET/2009. This is an issue that needs to be resolved in order to perform the project effectively. The need to formulate the MDM's Cisadane Hulu own vision is because localised vision according to the local situation at the MDM project site will be better understood by the stakeholders. The formulation of more local-based vision of the MDM project will result in higher motivation and better understanding of the project as the stakeholders will be more familiar with the project's objectives.

The lesson learned obtained from working in a holistic approach that leads to a multistakeholders platform on this MDM project will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Challenges and Lessons from Holistic Approach on the Micro-scale Watershed Management of Cisadane Hulu**

After about 4 years of involvement in the MDM project (i.e. through its multistakeholders forum), I have learned significantly that holistic approach is a way to an effective watershed governance process and that a micro-scalar that is taken as the project's scale is one aspect that gives considerable difference in all of the phases of the project (i.e. from planning to monitoring and evaluation phases). However, the holistic approach as well as the scale of being micro, based on my experiences working in the project,

will only succeed in bringing this project forward when these conditions, which I will elaborate on the following sub-chapter, are met.

### **Enabling Conditions to Perform the MDM Cisadane Hulu Project**

Based on RMI's experience in this project, the holistic approach on the micro-scale watershed management will work better if these conditions are fulfilled: it is led by a facilitator that understands the holistic approach on watershed management, the members of the forum are familiar with each other and the stakeholders share common visions.

It is crucial that the forum is led by a facilitator that possesses knowledge on the big picture of watershed management. The facilitator should be able to incorporate various issues that will benefit the forum to achieve the objectives. Although the project departed from a programme to conserve water and land, there are issues in the community that do not directly relate to land and water issues but will give positive contribution to the main objective of the project if they are addressed.

The facilitator should be sensitive to the flexibilities of space given by the holistic approach to add in various issues into the project's focus. That being said, the MDM project only welcomes issues that based on the community's needs and especially based on their rights as citizens. In regards with this, the MDM think tank led by RMI has identified the sectors that have been overlooked by the project. Addressing these issues will enhance the community's trust and their participation in the MDM project.

The designation of RMI as the facilitator of the project 4 years after the project initiation is in time with the changes on the government regime in 2014. The current regime invites wider non-governmental organisation and community groups to be part of the governance. In regards with natural resource governance, for instance, the current government also gives considerable amount of opportunities for the community to own land for them to farm or to own legal access to farmland in various locations, including in the national park.

This pro-people regulations are provided in form of various policies such as the Joint Regulation of 4 Ministries on Conflict Resolution in Forest Area agreed by the then Ministry of Forestry No. PB.3/Menhut--II/2014, the Ministry of Public Works No. 17/PRT/M/2014, the Ministry of Home Affairs No.79/2014, and the then National Land Agency No.8/SKB/X/2014, the formation of the Service and Resolution of Environment and Forestry Cases team by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry earlier this year and the latest formation of the Directorate General on Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership on the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in mid-2015. The latest action from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry is based on a strategic target of the ministry: to make use of forest resources and forest environment in sustainable manner to improve the people's economic and prosperity. Not to mention that one map policy adopted by the current government regime has enabled community's participatory mapping activities to be incorporated into data recognised by the government.



Figure 1 A group of rural young people is conducting a participatory mapping to map farm fields managed by their parents located in an area claimed by the GPNP. The paddy field is located next to the Cisadane River as a source of irrigation water.

The changes on the governmental regime have resulted in improvement in the MDM's multistakeholders forum. Community groups that had been left out from the project are now part of the forum (e.g. the rural youth groups). Based on some policies and initiatives from the government to resolve conflicts, especially between the governmental agencies and the communities, the young people decisively conducted participatory mapping to map the farm lands managed by their parents' that are located inside the area of the GPNP claim. This activity is part of the advocacy work of their parents to obtain access to their farm land legally—in average, they have managed the agricultural field since 1943. This struggle over the access to farmland is in line with and supported by the National Middle Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2014-2019 that targets 12.7 million hectares of forest area under the management of the communities.

Using this approach to resolve land issues among peasants that live inside the MDM project area, more community groups are attracted to the MDM project. At least one peasant group and one youth group have joined the MDM forum after the struggle over access to their farm lands was commenced on April 2015. Land conflict resolution is finally acted toward, and not only written as recommendation on paper.

If the community eventually gets their access to land, this will be a valuable lesson for the MDM, and be part of the model itself. By owning control over their land, peasants can manage their agroforestry garden and paddy fields without any restrain. Obtaining legal access to their farm lands can be an option to resolve the land conflict issues between the community and the State (e.g. national park) in an MDM project toward better land and water governance.

Despite the acknowledgement of the salient role of the forum's facilitator, based on the experience in the MDM Cisadane Hulu project, the duration of time needed by the forum to give their trust to the facilitator coming from the forum members depends on the level of lack of knowledge about parties



involve in the forum. This is another lesson of working in a multistakeholders platform of holistic-based approach project.

Four years being involved in various meetings of the forum, some people started to feel bored with the stagnancy of the project: almost everyone in the forum agreed that we had not gone anywhere and had not done too much for years of working together in the project. The information flow about “who is doing what” that is circulated during various meetings, happen to be not sufficient to perform this holistic-based approach project. The regular information exchange on activities among the forum members does not strategically leads to the project objectives.

In regards with the feeling of being stagnant that is felt by the forum members, the monitoring and evaluation activities conducted in 2013 (BPDAS Citarum Ciliwung, 2013) showed similar result. The physical condition of the area that is related to water management is categorised as good. The water management indicator is consisted of water quality, water continuity as well as water quantity. However, the good physical condition of water management does not necessarily come from the good conduct of the community because, according to the report, the socio-economic and institutional aspect of the community in the MDM project area is in bad situation. Categorised as bad, the monitoring and evaluation team found that, the community’s conduct on land productivity, the community participation on the project, and the solidity of the community to improve their economic situation through a cooperative, for example, are really low.

In addition, according to the latest evaluation conducted by the think tank of the forum in 2015, it is discovered that the benefits of the project are distributed unequally (i.e. only 5 community groups receiving various supports out of 14 identified community groups (Tillah, Laporan Temuan Tim Kecil MDM Cisadane Hulu 6-8 Januari 2015, 2015) and that activities that are implemented tend to be superficial and at times do not relevant with the key needs of the community. Therefore, facilitator role to design a more strategic planning is needed—which link with the lesson learned that I will describe after this.

**Table 1 Some Gaps caused by Lack of Strategic Planning of the Project identified in 2015 (Tillah, 2015)**

<b>Parties</b>	<b>Current Participation</b>	<b>Identified Stakeholders</b>
<b>Governmental agencies</b>	12	26
<b>NGOs</b>	1	3
<b>Community Groups</b>	5	14
<b>Private entities</b>	2	9
<b>Universities</b>	2	5
<b>Schools</b>	0	5

Having said that, I realise that the 4 years of sitting together is probably a natural process that happen to replace an essential step of the project that was missing during the initiation of the project and during the forum formation: the process of getting to know each other. There was no special allocation of time or sessions for members of the forum to get to know better the people that they would work with. The introduction part between members of the group has been known in facilitation process as an essential



element of working together in an institution. Maintaining familiarity among the stakeholders to be able to work as one organisation is crucial to enable the collaboration work in achieving the project vision.

In relation to that, I continue to the last enabling condition I learned from my involvement of the project: All stakeholders should understand, and have, common vision related to the MDM project.

Sharing common vision is a key element that will guide the forum's members to work together. The shared vision will help to run the project because direction of the project is known. Common vision will increase conformity of the stakeholders despite different underlying perspectives, knowledge and motivation of the parties. On the contrary, the situation of being lack of understanding on the shared vision has hindered an effective co-creation in the project. Based on the experiences gained in the MDM project, up to date, most of the forum's members consider that this project belongs to the BPDAS and that the BPDAS will take all the responsibilities regarding the project run since the shared vision is lacking.

To address this problem, it is agreed that the common vision should be advanced and be reminded in various meetings beside the urgent need that require a follow up action: to formulise the specific vision of the MDM Cisadane Hulu project. Specific common vision of the MDM Cisadane Hulu forum has not been formulised. The forum only follows the defined vision set by the government according to the law P.15/V-SET/2009. This is an issue that needs to be resolved to be able to work together because specific vision according to the local context will be better understood by the stakeholders. The formulation of more local-based vision of the MDM project will result in higher motivation and better understanding of the project as the stakeholders will be more familiar with the project's objectives. Therefore, as has been said before, a more strategic planning is needed.

Although there are several issues in the MDM Cisadane Hulu project that need to be addressed, the multistakeholders forum does provide benefits for the project.

### **Benefits of Working in a Multistakeholders Platform on Watershed Management**

The multistakeholders platform has provided opportunities for its members to learn wider perspectives in watershed management based on the interests of the stakeholders. Land issues, according to RMI and some other parties of the forum such as academia and the BPDAS, is an underlying issues that need to be resolved at first place. However, another party views community's low education level as an issue to be resolved to improve efficiency level of any capacity building provided for them. This is in line with community's wish to have a junior high school in their neighbourhood (Tillah, 2015). Other governmental agency called Agency on Food Security and the Implementor of Assitance on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (BKP5K) views support on cattle or seedling as a crucial programme of the MDM project. Conducting data collection activities to obtain more comprehensive data on the community's needs, the think tank also found that waste management is another issue that some of the community members interested in (Tillah, 2015). Because various governmental agencies are the stakeholders of the MDM project, it is easier to conduct coordination function with them in regards with the project needs.

Other than that, it becomes possible for the forum to gain more comprehensive data, even the sensitive ones regarding data on land, such as the masterplan of a resort-based land development in the area. The respective data is difficult to be obtained if it is not for the MDM's data collection purposes. A plan for collaborative work on tree planting between the resort authority and the peasants have also been discussed which will be facilitated by RMI as the forum's facilitator.

## CONCLUSION

I have described paths that RMI has undergone to arrive at the understanding that water (i.e. river) issues are closely connected to land issues. The micro-scale watershed management project as the study case discussed in this paper, has provided spaces to confirm this understanding. Talking about water quality and water quantity, for example, has led the forum into a discussion on land tenure approached through various sectors (e.g. farming activities, environmental education activities).

Performing a watershed management using holistic approach has provided many opportunities for the members of the forum and the facilitator to incorporate various issues. There are several lessons learned through the MDM project. The first one is that the facilitator plays significant role in the project. The facilitator of the forum should be knowledgeable about various sectors that are relevant to the MDM project's objectives and in line with the watershed management concept. Incorporating various relevance issues into the project's focus, especially the issues that are of the community's interests, has enhanced community's participation onto the project.

However, the MDM Cisadane Hulu project needs to address issues in relation with the lack of strategic planning of the project which also links with the absence of specific common vision of the project. Familiarity between the stakeholders forum's members will also need to be improved so that this institution will work as one solid organisation. These two are other lessons obtained from the 4 years' involvement of RMI in the project.

Despite some lacks in the MDM project that I have described above, this initiative of the then Ministry of Forestry (i.e. the BPDAS) provides valuable opportunities for the various parties to be part of the (environmental) governance. It is an option for parties to take part in the governance system so that, for instance, land-related injustice or unequal distribution of development benefits may find its way to be the center of various stakeholders' attention, especially those of the governmental agencies, for further improvement.

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