

CAPRI Research Grants 2001

ICRAF: Negotiating land rights and natural resource regulations for local people: The role and effectiveness of secondary farmer and community organisations in upland watersheds of Southeast Asia

Upland tropical watersheds contribute significantly to the livelihoods of many of the poorest rural populations. Large and growing populations are farming and harvesting forest products in upper watersheds, even as the value of watershed natural resources for water supply and quality, environmental services, habitat for wild biodiversity, and carbon services become increasingly important at regional, national and international scales. Collective action and modification of property rights are essential to address many of the critical challenges of watershed management— devolving resource management to local communities, internalizing environmental externalities, negotiating use rights over resources, and resolving conflicts among stakeholders (Knox and Gupta 2000).

One factor potentially important to the success of devolution is the development by community-based organizations of institutions for mutual cooperation. That potential derives from two sources: the effectiveness of larger groupings for some types of NRM, and the value of such organizations to empower local people in watershed and upland ecosystem planning and policy processes. In some circumstances, larger groups may be capable of managing their own natural resources more effectively than small ones. Effective secondary institutions for collective action of local people across watersheds will be essential for local people to participate in, negotiate, and benefit from new opportunities for payments for environmental services in upland watersheds (hydrology, biodiversity, carbon).

This project will investigate the role and effectiveness of secondary farmer and community organisations in negotiating land rights and resource regulations in the upland watersheds of Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. This module is part of a larger ICRAF-led project on “Local Organisations in Natural Resource Management in the Uplands of Southeast Asia”.

Main objectives of the study are:

- 1) To understand the rationale and processes whereby primary local organizations (LO's) involved in upland NRM develop together in secondary organizations (SLO's).
- 2) To identify conditions and mechanisms through which LO's and SLO's in tropical uplands influence the formulation and implementation of supportive NRM policies, rights and regulations, in different policy environments.
- 3) To identify conditions and methods through which SLO's in tropical uplands enable or facilitate LO's and LO members in implementing better NRM practices.

This project will help to enhance understanding of the development or function of secondary farmer or community organizations for the purpose of influencing natural resource management at a watershed or sub-regional scale, as multiple resource uses increase and worsen resource scarcity. The project offers also an opportunity to elucidate how the interactions of local and state institutions are changing under devolution, under the diverse political, economic and cultural conditions prevailing in the uplands of Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Notably, this project is centred at the intersection of collective action and property rights issues. Collective action is being used to change property rights, and property rights are earned through demonstration of effective collective action in NRM.

Project Leader: Chip Fay

Project Period: June 2001 – May 2004

Collaborating Partners:

De La Salle University (DLSU), The Philippines

Royal Forest Department (RFD), Thailand

Center for Agrarian Studies, Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), Indonesia

Landcare Federations of Claveria and Lantapan, Mindanao, the Philippines

CARE-Thailand

Rks Thai Foundation, Thailand

HKM Associations, Sumber Jaya, Lampung, Indonesia

University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), United States

Grant from CAPRI: \$125,000

Other Funding: ICRAF CORE, IFAD

IPGRI: Strengthening community institutions to support the conservation and use of plant genetic resources in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are hotspots of agrobiological and cultural diversity. Over sixty distinct cultural and linguistic groups exist in Uzbekistan alone, and the countries are situated at the heart of the Central Asian center of origin for over 40. Diversity maintenance, however, was a low priority during the land reform of the Soviet era, which organized agricultural production into a system of state collective farms producing the commodities dictated by the central command economy. This project will identify areas in which diversity may have survived, focusing on horticultural crops such as vegetables and fruits including non-tree fruits such as melons, and then work with communities to conserve the remaining agricultural heritage. The project will work with farmers' organizations, especially across different communities, to examine household and village-level agricultural dynamics across cultural boundaries. It will analyse the recent changes in land tenure and decentralization of agrarian institutions to support the local management of agrobiodiversity and its contribution to livelihoods. It seeks to understand how these changes in land tenure and rural institutions before and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union have affected the conservation of plant genetic resources (PGR) in the two countries. The project will contribute to agricultural development and biodiversity conservation by helping national institutions work with local communities to conserve diversity in plant genetic resources and further its deployment in production. For the rural poor, PGR are essential biological assets crucial to their livelihoods. The research will also focus on the national policy implications of tenure and local institutions for in situ conservation.

Overall the project will apply social science research on resource tenure and institutions to contribute to efforts to assess and reverse the disastrous erosion of the natural resource base and biodiversity that occurred as a result of centralized agricultural planning and deployment of a narrow base of plant genetic resources. Thus the proposed project would help to increase the portfolio of biological assets available to rural households in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, by securing the crop genetic resource base and increasing the participation of local institutions in PGR management.

Project Leader: Pablo Eyzaguirre

Project Period: June 2001-May 2004

Collaborating Partners:

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

CAN-PGR, Central Asian Network for Plant Genetic Resources

Uzbekistan:

Research Institute for Plant Industry

Research Institute of Vegetables, Melons

Research Institute of Horticulture and Viniculture

Research Institute of Forestry
Republican Association of Farmers and Dekhkans,
Turkmenistan:
Gary Gala Experimental Research Station for Horticultural Crops
Reconstituted collective farm enterprises and farmer's associations.
Grant from CAPRI: \$125,000
Other Funding: IPGRI, multilateral