

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Date:	Dec 2009	Entry Number:	1125
Case Study Name:	Politics of marine conservation area in Indonesia: from a centralized to a decentralized system		
Author:	Arif Satria, Masaaki Sano and Hidenori Shima		
Document Type:	Journal paper		
Year:	2006		
Language:	English		
Document Location:	Int. J. Environment and Sustainable Development, Vol. 5., No. 3, 2006.		
Full Citation:	Satria, A., M. Sano and H. Shino (2006) Politics of marine conservation area in Indonesia: from a centralized to a decentralized system.		
Region:	South East Asia, Oceania		
Country:	Indonesia		
Ecosystem Type:	Mangrove, coral reef, coastal marine, open water		
Social Characteristics:	Coastal community		
Scale of Study:	regional		
Resource Type:	Habitat conservation, biodiversity conservation, parks/ecotourism		
Type of Initiative:	Business initiative, environment planning		
Community Based Work:	Marine conservation, environmental assessment, development planning		
Keywords:	Marine conservation, political ecology, environmental conflicts, centralization, decentralization, property right.		

Summary:

This paper aims to analyse the current situation resulting from the Marine Conservation Area (MCA) in Indonesia in terms of the legal framework, institutional conflicts and the response of the local people. A case study of the centralised and decentralised MCA in West Lombok is presented and the process of establishing the MCA and its institutional performance are reviewed. The performance of centralised system is still questioned because this system marginalises the local people that leads to the rise of conflict and eventually weakens the institution of MCA. Therefore, strengthening decentralised system is necessary to increase the sense of stewardship of the local people over the resources, and to shape a new paradigm of the relationship of poor people-environment and conservation-fisheries, so marginalisation of the local people can be avoided, and finally a robust institution can be created.

Nevertheless, the case of Awig-awig as a type of community-based coral reef management in Gili Indah shows that decentralised system does not assure achievement of more robust institutional performance. This means that the success of decentralisation is not taken for granted, but there is prerequisite to be considered. At the community level, the prerequisite is a creation of better institutional arrangement including increasing equitability among resource users, a better representation system during process of consensus building and a well-defined property right system. Furthermore, the improvement of legal framework in national level is necessary to create more harmonious legal products related to the marine conservation with emphasis on how to recognise and enhance capacity of the local institution which may belong to the local government or the local people, in the marine conservation. Thus, the community-based management or co-management system can be officially recognised and promoted. In addition, the decentralisation of marine conservation also requires the local governments to have adequate capacity building, includes the following aspects: administration skill, political savvy, adaptability and expertise skill.