

# **Facilitating conflict resolution for the forest management through multi stakeholder approach in nipa nipa and nanga nanga forest in southeast sulawesi,Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper explains about LePMIL<sup>2</sup> experiences in facilitating conflict resolution and forest management since 2002 by using participatory multi-stakeholder approaches in the Murhum and Nanga-Nanga Papalia Forest Parks in Southeast Sulawesi.*

*The Nipa Nipa forest was designated as Murhum Forest Park by the Indonesian Forest Minister in letter No. 296, in 1995. The forest covers an area of 7,877.5 ha and managed under BKSDA.. Nanga-Nanga forest is a protected forest area as well as a production forest. It is 8,700 ha in size and managed under the authority of The Local Department for Forest and Environment of the city of Kendari.*

*However, in 1998, based on the decision of the national Forest Minister letter number 62, the authority to manage Murhum Forest Park was taken from the Central government and given to the Province. In fact, the official transfer of the authority was not completed until 2002.*

*Kendari bay is used as a regional center for fishing industry as a regional and local harbor and as a center of development for every other informal economic sector in South East Sulawesi.*

*There is great potential here, but it is yet to be managed optimally and if the situation does not change, the conditions will surely degrade. This situation has occurred due to extensive conflict involving the management of Murham and Nanga-Nanga Forest Parks which is in urgent need of conflict resolution.*

*There are many aspects to this conflict originating from the declaration of the forests as Forest Parks and their management plans. Regarding park boundaries, the community claimed they had cultural rights to the land but the management plan called for resettlement of all the people living within the forest park boundaries.*

*A Reform Movement was held in 1998 empowering the original people, who had been resettled, to flow back into the area and cultivate the fields they had previously left. Conflict between the provincial and city government regarding the management of Murham Forest Park also contributed to the lack of protection provided for the area. For these reasons, LePMIL decided to facilitate steps toward conflict resolution and achieving peace through dialogues.*

*LePMIL designed and used eight steps of facilitation which include (1) the continuation of developing knowledge and skill of facilitators, (2) identifying and involving of strategic partners from both non-government and government, (3) identifying the resources of conflicts and develop understanding among stakeholders, (4) capacity building through community organizer and government organizer, (5) developing dialog among stakeholders in order to reach a new agreement, (6) developing stakeholders action plan following the new agreement, (7) maintaining and ensuring that stakeholders implement the agreement and action plan, and (8) institutionalizing any agreements into local laws.*

*On July 18-19, 2002 the first agreement between the community and the government in the conflict resolution process was reached. It is a 7-point agreement and was the successful result of a very difficult negotiation process. It is not the end of the story. More has to be done by applying the on going method in order to reach a "permanent" solution.*

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<sup>2</sup> LePMIL is one of Non Government Organization in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, establish in 1997, which works for coastal and hinterland community development. Since 2002, this NGO in collaboration with Department for International Program have been working for conflict resolution and forest management in the Murhum Park, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Benga E'la and Lahundape', two villages in Nipa-Nipa forest area Southeast Sulawesi, had gone. There is no sign left that proves there were communities living in the area. "In 1974 the government forced the communities to move out of these villages. The area was considered for forest rehabilitation project. And if we did not want to leave from this place the government blamed us to be communist..." said Haji Naim, a farmer from one of the villages.

Every thing began in 1974, when Provincial government of Southeast Sulawesi started implementing forest rehabilitation project in Nipa-Nipa forest area. The provincial government forced out and resettled the communities who lived in and near the forest for generations, and it was backed by the Indonesian Army. Their farms, plantations and houses were damaged and burned by the provincial government. The community was resettled in a new place called Poasia, five kilometers far from forest areas. The land where people were resettled was unfertile. The same situation happened to the community who lived in and near Nanga-Nanga forest area.

Those communities have been struggling for their rights over land and forest for more than ten years. Various methods have been applied by the communities. Some of them came back and begun practicing farming in their original land. There were dialogues between the communities and the government but there was no outcome of the dialogues exchanged. Some of them had also used political approach by supporting the candidate of governors hoping that if he/she became a governor and they would formulate a better policy and provide protection for the communities. "Actually, in 1997 election, many communities in Tobimeita and Benua Nirae were

forced by government officials to vote for a certain party whose leader promised the communities that they would be given a piece of land near Nipa-Nipa forest in return.” said Arqam Ali, a farmer and teacher in Tobimeita village.

Another group, that consisted twenty head of families, had struggled for their rights through litigation. They have had access to good education and economic status compared with other communities. As a result they won the case in Mahkamah Agung (National Court).

LePMIL observed that the community struggle was unorganized, less prepared, and sporadic. Those experiences inspired LePMIL to facilitate finding ways to resolve the conflict between the community and the government. LePMIL and the community began to work together to find better methods to reclaim the community rights. The expectation for future processes was that the movements should be more systematic, measurable and open. After a series of discussions with the community and the government, there was a strong idea built to begin solving the problems through multistakeholder approach. The consideration was that many parties involved in the conflict, and there was a need for systematic dialogs among the parties. In the year 2000, LePMIL began to facilitate the conflict resolution by using multistakeholder<sup>3</sup> approach. This paper explains LePMIL’s experiences in how multistakeholder approach has been successful in finding solutions in the conflict of Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest management in Southeast Sulawesi.

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<sup>3</sup> Multistakeholder was defined as person and / or organization that has direct or indirect interest – social, economic, cultural and political – toward Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest resources.

## **The preparation for new agenda**

LePMIL was hesitant when it began to facilitate the process. The reasons were LePMIL's programs were more focused on working with poor communities in villages and were usually limited to a small number of stakeholders involved. LePMIL has no experience in working in the area of conflict before. The "strengths" that LePMIL staff possessed were their past experiences in facilitating dialogs in workshops, trainings and seminars at the city and /or province levels.

Dealing with the situation, LePMIL then had developed weekly discussions among its facilitators to share ideas and experiences. LePMIL began discussing conflict issues and developing framework for conflict facilitation. LePMIL identified nine phases to facilitate conflict resolutions including:

1. Developing an understanding and strengthening the facilitator's capacity
2. Mapping "strategic partners" from both the government and the community
3. Researching and understanding the conflicts and forest degradation in detail
4. Developing an understanding among the stakeholders about the results of participatory research
5. Improve capacity and understanding of the community and the government
6. Facilitating and empowering stakeholders for dialogs in order to develop new agreement
7. Facilitating and empowering stakeholders to develop a multistakeholder's plan to follow the new agreement
8. Maintaining multistakeholder process and to ensure that new agreement was being implemented by the community and the government

9. Facilitate and ensure the process of institutionalization of the new agreement on at least the provincial government policies.

This framework has helped in facilitating these processes. Sometimes, there were few things that needed to be adjusted due to social and political climate within the community and government organizations.

### **Selling ideas to broaden the “ownership”**

The challenge came right away when LePMIL began to communicate this idea with government officials who have the authority over Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest. His response was “I know exactly that those people lived and degraded the forest. The only option that the government has is that the community should go out from where they are living now. This forest is really important as a catchment area for this region.” said Alimudin, the Head of City Department of Forestry. A similar response came when the staff from LePMIL met the Head of Provincial Department of Forestry “I have no time to discuss this matter, because I have another meeting today....but I’ll give you five minutes to explain the cause.”

Despite the fact, that the head of the provincial and city governments did not respond positively, the process of communication is still continue. LePMIL broadened the range of stakeholders as target in promoting the idea of conflict resolution. LePMIL again met with other stakeholders including the Head of District Forest Department, the Head of Regional Development Planning Board (BAPPEDA), the Head of BAPPEDA, the member of people representative (DPRD), Forest Field Officers, and Forest Guards etc. In general, their responses were more positive and encouraging, “LePMIL should continue this initiative, and then we will see what we can do to support the initiative further.” Some of them also suggested that LePMIL

should conduct a comprehensive research so that there will be data available for future discussion. The process of discussions became a “regular” activity. LePMIL could meet them anywhere as it does not have to be in the offices.

The same process of discussions was also being conducted and within the community. LePMIL discussed with the community leaders and other members of the community who knew and still remembered the history of the conflict. The community was really enthusiastic and involved in the discussions. Though some of them also reminded LePMIL not to be the same as another NGO who came to them once and never come again.

In the progress, interpersonal discussions with key actors continued. These discussions were really effective to maintain relations among stakeholders who involved in the conflict. In order to guide and facilitate discussions effectively LePMIL was preparing the key questions<sup>4</sup>. These questions were reflective regarding the policies that were being implemented and also the conflict itself.

### **Collecting and Managing the information to support facilitation processes**

Responding to the community and the government suggestions and in order to collect data and information about the conflict and the issues around the forest, LePMIL had conducted participatory research by using Participatory Rural Appraisal methods. The RRA method was chosen because LePMIL have enough experiences in using them previously. Another reason was that it gave more chance to openly discuss

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<sup>4</sup> A couple issues that being discussed include; (a) how was their point of view regarding the government policies on the Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest?, (b) how was their point of view from both the community and the government regarding possibilities to develop a new social contract to solve the problems in the area?, (c) Is the “Operasi Sapu Jagad” policy—the policy that gave government the power and authority to resettle community by using any mean--, so far, effective enough to protect the forest and improve community welfare?, (d) Is there any idea and / or intention—from the people and organizations—to find a new way in solving the conflict and developing the forest in the area?

the issue with stakeholders. With the support of the community members and government officials, LePMIL developed basic information and maps, especially in conflict locations.

The RRA was conducted in sixteen villages near the forest including mangga dua, gunung jati, sanua, benu-benua, sodoha, panggaloba, tipulu, watu-watu, kemaraya, alolama, labibia, wawombalata, benua nirae, tobi meita, anggoeya, dan rahandouna. The research findings gave a clear picture regarding conflict and other problems in Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest. There were at least three reasons for the conflict.

*Fisrt* there was no dialog and/or agreement made between the government and the community about the status of the forest. The officer of Sub BIPHUT Southeast Sulawesi stated that the process of designating Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest was done under the existing laws. In 1979, the forest boundaries were made by Balai Planologi Kehutanan Region V Ujung Pandang, and it is 8,146 ha in size. The Nipa Nipa forest was designated as Murhum Forest Park by the Forest Minister of Indonesia in the letter No. 296, in 1995. It comprises of 7,877.5 ha and was managed under BKSDA<sup>5</sup>. Nanga-Nanga forest is a protected forest area as well as a production forest. It is 8,700 ha in size and managed under the authority of The Local Department for Forest and Environment of the city of Kendari.

Despite government official's statement regarding the boundary and the status of Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest, the community objected that they have never had an agreement with the government. "We were never invited to any kind of

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<sup>5</sup> The Central Authority of The Institution for Natural Resource Conservation for South East Sulawesi.

meeting or discussion on this matter.” (Comments from most of community during PRA, 2003)

The interesting finding regarding the conflict of forest boundary was that there are three villages—Labibia, Alolama and Wawombalata—that has no conflict. The reason for this was that when forest boundaries were being set up by the government, the head of those villages announced that the communities living in the villages had to sign on the agreement made to form boundaries.

*Secondly*, the government had also used coercion in implementing the project of forest rehabilitation in 1974. The community who lived near/in the forest were moved resettle in another place. “For generations we have lived in this place, but in 1974 when the government implemented the project they forced us to go out from where we lived.” (Pak Yato, a farmer in Bengga E’la Kemaraya village, 2003). When LePMIL asked him why he could not stay and defense their land, he said that the government was backed by Indonesia Military. Asri, a farmer from Andounohu, explained that the government burned out all of plants and farm’s house, so there was no prove left.

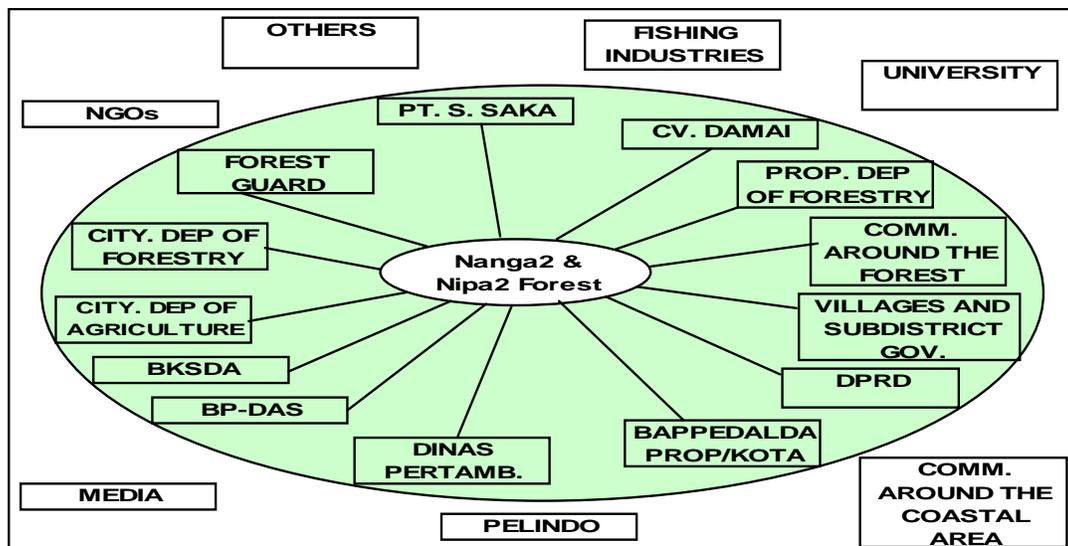
Third, there were land distribution done by persons from government official to the community who chose certain political party in 1998/1999. “In the election (1998/1999), many community members were promised that if they choose this party they would get a piece of land in return for their house and land farm.” (Arqam Ali, a farmer from Tobimeita village, 2003) There is a document that could prove the activities, and it was signed by the government official during the time of agreement.

Furthermore, forest degradation has continued. Many communities were influx to the forest and opened the land for farming and settling purposes.

When LePMIL asked those communities for not staying in the areas where the government resettles them they gave four main reasons including: the area where they live could not support their farm activities—less fertile, they saw that today many new comers come to the areas around the forest where they had lived before, there were land distributions for a certain group of people by government official in 1998, and because of reformation so they are not afraid anymore to the intimidation.

During the RRA process, LePMIL also met and discussed the issues with other stakeholders. The purposes of the meeting was to get data/information and also perspective from various stakeholders about the conflict, the impact of forest degradation, the interest from each group of stakeholders, the idea of conflict resolution that being proceed through this initiative, etc.

**Chart 1. Stakeholders identified during PRA.**



The RRA results were carried to consultation forums where stakeholders could come and participate willingly. The consultation was conducted from village

level, then sub district level and the province level. The purposes of these consultations were to understand the current situation – degradation, poverty, conflict on forest boundaries, etc, and the historical context of the area (forest). Through this consultation LePMIL expected that there would be understanding among stakeholders on the real problem that they had and faced. This consultation was used as a stepping “stone” for the next process of conflict resolution initiative.

### To the conflict resolution

It was unrealistic to have expectation for equal and just agreement from the dialog where there were unequal capacities among parties who engaged in the dialog. These statements very often come up in any forums – local, regional and national levels, to discuss about multistakeholder approach in forest management. To some extent many groups that were concerned in forest development in Indonesia were worried that multistakeholder approach is one only way to open new road for state and corporations to have control over Indonesian forests by legitimizing it through the community. What is LePMIL’s position in the debate? LePMIL believed that there was no such approach that could solve such problems related with the community and the forest. Confrontation and mobilization are some of the approaches that have been used often in the past in Southeast Sulawesi. But there was always violence and breaking of the laws embedded in those approaches when they were conducted. This activity left people on both sides as the victim of the situation. This was also the reason why LePMIL chose to try multistakeholder approach which created basic structure and systematic dialogs among the stakeholders. That’s why it is important to develop understanding and develop capacity among these stakeholders.

At the community level, LePMIL have facilitated regular group discussions (weekly basis), delivered the information related to the forest issue and laws to the community such as brochures, bulletins etc. The discussion was not only within the group but also among the different groups. The purpose of the discussion was to develop understanding about the issues and to create the alternatives that encourage conflict resolution dialog. In addition, LePMIL also facilitated the community to organize their efforts through farmer organizations. Furthermore, LePMIL gave opportunities to the community leaders and/ or members to participate in the meetings and discussions regularly at local, provincial, regional and national levels. LePMIL sees there process as a continued effort for conflict resolution.

At government level, LePMIL has facilitated various discussions, both in the Provincial/City/District Forest Department and among the governments organization that was related to the issues. The purpose of these meetings and discussions was to develop understanding within the government organization, and like the community, the government also formulate alternative of the solutions for conflict resolution dialog.

Another group of stakeholders were usually involved in the discussions at both parties—the community and the government.



## Maintaining agreement and developing multistakeholder agenda

Following this agreement, LePMIL, then, facilitated stakeholders to implement it further. At the community, LePMIL had facilitated to strengthen community organization by set up the group's rules. The rules included the issues like decision making, land management, forest protection, etc. In addition, LePMIL has also encouraged the community to plant kind of commodity/plant that has multifunction. At the government level, LePMIL has also facilitated discussions and ensured that the agreement is being followed up by the government. For example, the government's responsibility is to set up a policy initiating a team that is responsible to follow up the agreement. As a result, the Governor of Southeast Sulawesi launched the decree on Tim Terpadu/ Multistakeholder Team. At other stakeholder level, LePMIL has also conducted series of discussions in order to get other inputs and also supports from these stakeholders.

In order to make further activities more systematic, LePMIL facilitated stakeholders to develop action plan together. The planning covered multi aspects including developing "permanent" solution for the conflict, developing alternatives and sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitating forest degradation, developing multistakeholder institution for Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest management and development, and institutionalizing agreement and institution. This action plan has been used till now to guide multistakeholder activities.

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Tim Terpadu/ Multistakeholder Team in which the members should come from the government, the community and NGOs, (3) The Tim Terpadu/ Multistakeholder Team has responsibilities including identifying, clarifying, and verifying the sources of conflicts, (4) In the short term, the results from Multistakeholder's Works will be used for giving assistance to the community, (5) In the long term, the results from Multistakeholder's Works will be used to develop a concept of policy in Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga forest development, (6) the community and the government are responsible on protecting the forest from extend degradation, (7) the Multistakeholder Team should use participatory approach and techniques in doing its works.

## **Institutionalization processes**

After more than three year of implementation, there were some changes made. The changes were not only at the community but also at the government and other stakeholders. Before the initiative, the community efforts were unorganized. Now they work in groups and are more organized. There were group and inter group discussions on weekly and monthly basis. They have patrolled around the forest and developed community's seedling for forest rehabilitation. They developed a network among the groups. They have developed a concept of community-forest management, including the concept of community's right to access and manage the forest in their own area. They are going to offer this concept to the government to be institutionalized. Even though forest degradation still continues, the scale and intensity has decreased significantly. In addition, the government has started to support community activities such as training for communities. Forest guard (Polisi Kehutanan) started to do patrol around the forest with the community which never happened before. The government also supported the local NGOs, University, and community members to visit and learn the community forestry initiative in Wan Abdurrahman Forest, Lampung and Wonosobo Forest Management in Central Java.

This time, the institutionalization has continued. The government and the community have developed different models and concepts for forest management and community's rights that fit with local situations. To develop the policy on Nipa-Nipa and Nanga-Nanga Forest Management that consider and accommodate community's aspirations, the government set up a team, an add-hoc team. The team has some responsibilities that include collecting feedback and relevant information from both

the community and the government discussions. The team was also responsible for synthesizing the data information and also developed a draft for local law. The draft has been done and now the multistakeholders have started to develop intensive and systematic discussion on the draft. The process of facilitation is not dominated by LePMIL anymore. The government has started taking significant roles in facilitating and developing initiatives for further solutions.

The multistakeholder team (Tim Terpadu) still continues to identify and verify the conflict over the land, especially the community's land that was being claimed by the government. The results of these activities have been used in multistakeholder's discussion including the discussion of draft for local law. At the same time, the process of multistakeholder capacity building through regular discussions still continues.

On the field, the community has continued to develop models of sustainable forest development, such as agro-forestry system. The community and the government have conducted field share learning. In addition, the communities, government officials, forest guards, and forest extension officers are also engaged involved in the activities. The Provincial Department of Forestry developed partnership with the community organizations to implement Forest Rehabilitation Project (GERHAN) in the area.

**Problems and important matters in multistakeholder processes that need to be addressed of**

During facilitation processes, LePMIL faced various obstacles regarding paradigm, knowledge, attitude and skill. These obstacles existed not only in the government but also in the community and within the facilitating team. The obstacles

include the different perspectives on community based forest management / development, the perception that the government is the main ruler and the community is the one that need to be ruled, the government saw the NGO as outsider in the policy making, less communication skills among the stakeholders, less creativity to initiate new policy due to the facts that government have always been working based on “certain” guidelines, less coordination between the government organizations. Furthermore, the political climate such as the change on the head of provincial department especially in the provincial department of forestry was happened too often. Other obstacles relied on the capacity of community to able to communicate with other stakeholders. Last but not the least; the facilitators also faced the problem regarding the facilitation skills.

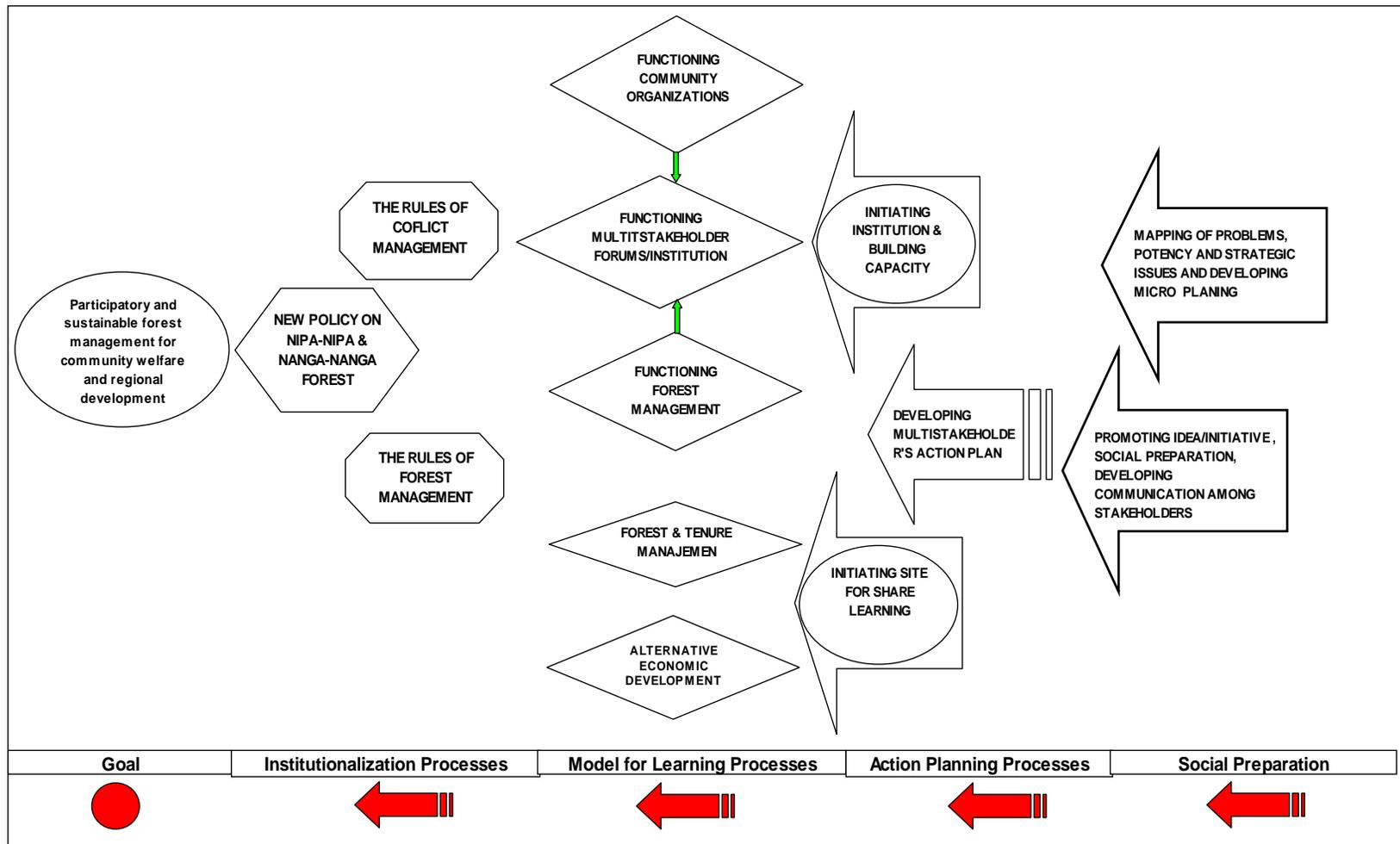
To cope up with these obstacles, LePMIL has tried to do a couple of activities such as developing weekly discussions among facilitators, developing weekly and/or monthly discussions with the government and community groups, developing multistakeholder frameworks, developing participatory evaluation, at facilitator, at community and government levels, and also developing facilitator’s capacity through training of multistakeholder facilitators, and developing trust among facilitator, the government and the communities.

## C l o s i n g

Though multistakeholder process might not easy to be managed and facilitated, it does not mean that it cannot be used as an approach to solve the problem in the forest development, such as conflict between government and the community. To use this approach, there are some capacities like facilitation, communication and mediation skills etc, which need to be improved in order to optimally achieve the

purposes. Trust building and idea promotion among the stakeholders are two important parts of the multistakeholder approach. Maintaining relationship among the stakeholders is indeed very important. In addition, it is also very important to improve facilitator's capacity like knowledge, skill and attitude. It is also necessary to have a continuous learning among the stakeholder through "action-reflection-action-reflection" process.

Appendix 1. Scheme for facilitation processes regarding conflict resolution and forest management in Nipa-Nipa dan Nanga-Nanga forest area, Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.



Appendix 2. The map of Nipa-Nipa dan Nanga-Nanga forest area, Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. (One of the result from multistakeholder team).

