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## A time for locally driven development in Papua and West Papua

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### ABSTRACT

The vast biocultural diversity of Tanah Papua (Land of Papua) are important resources for local economic development, especially where their sustainable use incorporates affirmative action to ensure that indigenous communities capture the resulting benefits. Papuan stakeholders already have their own detailed plans, and there are some success stories to instil confidence in the abilities of the indigenous peoples of Papua to lead their own development. Multi-stakeholder approaches are known to work well, and in this case, locally driven initiatives are also known to be promising. This viewpoint suggests the need for a balance between inclusive participation in multi-stakeholder programmes and the enhancement of locally driven initiatives.

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## Introduction

The landscapes and seascapes of Tanah Papua (currently administered under the two Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua) are truly rich. The ecosystem diversity alone is impressive, including coral reefs, seaweed, seagrass, vast mangroves, swamps, lakes and rivers, savannah, lowland and montane tropical moist forests, alpine steppes, and glaciers. Tanah Papua contains half of Indonesia's total biodiversity, particularly its endemic flora and fauna. There are more than 20,000 plant species of which 55% are endemic, including 2,000 species of endemic orchid. Tanah Papua also has 602 bird species of which 52% are endemic, including 25 species of birds of paradise, 125 mammal species of which 58% are endemic, 329 species of reptile and amphibian (35% endemic to Papua), 250 fresh water fish species, and 1,200 marine fish species. No fewer than 150,000 species of insects are estimated to occur in Tanah Papua (Marshall and Beehler 2007). The cultural diversity of Tanah Papua comprises at least 250 indigenous ethnic groups, each with their own language or distinctive dialect, and their own traditional ecological knowledge. Today, seven customary regions are recognised in Tanah Papua<sup>1</sup> of which there were five in Papua Province (La Pago, Mee Pago, Mamta, Anim Ha, Saireri<sup>2</sup>), and two in West Papua Province (Doberai and Bomberai) Disbud Provinsi Papua, Jurusan Antropologi UNCEN, SIL. (2008) (Sumule 2018). Their value as sources of culture and wisdom are being increasingly recognised, especially by those from the local governments (Figure 1).

The main question posed here is whether and how indigenous communities can lead local development in Papua. This would naturally depend on how the communities perceive the concept of sustainable development, as well as their implementation capacities on the ground.

## The view from the ground

Serious development challenges remain in Tanah Papua. The so-called Papua development paradox (Dale and Djonga 2011) suggests that despite its biocultural richness and diversity, indigenous Papuans are often excluded from development progress. Papua province is democratically



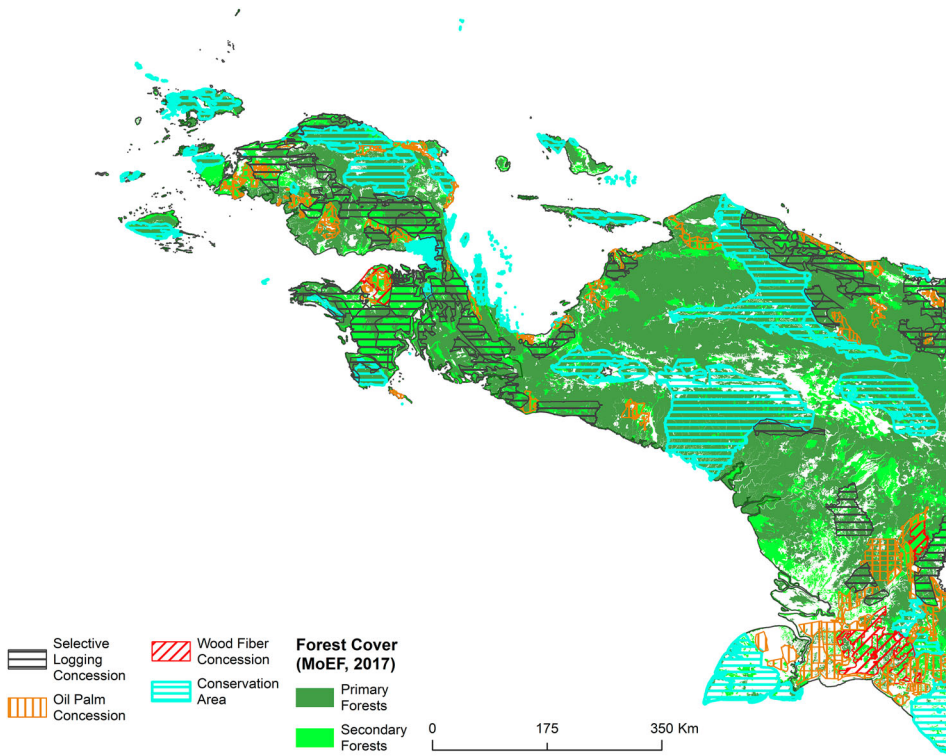
**Figure 1.** Map of Papua and Papua New Guinea.

challenged (the Indonesia democratic index for Papua in 2013 was 57.55), and indigenous Papuans in general lag behind in livelihoods, health, and education. The issue remains how to transform the potential of the biocultural richness and diversity into better quality of life for the indigenous people of Tanah Papua (Rumaseb 2015).

At the heart of Tanah Papua's sustainability of land and resources is spatial planning (Rumaseb 2015). However, spatial planning is not always aligned to the practice on the ground. Spatial analysis using Global Forest Watch found that 8.2 Mha of natural forests have already been licensed, either for oil palm, selective logging or timber plantations (Figure 2). The province of West Papua currently targets 70% to be protected as natural forests, but in the field, 64% are already decreed as cultivation areas; only 32% was assigned as protected forests and conservation areas (Suara Papua 2018). A similar set of challenges exist in Papua province, which has currently registered 102 mining permits, 25 palm oil licenses, and 35 logging permits covering 2,627,099 ha of forest that overlap with conservation areas and protected forests (KMSTRP and KPRHPB 2018). Despite the best intentions for sustainability, deforestation throughout the two provinces of Papua and Papua Barat has sharply increased, from 10,000 hectares in 2001 to 97,000 hectares in 2015 (Chitra, Wijaya, and Firmansyah 2017), with top-down imposition of roads gravely endangering the situation (Sloan et al. 2019)

This viewpoint is based on the findings of a series of international biodiversity deliberations for Papua since 2009 (Indrawan, Kapisa, and Rumansara 2011), including the International Conference on Biodiversity, Ecotourism, and Creative Economy in Papua (Jayapura, 7–10 September 2016). These focused on establishing a framework of scientific knowledge relevant to biodiversity and cultural diversity in Tanah Papua, with the aim of supporting sustainable development in the region. An important emphasis was how local actors see sustainable development, and how it should be undertaken. At the 2016 conference, the Governor of Papua explained that development in Papua and West Papua may be delivered through a holistic package consisting of biodiversity, ecotourism, and creative economy, strategically targeting the seven customary regions (Enembe 2016).

The government of Papua devised seven policies to support the province's development aims: (1) mapping customary lands; (2) developing the integration of biodiversity, ecotourism, and creative economy across the seven customary regions with the concept of 'One Region, One Product'; (3) fostering the development of connectivity between areas, basic facilities, and infrastructure; (4) developing the capacity of human resources in accordance with local potential; (5) developing the area of creative economy, biodiversity, ecotourism, and integrated culture (upstream and downstream) of Papua's seven customary regions; (6) developing all the national parks to be areas of creative



**Figure 2.** Spatial analysis of land and resources in Tanah Papua.

economy, biodiversity, and ecotourism using the ‘tourism resort management’ approach; and (7). strengthening regulations and the investment licensing facility in order to improve the welfare of Papuans and increase local fiscal revenues (Enembe 2016).

### ***Districts and customary development potential***

In a region as diverse as Tanah Papua, each of the seven customary regions is likely to possess a great variety of resources with potential for development in different ways – for pharmacy, agriculture, agroforestry, and so on (Table 1). For now, each region is associated with particular features (BAPPE-NAS 2015). As a logical consequence, though, proper market access and value-addition through all these geographically remote districts should be addressed as well.

### ***Role of local policies***

Management of biocultural diversity has yet to engage effectively with the knowledge management sector, as well as with education in its many forms. To begin with, the provincial education office should encourage development of local content on biocultural diversity, including local languages and traditional ecological knowledge, across school curricula. To educate the general public, the West Papuan government is now considering establishing a Museum of Natural History to act as a knowledge management hub for the region’s biocultural diversity. Eventually, this could become a clearing house for information on biocultural diversity, providing a knowledge base on which local policies will be built.

Conservation alone is not enough to safeguard biocultural diversity. Incentives are needed to integrate conservation with local economic development, and through multi-stakeholder dialogue.

**Table 1.** Examples of districts' capacity for biodiversity based products in Papua Province.

Customary regions	Districts	Timber and non-timber forest products
Anim Ha	Merauke, Boven Digul, Mapi, Asmat	Timber, sago, red fruit pandan ( <i>Pandanus conoides</i> , which has medicinal properties), rubber, honey, pig-nosed turtle ( <i>Carettochelys insculpta</i> , which has potential for captive breeding), and crocodiles
La Pago	Jayawijaya, Lani Jaya, Pegunungan Bintang, Nduga, Yahukimo, Yalimo, Mamberamo Tengah, Puncak, Puncak Jaya, Tolikara	Sago, red fruit and other pandans, and honey NB: La Pago is a centre of biodiversity for red fruit pandan and sweet potatoes
Mamta	Jayapura, Sarmi, Mamberamo Raya dan Keerom	Timber, sago, resin, honey, crocodiles, and nature tourism
Saireri	Biak Numfor, Supiori, Kepulauan Yapen, dan Waropen. Haanim meliputi Merauke, Boven Digoel, Mappi, Asmat	Timber, sago, resin, mangrove, medicinal plants, nature tourism, as well as bird parks and orchid gardens
Mee Pago	Intan Jaya, Paniai, Deiyai, Nabire, Mimika, dan Dogiya	Timber, sago, cinnamon, Amboyna pitch tree or <i>Agathis dammara</i> , red fruit, cinnamon, and ecotourism

Source: Enembe (2016).

Conservation enforcement, in line with the declaration of West Papua as a conservation province on 19 October 2015 (Cahaya Papua 2015), calls for income protection for indigenous communities, and strict control of forest conversion and logging licenses. International development actors are recognising the importance of increasing livelihoods, and this can be effectively cultivated under sustainable financing schemes.

Supportive spatial planning, systems management, and adequate human resources are all vital. In regard to spatial planning, the principles of free, prior, informed consent have yet to be applied to the provincial and district levels – meaning that any spatial planning needs to properly consult with indigenous communities (KMSTRP and KPRHPB 2018). Further, the customary regions are yet to be integrated into the provinces' spatial planning, and again the prerequisite here is to have bottom up and participatory mapping delineating the respective territories of the indigenous communities (Rumaseb 2015).

At the same time, customary (*adat*) communities with their indigenous knowledge and wisdom must be encouraged and enabled to participate. These priorities have already been mandated in Papua province's development vision. To meet local economic development needs, prerequisites include effective participation (including that of the indigenous communities) from the planning stages, development of shared ownership at the local level, avoidance of mass tourism, and development of local knowledge management systems as they pertain to biocultural diversity. Supportive regulations at provincial and district/municipality levels are needed to back these. Only through such locally driven arrangements can biocultural diversity work for the benefit of the public, and especially for indigenous communities in Tanah Papua.

### Key stakeholders for future development

The discussions stressed the need to prompt and empower indigenous people towards a role as the region's main actors. There are already glimmers of hope from local socio-economic sectors. For example, the ecotourism operations in the Carstenz Pyramid of Mt. Jaya (Intan Jaya), the diving resort in Raja Ampat (Waiwo), the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) aggregation areas off Nabire, and the bird-watching programme in the customary forest of Rheapang village of Jayapura, are all at least part-owned by indigenous Papuans.

There are promising benchmarks. In one example of demonstrable persistence, Papuans managed to push for *Noken* (a traditional woven bag made from tree roots or tree bark and which carry deep meaning in the land of Papua since they resembled women's wombs, and babies are often actually carried within it) to be recognised in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding.

## Affirmative action

Serious affirmative action (as has been defined across the Asia Pacific region: Chatterjee 2005) and especially capacity building are needed to build momentum for facilitating the development of local leadership for and by indigenous Papuans. Capacity building should include increased space for indigenous tenure over the land and forest resources, based on local customary laws and improved gender perspective.

Further, to increase tenurial bargaining power, there is also need for indigenous people's traditional institutions to be strengthened by state law. The enabling policy have already been enacted, for instance with Papua Province's Special Regulations (*Perdasus no 21/2018*) decreeing sustainable forest management for Papua province. Almost a decade ago, a roadmap called Papua Province Vision by 2100 was established. Papua Vision 2100 aims to maintain 90% forest cover over the Papua province, and simultaneously achieving low-carbon development objectives.

Local values and wisdom are strongly portrayed in Papua Vision 2100. Many of the communities of Papua and West Papua retain their values such as subsistence (meaning non-excessive consumption and production; for instance, pigs are reared for local consumption) and fair trade (e.g. under the coffee growing enterprises local buyers commit to providing a fair price to growers), and therefore are working towards Papua Vision 2100s economic model, which provides for equitable growth, ecological sustainability, and increasing the welfare of the local communities.<sup>3</sup>

Ongoing power contestations between indigenous forest-dependant cultures and heavily capitalised palm oil drives called for stepping up rights-based approaches (Manufandu 2017). A benchmark from West Papua Province came in 2017, when the traditional communities of Sorong regency were accorded with the District Regulation regarding the Recognition and Protection of the Rights of the (Local) Customary Law Communities; this policy included a mandate for the conservation of the local forest and mangroves.

There is even more to do in relation to programming. Diving tourism has yet to be developed to meet its true potential. Indonesian tourism in general is currently challenged by environmental sustainability. The World Economic Forum (2015) ranked Indonesia at near-bottom for environmental sustainability, despite a high rank for the potential of the country's natural and cultural resources. Key to the sustainability is inclusive partnership, such as public–private–people partnerships in the tourism sector, and applying this to the local communities (e.g. Schultze-Westrum (2011) illustrating the case in Raja Ampat islands, West Papua). Again, affirmative action is needed to ensure local communities' participation.

## Conclusion

Local Papuan governments and communities have the potential to expand low-carbon development pathways. Securing the indigenous communities' true participation in sustainable development from the earliest planning stages is a prerequisite. The mainstreaming of traditional values, wisdom and rich cultures has yet to be carried forward into relevant policy-making such as development planning, spatial planning, and strategic environmental assessments. Capacity building needs to include institutionalisation of the rights of traditional communities. Central to the locally led economic development, improved market access coupled with sufficiency economy and fair trade are a key part of local capacity building needs.

## Notes

1. The designation of the seven customary regions as bases for the development of Tanah Papua was announced on 16 June 2016 by the Minister of Planning on behalf of the national government of the Republic of Indonesia. However, this division was not grounded on systematic research and may serve more for practical management purposes. There needs to be more articulation if the different customary regions are accorded region-specific development supports such as livelihoods, health, and education. Another unexplored opportunity would be



to treat the division of the regions with ecological approaches. For instance, a provisional analysis suggested Papua and West Papua may be divided by 24 ecosystems and agricultural systems. Both ecological and cultural algorithms are needed (Sumule 2018).

2. Saireri, which included part of the bays of Cendrawasih actually extended to the Province of West Papua as well.
3. This may invoke the philosophy of sufficiency economy, as outlined by Mongsawad (2010).

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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