



Thesis Abstract

Local Governance as Determinant to Sustainable Forest Development of Two Community Forestry Projects in the Province of Bukidnon, Philippines

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The study aimed to analyze the relationship between local governance and sustainable forest development of the two community forestry projects in Bukidnon, namely, the Community Based Forest Management – Pulangi Watershed Rehabilitation Sub-project (CBFM-PWRS) and the Integrated Social Forestry – Bukidnon Environment Small-scale Tree Farm (ISF-BEST) plantation project.

Quality of local forest governance was determined using respective indicators of its six dimensions: local empowerment, accountability, participation, transparency, responsiveness, and predictability. Sustainable forest development indicators were also evaluated. Their relationship with governance dimensions was analyzed using logit regression. Subjective ratings, qualitative descriptions and objective data measurements were used. The subjective ratings were translated into governance index of 0 to 10, with 10 as the highest.

Results of the study showed that local governance of both projects did not yield the expected results. Positive changes on economic condition, equitability and biophysical condition occurred temporarily while the projects lasted. When the project funds stopped, the positive changes were unsustainable. For CBFM-PWRS, the NPV of the reforestation component was Php -1,041.00, equitability problem worsened as the rich participants captured the project benefits and the biophysical condition of project area became unstable. For the ISF-BEST, the NPV was positive (Php 317) but fell short of the expected financial return. The financial benefits were reaped by the local elite and businessmen. There was temporary improvement in plantation area maintained/developed, soil condition was not significantly enhanced and plant species diversity indices were very low.

The significant governance dimension predictor to over all sustainability for both projects is accountability. For individual sustainability indicators of CBFM-PWRS, the significant predictors are accountability and participation for economic development, and accountability and responsiveness for both equitability and biophysical stability. For ISF-BEST project, accountability is the significant predictor for economic and biophysical indicators, while responsiveness for equitability.

Local governance was constricted by traditional scientific forestry and economically driven development perspectives which are oriented towards timber production and economic gains. To improve this, adaptive learning perspective should be adopted with the CENRO and local institutions as the loci of social negotiations.