

# ***SOCIAL FORESTRY NETWORK***

**SOCIAL FORESTRY PLANNING: SEARCHING FOR A MIDDLE WAY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Social forestry programmes are based on community participation in the design and implementation of land management plans. These programmes seek to help farmers identify their demands for various social forestry products, develop sustainable plans for achieving self-sufficiency in these products, determine how to distribute products among themselves, and regulate abuses. On government forest lands, these programmes are implemented with the consent and assistance of the forestry department. Social forestry programmes thus require not only an understanding of the people, their needs and aspirations, but also of the forest management agency, its planning and implementation mechanisms, and its capabilities.

As one writer asserts:

The ideal resource management system should combine the strength of both community controlled and bureaucratically controlled systems, integrating responsive local decision units into larger systems able to distribute risks and developmental costs while mediating conflicts among individual local units (Korten, 1987:48).

Social forestry programmes take as their point of departure the community -its needs, its capacities, and ultimately its own control over both its resources and its destiny. But while these programmes emphasise empowering local communities to make decisions on the use and management of their productive resources, they also recognise that management decisions made by diverse communities need to be merged into a national perspective. Forestry departments can serve a useful role as instigators and supporters of community-based management projects. Forestry departments, however, often take as their point of departure the bureaucracy - its needs and capacity and its control over forest lands. Social foresters seeking to implement community participation programmes on public lands must search for a middle way through the contradictions implied in a bottom-up land management strategy being implemented by a top-down management agency.

Various planning processes and strategies have been used or proposed for social forestry programmes. In Nepal, for example, village governments (panchayats) seeking to gain control of local forests are required to work with forestry officials to design land management plans. Once accepted, these plans form a contract spelling out the rights and obligations of the government and the panchayat with reference to managing this piece of land (Manandhar 1980, Fisher 1990). Gilmour (1988) describes the following steps to be taken by the forestry department in planning and implementing this programme: investigation (including data gathering), negotiation (culminating in agreement), monitoring, review, and revision.

Likewise, in India, the National Wastelands Development Board (1987) emphasises developing simple micro-plans that require low staff input and that propose agroforestry technologies consistent with people's needs and available resources. In Thailand, the government is promoting a forest village programme that seeks to develop rural areas and rehabilitate forest lands. This programme relies heavily on forestry officials for planning and implementation, requiring at least six forestry officials per village: project chief, secretary, two sociologically inclined officers for village establishment, and two biophysical specialists for forest plantation (Pratong, 1985:214).

Obviously, methods for integrating micro-scale forest-management programmes into national programmes and objectives will vary from country to country according to cultural and social norms and political and institutional constraints. Some similarities exist, however. Social forestry programmes must solicit the participation of villagers and forest managers and must encourage institutional arrangements that allow effective cooperation between forest agencies and forest communities to develop.

### **Social Forestry in Java**

This paper describes the planning process used by the social forestry programme in Java. We begin with a discussion of the organisational hierarchy and planning processes of the State Forest Corporation (SFC), the agency responsible for managing forest lands in Java. We then describe how the social forestry programme in Java has been structured to fit within the framework of the SFC while allowing farmers a larger role in forest management. Finally we examine the processes used to design management plans that meet the aspirations of farmers and foresters alike. Because of SFC's experience in developing a programme that is responsive to the needs of both farmers and foresters, this paper should be of interest to a broad audience.

## ORGANISATION OF THE STATE FORESTRY CORPORATION

Figure 1 shows the structure of the State Forestry Corporation (Peluso *et al.* 1989). The central office and chief administrators are located in Jakarta, and provincial or unit-level offices are found in each of the three provinces of Java (west, central, and east). Decision-makers in Jakarta and the provincial offices set policies that affect the entire hierarchy of management and labour. Each province is divided into approximately 20 to 25 forest districts (KPH), which are managed by a forest administrator (ADM or KKPH). Forest districts are further divided into approximately 5 to 6 subdistricts (BKPH) and managed by a subdistrict officer (Asper or KBKPH). Each subdistrict is divided into a number of police resorts (RPH) and supervised by a forest guard (*mantri* or KRPH). Some police resorts, particularly in non-teak forests, comprise extensive forest areas of 1,800 to 2,500 ha. In any one year, planners may slate several hundred hectares of a police resort for intensive management activities such as planting, tapping, logging, or maintaining forests. These duties, plus the more time-consuming task of forest security, are the responsibilities of the forest guard and an average of four forest foremen (*mandor*) for each police resort.

Forest planning occurs at three levels in the organisational hierarchy. At the central level, the Planning Division (Divisi Perencanaan) is the lead organisation. At the provincial level, the Planning Bureau (Biro Perencanaan) assumes responsibility for planning activities and is assisted by the Rayon or Regional Forestry Planning Section (Section Perencanaan Hutan Daerah) to prepare plans for groups of 4 or 5 forest districts. Finally at the district level, staff members are supervised by the Technical Planner (Kepala Technique Kehutanan Umum) who handles district planning activities.

Forest management plans are made for 20, 10, 5, and 1-year periods. the 20-year master plan (Rencana Umum Perhutani) is prepared by the Planning Division and describes broad policies, strategies, and goals for use of forest lands.

# Structure of the State Forestry Corporation

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**PRESIDENT**

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION      PRODUCTION      MARKETING**

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**DIVISION HEADS**

**PERSONNEL, FINANCE, SECURITY AND CADASTRAL SURVEYS, PLANNING, PRODUCTION, INDUSTRY, MARKETING, ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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**UNIT (PROVINCIAL) HEADS**

**CENTRAL JAVA, EAST JAVA, WEST JAVA**

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**FOREST DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS  
(ADM/KKPH)**

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**FOREST SUBDISTRICT OFFICER  
(ASPER/KBKPH)**

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**FOREST GUARDS  
(MANTRI/KRPH)**

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**FOREMEN  
(MANDOR)**

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The 10-year plan (Rencana Pengaturan Kelestarian Hutan) outlines sustained yield regulations and is concerned with the management of forest concessions and other forest-related industries. Personnel in the provincial Planning Bureau prepare this plan. The 5-year plan (Rencana Karya Lima Tahun) outlines SFC's objectives in more detail and defines the subdistricts and police resorts that will be the target of different forestry programmes during the 5-year period. This plan is produced by Rayon personnel in consultation with personnel from the Planning Bureau. The 1-year plan (Rencana Technique Tahunan) states the precise objectives to be achieved by the forest districts during the next year, gives priorities to these objectives, and outlines the budget. This plan is prepared by district personnel (KTKU) and approved by the Rayon and provincial offices.

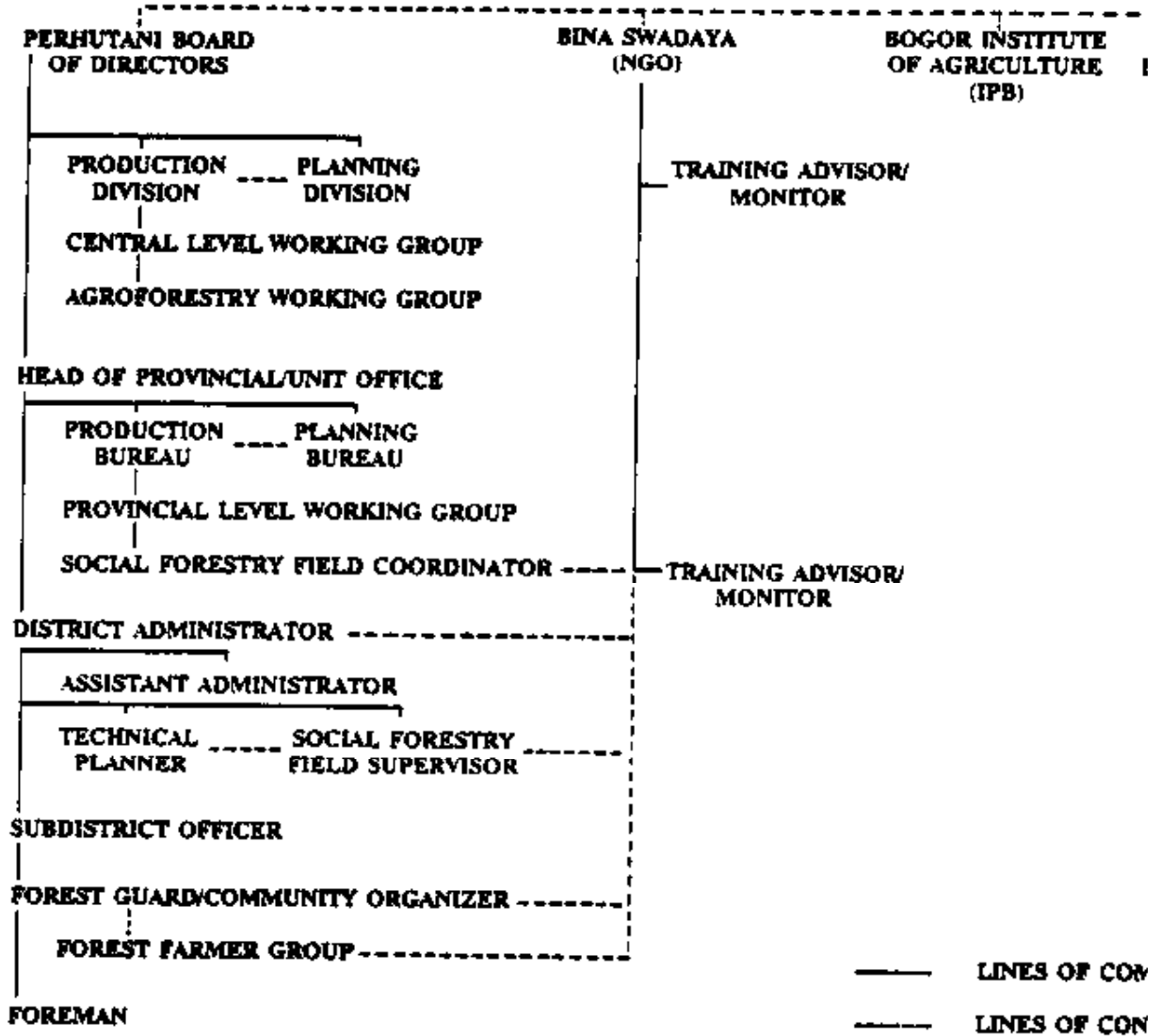
## STRUCTURE OF THE JAVA SOCIAL FORESTRY PROGRAMME

Social forestry activities in Java are structured as shown in Figure 2. At the central level, three outside organisations are associated with the programme. The Ford Foundation provides partial funding and advice; Bina Swadaya, a locally registered non-government organisation (NGO), conducts training in community participation techniques and has assigned staff members to work in the State Forest Corporation's central and provincial level offices, and the Bogor Institute of Agriculture provides expertise in socio-economic and agroforestry research. Within the SFC, social forestry working groups at the central and provincial levels determine the direction of the programme and monitor its progress. An agroforestry working group has also been established at the central level to establish agroforestry planning policies. A member of the provincial working group, the social forestry coordinator, supervises all social forestry activities in the province. The coordinator reports to the head of the Production Bureau and consults with the district administrators. At the district level, a social forestry field supervisor manages the social forestry activities in several districts. These supervisors report to the administrator in each of the districts in which they work and consult with social forestry coordinators. Forest guards are trained as community organisers and assigned to organise and work with forest-farmer groups in each community. These guards report to the officer responsible for the subdistrict in which they work and consult with the social forestry supervisors.

Outwardly the structure of the social forestry programme mirrors the administrative hierarchy of the SFC, but several significant changes have been made. These changes include the working groups established at the central and provincial levels to advise and monitor the programme, and the new positions created (coordinator and field supervisor) to supervise the programme daily. More significant differences are the changes in the role of forest guards from being strictly police to being both police and community organisers, and the role given to forest-farmer groups for designing and implementing management plans that respond to local needs.



**Figure 2: Structure of the Social Forestry Programme**



On first thought, using forest guards as community organisers appears to be a contradiction in terms. Funding limitations, however, demanded if the programme was to be replicated throughout Java that existing personnel had to be used. This practice is true of social forestry programmes everywhere: changing the role of forest guards from police to community organiser does not allow forest departments to hire all new personnel. Barber (1989:267), however, argues that SFC rejected the notion of an institutionalised role for non-SFC community organisers from the start in order to head off potential growth of an alternative centre for power and authority. By doing so on the basis of pragmatic necessity ('We can't afford to put non-SFC community organisers in every forest village'), SFC justified inclusion of forester-community organisers in the programme from the start and avoided discussion of its implications.

Despite the apparent contradiction in the role of forest guards as community organisers, the project has met with success. This may be because most forest guards are members of the local community and do not relish duties that put them in conflict with their neighbours - as evidenced by the amount of theft and destruction of forest property that has occurred. This is not to deny the argument by Peluso *et al.* (1989) that while many forest guards overlooked small transgressions in order to maintain working relations with local villagers, these informal systems of controlling forest access could also lead to misuse of power. Examples of these abuses include extracting illegal fees and accepting bribes (for access to land or 'purchase' of seedlings), underpaying forest labourers, and using strong-arm tactics with villagers. Other factors attributed to the success of forest guards as community organisers include the training given them in community organisation techniques, the opportunities given them to promote socially acceptable agroforestry systems, and the power given to forest-farmer groups to lobby for their own interests.

Another difference is the role of outsiders. The NGO, Bina Swadaya, trains forest guards in the skills required to become community organisers and assists the provincial coordinators to supervise, improve, and monitor the effectiveness of these trainees. The Bogor Agricultural Institute researches and designs more effective land management programmes. In the provincial planning office, the programme has developed a rapid rural appraisal team to act as an 'outsider' for evaluating forester-farmer relationships and for identifying suitable villages for establishing social forestry programmes (Khon Kaen University 1987). Theoretically, outsiders monitor the progress of the programme and continually create a tension, which is useful for prompting the SFC to change its practices.

## SOCIAL FORESTRY PLANNING IN JAVA

Social forestry programmes on public lands must be responsive to the needs and aspirations of farmers and foresters alike. To begin, both farmers and foresters require a programme that provides incentives for their participation. Farmers desire a programme that is responsive to their subsistence and cash needs and that is sensitive to their time and capital constraints. Foresters, on the other hand, desire a programme that meets planned production and conservation objectives.

Two other factors important to social forestry programmes are flexibility and clarity. Farmers require a flexible programme that responds quickly and easily to changes in weather and marketing conditions. The programme should contain minimal red-tape and should clearly define each farmer's rights and responsibilities for forest products and management. Foresters desire a programme with clear rights and responsibilities and, in particular, a programme that does not cause the state's ownership and control of forest land to be questioned by farmers or other public organisations. Foresters also want a programme that follows existing organisational and planning procedures. This minimises confusion among agency personnel and maximises the use of the agency's infrastructure and resources.

Finally, both farmers and foresters need a reliable programme. Farmers want to feel that their risks are minimal and their rights to forest products are secure. Foresters require a programme that produces reliable results, does not question their tenure rights, and is minimal trouble to implement. Occasionally, forest agencies may also be concerned with promoting goodwill among forest communities.

A multi-level planning approach is necessary for meeting these diverse and sometimes conflicting objectives. The following discussion describes the processes being used or proposed for designing and implementing management plans in Java. Consistent with the bureaucratic hierarchy, the programme is discussed in terms of central, provincial, district and village activities.

### **Central Level**

Two central level working groups - social forestry and agroforestry -set the policy guidelines that determine the structure of the programme. These guidelines provide the framework for stimulating the design of forest management plans by local communities and for tying these plans together into a national perspective. These working groups are also responsible for soliciting the cooperation of middle-level (provincial and district) personnel with the programme.

### **Provincial Level**

Social forestry planning teams have been organised at the provincial level under the supervision of the head of the Planning Bureaus. The responsibilities of these teams include:

- 1) identifying the forest districts to be included in the social forestry programme;
- 2) assessing and ranking according to need and suitability the villages to be included in the programme;
- 3) tying the management plans developed by different communities in the same police resort into an integrated activity.

These teams are responsible for introducing plans for these activities into SFC's 5-year plan.

To fulfil the first goal, the provincial planning teams meet with the administrators of the various forest districts under their supervision to determine the districts most suitable for inclusion in the social forestry programme. Criteria used for assessing these districts include:

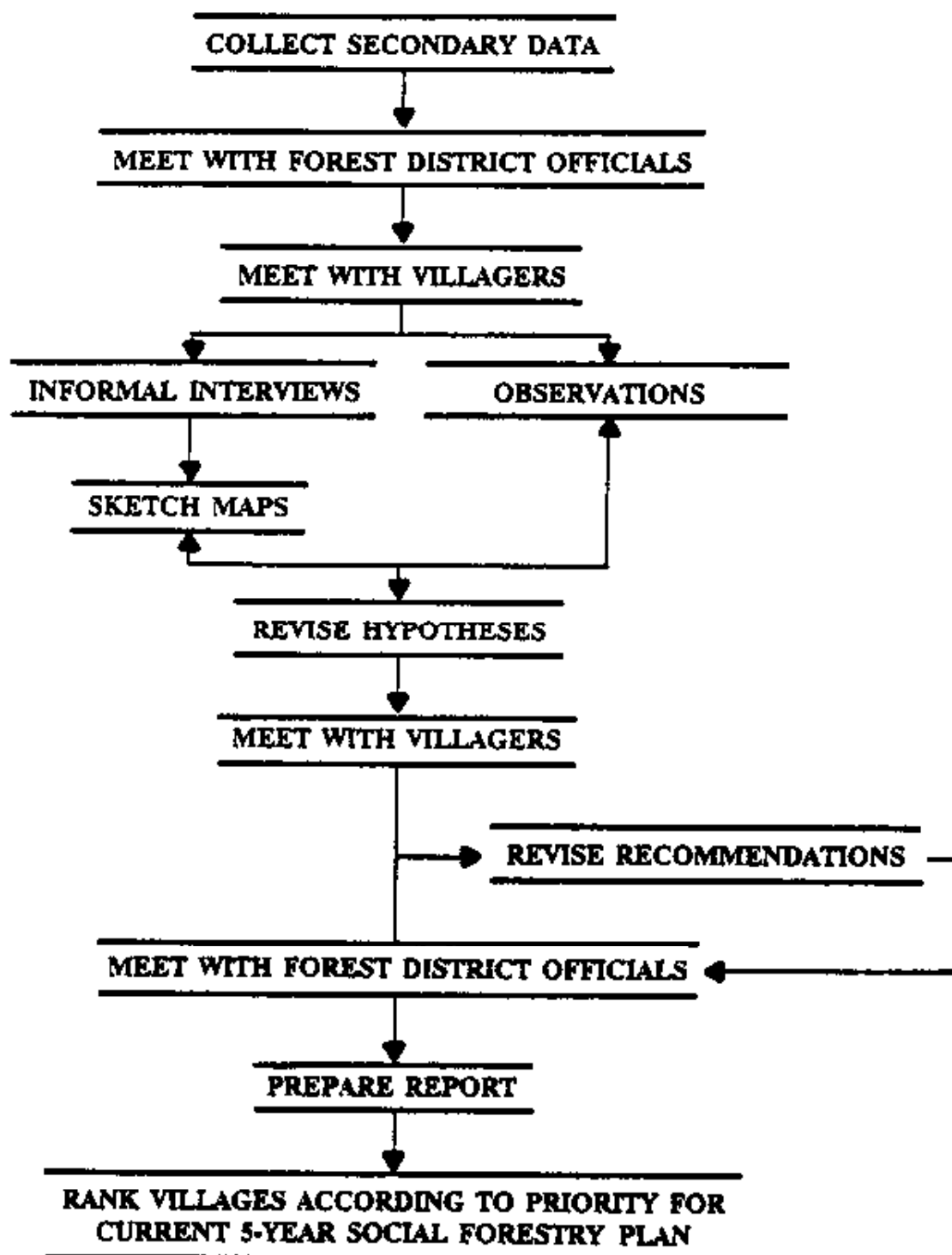
- 1) the amount of critical or degraded forest land found in the district;
- 2) an estimate of how much of this degradation is due to socio-economic pressures and not just the result of a poor resource base (determined by evaluating population density in surrounding areas);
- 3) the willingness of district personnel to participate in the social forestry programme;
- 4) the history of reforestation programmes in the district.

After assessing these factors, the teams give priority to the districts with the largest amount of suitable land. This analysis provides a broad outline of the districts and the number of hectares in each district that need to be scheduled for inclusion in the social forestry programme in the next 5-year plan.

As noted, **R**apid **R**ural **A**ppraisal (RRA) teams were established and trained for assessing the villages to be included in the social forestry programme and ranking them according to need. This responsibility was placed on the provincial and not on the district teams, because the operation of the district office itself forms part of the assessment. The RRA teams act as an 'internal' outside, evaluating forester-farmer relationships and identifying suitable villages for establishing social forestry programmes.

The RRA teams begin by collecting secondary information on the forest districts identified in the 5-year plan and meeting with the administrators of these districts to learn their perspectives on the problems and causes of land degradation (Figure 3) (Direksi Perum Perhutani 1989). Problems include failed nurseries, overgrazing, burning, and theft of lumber and firewood. During these meetings, a team selectively chooses several villages in which it will conduct RRAs. The team then visits these villages and holds meetings with village leaders to explain the objective of their visit and to learn about forest-use problems. The team spends several days meeting with villagers, learning about land-use practices and problems. Interviews with a cross-section of villagers are conducted in fields, forests, and homes. The team also maps forest-use patterns on sketch maps (Fox 1989) and checks results by walking through the village and surrounding area to observe their accuracy. Before leaving the village, the team presents their findings to villagers for discussion and verification.

**Figure 3: Using Rapid Rural Appraisal Methods to Identify and Recommend sites for Social Forestry Projects**



After reporting again to district officials, the team prepares a report on forest-use practices and problems, and possible agroforestry alternatives for overcoming these problems. These reports are studied by planners at the provincial office, and recommendations are made on the villages for inclusion in the social forestry programme during the current 5-year planning period.

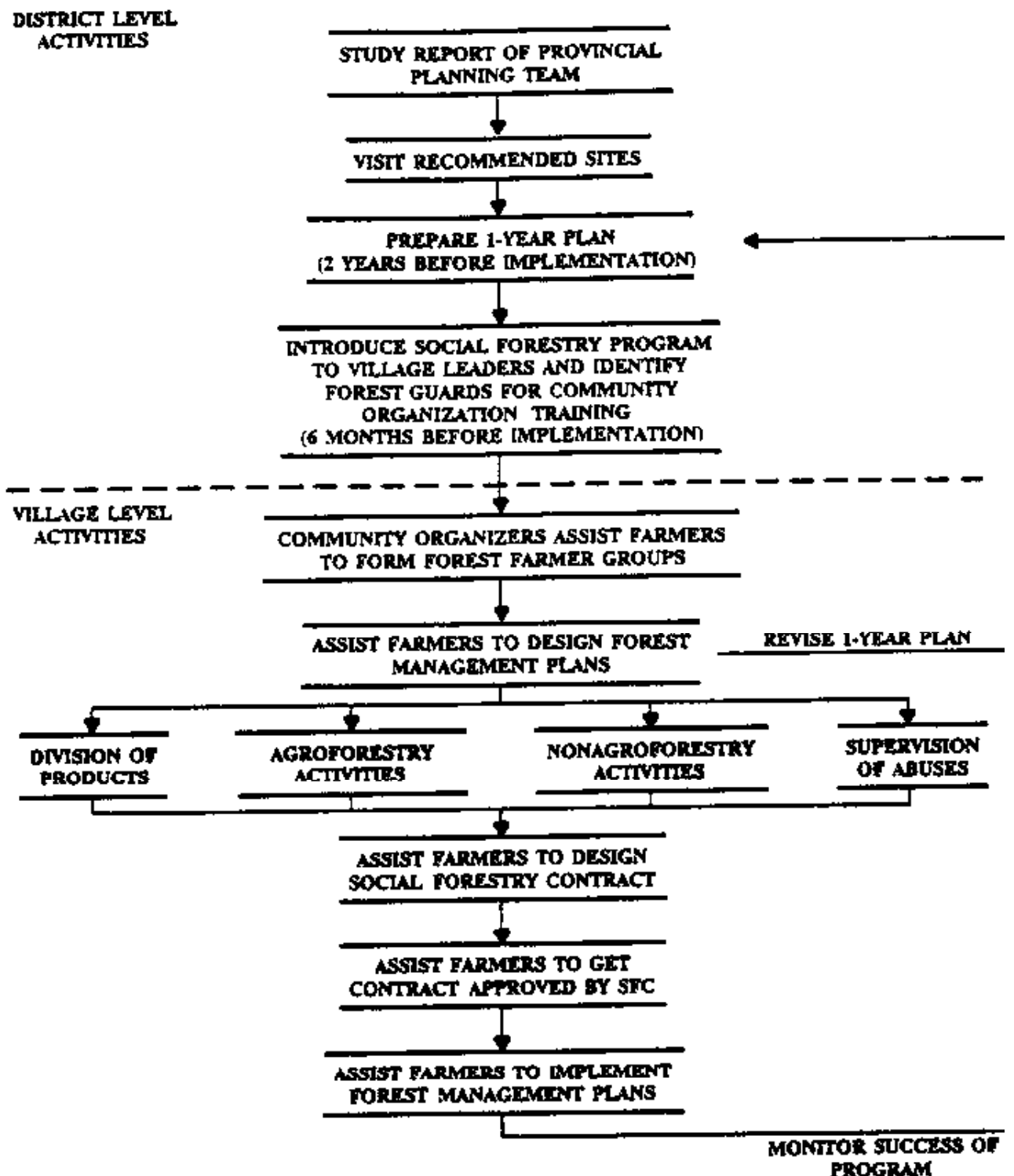
The final responsibility of the RRA teams is to identify how management plans developed by different communities in the same police resort can be tied together into an integrated activity. The RRA teams visit communities around the police resort and help them to identify who will be responsible for which pieces of land.

### **District Level**

The district level planning committees are responsible for implementing the broad goals suggested in the 5-year plan (Figure 4). A district committee begins by reviewing the RRA reports prepared by the provincial team. If more than 1 year has passed since the RRA was conducted or if the district team doubts the accuracy of the provincial report, the team is instructed to return to the field and evaluate the accuracy of the report. After reviewing the provincial reports, the district team makes a final recommendation on which villages will be included in the social forestry programme. This recommendation must be made at least 2 years before implementation so that plans can be made for these activities in the 1-year plan. This report includes information on area (hectares), forest block, police district, and broad pattern of social forestry to be implemented.

Six months to 1 year before implementation of the programme, district level personnel visit local government agencies to explain the programme and to seek agreement on the villages selected for the programme. The district team then visits the identified villages to explain the programme again and to seek cooperation. In addition, before the programme is implemented, forest guards from the affected communities are trained in community organising techniques such as forming and advising forest-farmer groups, communicating with farmers, and designing agroforestry plans (Barber 1989:293-320).

**Figure 4: District and Village Level Social Forestry Planning Activities**



After forest guards begin village organisation activities, the social forestry field coordinator, in conjunction with district personnel, provides backup support and acts as a funnel for channelling information from the field to provincial planners and *vice versa*. In addition, the social forestry field supervisor is responsible for monitoring the success of each forest-farmer group. Finally, social forestry programmes do not mean that the state relinquishes responsibility for policing forest lands. District personnel remain the enforcers of last resort for the community-initiated and community-designed forest management plans.

### **Village Level**

At the village level, the forest guard/community organiser works with local farmers to design and implement land management plans (Figure 4). The forest guard initiates a series of discussions with farmers living near or on forest lands about their needs and problems and helps them to form forest-farmer groups. The guard then assists the forest-farmer groups to identify agroforestry plans for the state forest land. Forest-farmer groups determine how products will be divided among members, how abuses will be regulated, and choose non-agroforestry activities for the group to engage in until the agroforestry project begins to bear fruit.

Results from the bargaining sessions held between the forest-farmer groups and the forest guard on the trees to be planted on state forest lands form the basis of a contract between the parties spelling out the rights and obligations of each group (Barber 1989:373-377). Based on land quality and spacing, the State Forest Corporation determines the primary forest species to be planted. The plants used for filling in the spaces between forest trees, for fencing, and for intercropping are chosen by the forest-farmer groups. A general contract is used for all social forestry projects, but the content of the contracts is determined individually for each project. Contracts are written in the local language so that all parties understand the content. These contracts form the basis of the 1-year social forestry plans and are renewable as long as both sides are happy with the results.



### **Agroforestry**

The Agroforestry Working Group at the central level divided the island of Java into a series of agro-ecological zones. Each zone represents similar soils, elevation, geomorphology, and climate. Within each zone, lists of appropriate annual and perennial species have been compiled. Recommendations are made in terms of suitable dominant, intermediate, and understorey species. These lists assist community organisers and communities to identify appropriate species for planting in their forest plots (Kelompok Kerja Agroforestry 1989). A technical manual has been prepared outlining the steps to be taken in designing the planting scheme. Most decisions on the species, planting distance, and other relevant factors are made in conjunction with the forest-farmer groups.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

The major responsibility for monitoring the success of the programme falls on SFC and its field workers. The forest guard/community organiser writes journals and monthly reports that are forwarded to the provincial coordinators. The five types of reports prepared by the forest guard/community organiser include:

1. A baseline study of biophysical and socio-economic data. The district level field supervisor assists the forest guard/community organiser to prepare these reports.
2. A forest-farmer group report. This will be prepared after the group is formed and describes the membership by income and land-holding category.
3. Annual forest-farmer group progress reports. These look at criteria such as membership stability and participation, leadership, by-laws, self-generated credit systems, technical progress, relationships with SFC, and attitudes of group members.
4. Monthly reports documenting the general progress of the project for use at the monthly forest-farmer group meetings.
5. Annual technical reports on the growth of tree species and the harvest yields from agricultural species.

The Ford Foundation has also funded a programme with the Development Studies Centre at the Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB) under which IPB students will undertake field research at project sites. The objectives of the studies include documenting and evaluating activities such as the establishment and development of forest-farmer groups. This group will also evaluate the impact of the social forestry programme on the economy and environment of the village (Barber 1989:389).

## PROBLEMS

As the programme has grown through three phases - diagnostic research, pilot project, and expansion - different problems have surfaced (Peluso *et al.* 1989). The problems associated with the expansion stage of this programme are typical for projects being widened to provincial or national scales. One important issue has been the limited number of staff able to provide attention to the rapidly growing number of social forestry sites. Reassigning forest personnel from 'protection' to 'community organiser' duties and providing them with training for their new duties are two blocks to the rapid expansion of social forestry programme. SFC is trying to provide one full-time social forestry specialist for each participating forest district.

A second problem has been a lack of support and misperception of the social forestry programme at the district level. Specifically, District Administrators and planning staff have not received sufficient training in social forestry, and many of these staff members still do not understand the purpose of the programme. Middle-level management has been particularly concerned with the distribution of authority and responsibility in the programme, including clarification of how the new actors fit into the existing hierarchy, who is responsible for what, and on what basis they are to be evaluated (Barber 1989:351). The failure to clarify these concerns has resulted in a lack of support from middle-level managers for programme implementation. To remedy this problem, the SFC plans a series of short meetings at the Provincial Office for introducing District Administrators into the programme.

A third major problem relates to the involvement of poor farmers in the programme. Project evaluations indicate that the programme has not yet succeeded in reaching the poorest farmers in a consistent manner. The extent to which the poor benefit from the programme is influenced by site selection, the method used to select forest-farmer group members, and the level of support provided to group members during implementation. Barber 1989:398) argues that the primary goal of the programme is not increasing community welfare but rehabilitating forests. There is thus a built-in incentive to recruit the most able forest farmers rather than the poorest, and foresters often perceive wealthier farmers as more skilled and diligent. In addition, SFC defines 'participation' as meaning participation within the existing structure. The social forestry programme is thus attempting to build in protection against the symptoms of elite domination but neglecting to address the causes (Barber 1989:278).

## REFLECTIONS

The social forestry programme in Java was designed to solicit the cooperation of farmers with forest management plans by involving them in the design and implementation of these plans. The programme was also designed to solicit the support of SFC personnel and to maximise the use of the corporation's resources by fitting the programme to the structure of the SFC. Our discussion of the responsibilities of different actors in this programme is not meant to imply that any one actor or level of the bureaucratic hierarchy is more important than another. But rather we hope to provide insight into a programme where both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches have a role. Unfortunately, this discussion may create the impression that the responsibilities of different actors are clearly differentiated. In reality these roles overlap and are shared by members at different levels in this hierarchy.

National and provincial level planners do not dictate the content of local management plans but provide a general framework for stimulating the design of these plans by local communities and for tying these plans together into a national perspective. These planners provide assistance for meeting the short-term needs of the villages willing to participate and for sharing the risks associated with new programmes. National and provincial level planners are also responsible for selecting and ranking the areas to be included in social forestry programmes and for allocating budget resources effectively among project participants.

Planners at the district level are responsible for monitoring village activities and for providing back-stop support for village-initiated requests. District planners serve as a go-between, feeding information up and down between provincial planners and village communities. Social forestry programmes do not mean that all policing efforts can be dropped, and district level personnel remain responsible for enforcing the social forestry contracts made with farmers through the participatory planning process.

At the village level, farmers work with a forest guard/community organiser to design and implement land management plans that meet their needs. Farmers working through forest-farmer groups design plans for improving land management, distributing products among themselves, and protecting against abuses. Forest-farmer groups work with district and provincial personnel to adapt village programmes to broader national needs and to take advantage of market opportunities.

Community participation in the designing of land management plans and the sharing of forest products is the 'carrot' for soliciting villager support for controls on forest-use practices. Community participation also guarantees that land management plans are realistic in light of environmental and social constraints. The role of the forestry department is to provide suitable conditions for community participation to develop, and to help individual communities design plans that meet national needs and minimise marketing risks for individual farmers. Forestry departments also provide the 'stick' for enforcing the terms of the social forestry contract and regulating abuses. Outsiders play an important role in these programmes by training forestry personnel to be sensitive to village needs, by conducting research on the best land management technologies available, and by monitoring project results. Through these activities, outsiders help keep the forest department 'honest' in its attempt to reform its approach to land management problems.

This programme was not designed to induce significant changes in the structural, legal, or policy framework of forest management on Java. Rather, the programme employs instrumental changes in the structure and

technology of agroforestry systems to stabilise the environmental, social, and institutional landscape in which SFC operates (Barber 1989:399). As for the farmers who live near or on forest lands, SFC seek to solicit participation in ways that respond to resource degradation problems but do not challenge SFC's power and authority. As for working with other government agencies and international donors, SFC seeks to integrate these actors into SFC's efforts to order and control its universe. In the short run, the programme depends on its ability to improve the welfare of rural communities dependent on SFC land.

By seeking a middle way through the tangle and contradictions of bottom-up land management plans being implemented by a top-down management agency, social forestry programmes may be attempting the impossible. This paper describes how the SFC in Java is attempting to wrestle with this problem. The first few years of experience give cause for guarded optimism; it will be interesting to observe the long-term results.

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