

VALUING ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BY THE UPLAND POOR: METHODS FOR FACILITATING ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFERS

PENILAIAN JASA LINGKUNGAN YANG DIHASILKAN OLEH PETANI MISKIN DI LAHAN KERING: METODE TRANSFER JASA LINGKUNGAN

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ABSTRAK

Makalah ini memaparkan tentang program penelitian dalam mengembangkan mekanisme untuk menghargai petani miskin lahan kering bagi jasa lingkungan yang mereka hasilkan. Banyak komunitas lahan kering dan pegunungan di Asia mengelola lahan dan menghasilkan jasa lingkungan kepada komunitas luar lain yang menikmati. Jenis-jenis jasa lingkungan misalnya: penyedia air bersih dalam jumlah yang besar pada daerah aliran sungai, proteksi keanekaragaman hayati, dan penambatan karbon yang dapat mengurangi pemanasan global. Dari satu sisi seringkali komunitas memerlukan biaya oportunitas yang tinggi dalam menyediakan jasa lingkungan tersebut, sementara itu jasa lingkungan tersebut dinikmati masyarakat luas tanpa biaya. Program penelitian ini mengupayakan kesetaraan yang bertujuan untuk merumuskan pengalihan jasa lingkungan kepada komunitas masyarakat lahan kering sehingga dapat meningkatkan taraf hidup, mengurangi kemiskinan, dan melestarikan jasa lingkungan. Sebuah komponen yang menonjol dari program ini adalah pelaksanaan studi penilaian jasa lingkungan yang memberikan informasi dalam memfasilitasi perjanjian layanan lingkungan antara komunitas lahan kering yang mengupayakan dan masyarakat luar yang menikmati. Metode penilaian didiskusikan secara singkat pada makalah ini.

ABSTRACT

The paper describes the action research program, developing mechanisms to reward the upland poor in Asia for environmental services that they provide (RUPES). Many upland and mountain communities in Asia manage landscapes that provide environmental services to outside beneficiaries. The services include clean and abundant water supplies from watersheds, biodiversity protection, and stocks of carbon that may alleviate global warming. While such communities often experience high opportunity costs in supplying them, the same services are provided freely to the

beneficiaries. The action research program seeks to address this asymmetry by formulating environmental transfers that reward the poor upland communities through enhancing their livelihood, reducing poverty, and sustaining environmental services. A salient component of the action research is the conduct of environmental valuation studies that would provide information for facilitating environmental service agreements among upland providers and off-site beneficiaries. These valuation methods are briefly discussed in this paper.

BACKGROUND¹

Among the vast multitude of the poor in Asia, the populations that have been most affected by the process of marginalisation are those living in the uplands, namely in the hills and mountainous areas which cover almost half the total area of the region². Nearly one quarter of Asia's absolute poor (some 250 million people) exist in a meagre existence in these areas.

The benefits of national and local investments in economic development have tended to bypass most of these poor upland people as the composition of development initiatives and/or their products are often irrelevant or inaccessible to the upland communities. Being far away and disconnected from administrative and economic power centres means that the political, social, economic, and ecological niches occupied by them are not central to national development concerns or priorities. Hence, their development needs and aspirations are often not on the "map" of decision-makers and rank very low in the hierarchy of national priorities. Even when well-intentioned macro-policies are developed to try to improve the situation in the uplands, they are often too "macro" in their approach, relying on economic models and methods that give insufficient attention to differences between localities.

In addition, upland and mountain people often bear a disproportionate share of the negative externalities of the development process, whether it be the loss of a production base to land acquisition for development projects or to migration from the lowlands, or the appropriation of natural resources (including forest and water) by national and non-local interests. The lack of security of tenure over livelihood resources has led, not only to disempowerment, but also to unsustainable natural resource management practices.

The steepness of slopes and the high risks of erosion, landslides and flooding in downstream villages, however, should make the uplands a priority target for development initiatives to reduce poverty. However, lack of local capital and security of tenure over land and tree resources have resulted in a low level of investment. It has

¹ This section draws heavily from the IFAD/ICRAF Final Project Design Document, "Program for Developing Mechanisms to Reward the Upland Poor in Asia for the Environmental Services that They Provide (February 2001).

² Out of a total of 1,700 million hectares that make up the continent, nearly 236 million hectares (14%) have slopes exceeding 30% and a further 664 million hectares (39%) have slopes between 8-30%.