

Study Tour for WEMB Members

Lombok Indonesia, October 5 – 12, 2010

Background

Ecotourism involves the cooperation of many sectors to succeed. In 2008, WWF facilitated the setting up of a multi - stakeholder management Board to encourage cooperation among relevant stakeholders in developing and implementing a sustainable ecotourism in the Eastern Plains Landscape - the Wildlife Ecotourism Management Board or WEMB. However, since its formation in 2008 the Board did not fully operate because of limited appreciation and lack of clear framework and guideline to operate it especially on perceived overlaps in jurisdiction among the members. Moreover, while the concept of having a multi stakeholder management committee is already being implemented in other countries many years ago, for other countries this is still relatively new concept.

To learn more about this concept and approach to ecotourism WWF organized a comparative study tour for selected WEMB members in Indonesia on October 6-12. The team visited the Ecotourism project in Gunung Rinjani National Park which proved to be a good example of a park ecotourism project managed by multiple stakeholder Board composed of government, NGOs, local community, and tourism industry.

Objectives

The study tour objectives are to learn from the experience of the Rinjani Trek Management Board (RTMB) in implementing a sustainable tourism in a national park and identify practices and guiding principles which can be applied by the WEMB. After the visit it is expected that management Board will be inspired to improve the WEMB operation and develop action plans to move forward.

Participants

Nine people joined the study tour; three from WWF, 4 from government offices, 1 from community and 1 from private sector. See attachment for participant's profile.

Expectation from the participants

Prior to the trip, WWF staff facilitated expectation setting among the participants. Below is the list of expectations:

- To learn more about the roles and responsibilities of each agency who are members of RTMB, structures, name of agencies who are involved.
- To learn from the benefit sharing mechanism they are using;
- To understand what legal framework supports the Gunung Rinjani National Park and the Rinjani Trek Management Board
- To know more about the tourists profile visiting Rinjani National Park – age, origin, nationalities; who are their most common market.
- Find out how the project is linking ecotourism to conservation of the national park, community involvement in conservation, what the carrying capacity is and how to avoid the negative impact of tourism.
- How community participate in the ecotourism activity and management, problems encountered, challenges, and solution (both bad and good things)
- To know about the participation of local community and project's approach in encouraging their participation; want to find out if community involvement is voluntary or forced
- Find out from the tour guides and catering group can get benefits from ecotourism
- To learn how the community homestay and hoesl work together in promoting ecotourism
- To learn about the tour packages in Rinjani park and what attract the visitors
- Learn from their promotion and marketing strategies
- Learn how they are ensuring respect to culture and indigenous communities
- The team expects to meet officers of the Park, Finance officers of the community groups. Administrator, Rangers, Village leaders and Community leaders.

About the study site

Mt. Rinajni National Park, a 41, 330 hectares national park established in 1977, is the second highest volcanic peak in Indonesia with an altitude of 3, 726 masl. Surrounding the national park is a protection forest of about 66,000 hectares being managed by the provincial government. The National Park is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forestry.

It is considered as a sacred place by the Sasak and Balinese tribes in Indonesia hence the area receive thousands of pilgrims every year who come to give offerings to the crater lake located at the peak of the park.

The area is a known ecotourism destination in Indonesia and considered by many as a good model of ecotourism. The community based ecotourism project here started in 1999 with funding from the New Zealand Government which aimed to strengthen the relationship of the three key players – national park officers, tourism industry and local communities. A good partnership was developed among these main actors which paved a way for the creation of the Rinjani Management Board. The Board, composed of NGO representatives, government representative, tour operators, and local communities, serves as a coordination forum for the management of the ecotourism in Mt. Rinjani National Park. It became the organization to oversee the continuity of project activities after the funding from New Zealand government ended in 2003.

Highlights of the study tour

City Tour

The first day of the trip was spent touring around Lombok province and visiting weaving village in and pottery village.

Project Presentation and meeting with Ecotourism Stakeholders in Lombok

The second day was spent listening to presentations about the RTMB, the Mt. Rinjani National Park, and the Rinjani Ecotourism project.

As an overview of the ecotourism project, Mr. Ary Suhandi, INDECON's Executive Director, presented the role of INDECON in developing ecotourism activities in Indonesia. INDECON is an ecotourism network in Indonesia primarily doing capacity building, planning and research, product development and market link for ecotourism projects in Indonesia.

The provincial tourism officer presented the role of provincial government in developing and promoting the ecotourism industry in the province of Lombok. One of the strategies is announcing to the country through the National Tourism Office about readiness of Lombok to host national and international events like conferences, exhibits, festivals, government meetings, etc. They also sent letters to the president asking his assistance to promote Lombok Ecotourism.

The Park Manager provided a brief presentation about Mt. Rinjani National Park. The presentation outlined the history of the park, the ecological features, challenges, and management strategies.

Mr. _____, staff of RTMB presented the history of RTMB and the process of its formation. The team got interested with the role of the RTMB in promoting and marketing the ecotourism in Rinjani.

Visit to Senaru and Sembalun Lawang Villages

The third and fourth days were spent in villages. The team got a chance to find out more about communities' involvement in the ecotourism project and its relationship to the RTMB during this trip. The ecotourism project indeed promoted entrepreneurship among the members of the community as can be seen by the number of guesthouses.

There are 20 villages around the Park but the main access to the peak of the park is from two villages – Senaru on the northern side and Sembalun Lawang on the eastern side.

Senaru, the first village we visited is located at the northern foot of Mt. Rinjani National Park, around 2.5 hours drive from Mataram, Lombok's capital town. Inside the village are number of lodges and homestays and the Rinjani Trek Center where visitors can find more information about the park and the tour packages. The center also serves as the office of the Tour Organizer Cooperatives. Senaru is one of the entry sites to the peak of Mt. Rinjani. Trekkers

who want to go to the Mt. Rinjani lake at the top of the park prefer to start their trek from this side of the park and spend 6 hours to reach the base camp of the park then take another 2 – hour to reach the summit. There are number of waterfalls around the village and traditional villages occupied by the Sasa indigenous communities – the original settler in Mt. Rinani.

Semablum, the second village we visited is located on the east of Mt. Rinjani. Located at a higher altitude of 1,500 m asl, Sembalum village is endowed with fertile soil which favor a good agriculture production for the local communities. Trekkers who want to go direct to the summit of Mt. Rinjani prefer to start from this side. Other tourist attractions in the village are traditional villages, traditional weaving, and attractive scenery with the different colorful flowers striding the roads on the way to the village. There is also a Cooperative of tour guides in this village and is managing a guesthouse.

Activities in the village

The team had a meeting with the local community in Senaru participated by the elders, village chief, local guides, Park Rangers, Cooperative Officers, tour guides and porters. The Cooperative officer shared their experience how they started the tour operation in the village and how the benefits are shared among the Cooperative members and to larger member of the community.

Learning

The following are the learning which the participants think they can apply after the visit:

- Annual tourism planning at provincial level.
- Processing of community establishment, and the promotion.
- Good guide, the traditional product conservation.
- Organize meeting before processing work
- Good experience of local guide, and income of local guide. Financial system of benefit sharing, provide activity report to stakeholder. The processing of ecotourism establishment, enhance to attendant of community, benefit sharing and cooperation with stakeholder. The technical for invite the community to join the meeting. Cleaning in national park, training (forest...)
- Traditional weaving,
- How to be a good guide
- Organize the cultural village, create the orchid project and propagate to the community.

Action plan

Internal to WWF, the following immediate action points were identified:

- 1) Prepare report and disseminate to the participants – in Khmer
- 2) Phaht, Noketh and Amy brainstorm about WEMB composition and TOR
- 3) Present the ideas/concept to each WEMB member for their inputs
- 4) Organize meeting to finalize the draft/concept

Long term plans

No.	Activities/Outputs	2010	2011				Involvement	
		Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	WWF	Gov't
1	Review of members and term of reference of WEMB: -Develop draft of WEMB's structure, roles and responsibilities -Organize meetings/workshop to reviewing and reflecting the structure, roles and responsibilities -Review the existing Provincial Deika for WEMB and approved by provincial governor						Amy, Nougeth and Phath	CFA, PDoE and PDoT
2	Review of the existing benefit sharing of the ecotourism activities/ management in MPF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For community, guide and other maintenance • Monitoring and reporting system • Capacity building to ecotourism committee's members 						Amy, Nougeth and Phath	CFA, PDoE and PDoT
3	Integrating ecotourism management plans into the short, medium, and long term of the process of the government development planning mechanism at three levels: commune, district and province						Phath	ExCom
4	Doing training need assessment. Within this period of assessment, ecotourism committee, guides, and other stakeholders shall be provided on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic concept of biodiversity conservation, environment and species • Preparing ecotourism planning process and implementation 						Amy, Nougeth and Phath	PDoT
5	Organizing quarterly meeting and annual reflection workshop with participation of provincial government departments and other stakeholders in the Mondulkiri province						Phath, Amy	CFA, PDoE and PDoT