

Lessons from the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest of West Kalimantan: Insights to Strengthen Indonesia's Social Forestry Program

by

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Candidate's Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the author's knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.



Rizka Dewi Zuleika

Date: 23/10/2025

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Abstract

Forests are social and political spaces where questions of rights, access, and governance intersect with the lives of people, including Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs). In Indonesia, centralized control rooted in colonial legacies has historically marginalized these communities, creating decades of tenure conflicts. The country's Social Forestry (SF) program attempts to address these injustices through five schemes, with the Customary Forest scheme recognizing the ownership of customary forest by the customary communities.

While substantial literature exists on the legal frameworks of SF, less attention has been paid to post- community recognition outcomes: how formal recognition shapes daily practices, power dynamics, and the enabling conditions for self-governance. This research addresses this gap by examining whether customary forests translate into meaningful governance outcomes. As a case study, I focused on the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest in West Kalimantan is managed by the Melayang Hamlet community, dominated by Dayak Bekati' Rara people. I conducted three weeks of fieldwork including interviews and participant observation with communities, government institutions, and NGOs.

The findings reveal interconnected opportunities and challenges. Recognition created opportunities through tenure security, access to funding via SF Business Groups (KUPS), hybrid economic models reinforcing cultural identity, and strengthened social cohesion. However, structural capacity gaps created NGO dependency, inequitable participation persists, and weakening traditional knowledge transmission threatens future leadership.

With Indonesia targeting 12.7 million hectares to be managed under the SF program by 2030, these findings may apply broadly to other SF schemes. This research provides an example of pathways needed for recognition to achieve meaningful outcomes: adaptive policy frameworks that address structural constraints, long-term technical support beyond recognition process, and enabling conditions for exercising community self-determination. The study demonstrates that while acknowledging community rights provides a foundation, developing these pathways is essential for translating formal recognition into sustainable self-governance.

This research gathered perspectives from communities, government institutions, and Non-Government Institutions. However, it was only possible to gain limited access to officials in Ministry of Forestry and Forest Management Units, who support the recognition process. This is important for future investigation regarding evolution of the recognition process and multistakeholder coordination. Future research should examine community decision-making processes and internal power dynamics, dependency patterns and traditional knowledge transfer, and ethnobotanical and ecosystems assessments, to understand how both social and ecological dimensions can inform more effective Community-based Forest Management.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMAN	<i>Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara</i> (Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago)
APL	<i>Areal Penggunaan Lain</i> (Area for Other Purposes/Other Land Use Zone)
AUD	Australian Dollar
BRWA	<i>Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat</i> (Registry of Indigenous Territories)
BUMDes	Badan Usaha Milik Desa (Village-owned Enterprise)
CBFM	Community-based Forest Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FMU	Forest Management Unit
Ha	Hectare
HS	Harmonized System (tariff classification code)
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
INTAN	Institut Riset dan Pengembangan Teknologi Hasil Hutan
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
KUPS	<i>Kelompok Usaha Perhutanan Sosial</i> (Social Forestry Business Group)
Mha	Million hectares
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MoF	Ministry of Forestry
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
PARAKU	<i>Pasukan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara</i> (North Kalimantan People's Forces)
PDAM	Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum (Regional Water Company)
PERDA	<i>Peraturan Daerah</i> (Regional Regulation)
PGRS	<i>Pasukan Gerilya Rakyat Sarawak</i> (Sarawak People's Guerrilla Forces)
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
SK	<i>Surat Keputusan</i> (Decree)
SF	Social Forestry
TFCA	Tropical Forest Conservation Act
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Chapter 1: Introduction

Forests are social and political spaces where questions of rights, access, and governance intersect with the lives of people. Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) have long managed forest landscapes through customary practices and traditional knowledge. However, centralized control, often colonial legacies, have frequently marginalized these communities, displace them of ancestral territories and criminalizing traditional resource use. In Indonesia, this tension between state authority and tenure conflicts has persisted for decades. The country's Social Forestry (SF) program announced in 2014, officially launched in 2015, and formally regulated in 2016, represents an ambitious attempt to address these historical injustices by recognizing community rights and promoting inclusive forest management. Among its five schemes, the customary forest scheme stands out for its potential to transform tenure by recognizing customary communities' ownership rights over their ancestral territories. However, despite progressive policy frameworks, implementation remain challenged. This research explores whether formal recognition of customary forests translates into meaningful outcomes in forest governance, community empowerment, and tenure security by examining the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest in West Kalimantan, managed by the Melayang Hamlet community who are dominated by Dayak Bekati' Rara people. Drawing on fieldwork including interviews and participant observation, I investigate impacts, challenges, and opportunities of customary forest recognition, and explore what lessons can strengthen Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) implementation more broadly.

1.1 *Community-based Forest Management (CBFM)*

Approximately 1.6 billion people in the world rely on forests which cover 31% of the world landmass (Chao, 2012; FAO and UNEP, 2020), including Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) who live in and around them. Despite having historically managed forests and utilized forest resources to sustain their livelihoods (Angelsen *et al.*, 2014; Berkes *et al.*, 2000), their role is often overlooked (Poffenberger, 2000; Ota *et al.*, 2020b). This centralized state forest management has been especially prevalent in post-colonized countries, where governments assumed all rights over forest access and management to maximize forest production (Gilmour, 2016). In response to this exclusionary approach, Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) emerged in the mid-1970s, representing a shift toward participatory approaches that recognize communities' knowledge, practices, and rights (Gilmour, 2016; Pulhin *et al.*, 2007; Maryudi *et al.*, 2012; Fisher *et al.*, 2019),

Since the late 1970s to early 1980s, countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have launched CBFM programs (Weiland and Dedeurwaerdere, 2010). CBFM implementation is particularly critical in tropical countries, where more than half a billion people depend on forests

for their daily subsistence and livelihoods (Baynes et al. 2015; Agrawal 2007). In these tropical contexts, CBFM faces unique challenges related to high biodiversity (Rasolofoson *et al.*, 2015), complex tenure systems (Holland *et al.*, 2014; Pulhin *et al.*, 2007), and intense land-use pressures (Pendrill *et al.*, 2022).

Indonesia represents a critical case where these dynamics are in interplay. With around 63 per cent of their land area covered by forest (source) and more than 32 millions of people depend on forest for their livelihoods (MoEF Survey 2014) (MoEF Indonesia, 2025), Indonesia started its CBFM approach through Social Forestry program since 2015 with a target of 12.7 million hectares of state forests under SF permit. However, the program must contend with a complex history of state control and persistent tenure conflicts, particularly affecting customary communities (Safitri, 2022; Sertianti and Singer, 2025).

1.2 Indonesia's forest governance and tenure conflicts

Indonesian forest management has been shaped by a long and complex history of colonization, particularly the legal construct of 'state forest' established by the Dutch East Indies colonial government. This principle of state control persisted after independence in 1945 through the 1967 Basic Forest Law (Law No. 5/1967), which centralized forest management under the Ministry of Forestry. The law failed to recognize customary territories, making much of the livelihood activities of forest-dependent communities illegal (Peluso, 1992; Riggs *et al.*, 2016; Rachman and Siscawati, 2017).

Beginning in the late 1960s, the state allocated extensive forest concessions to logging and plantation companies, fundamentally altering forest landscapes while ignoring community rights (Contreras-Hermosilla *et al.*, 2005; Barr *et al.*, 2006). This centralized governance model, marked by competing land use priorities of different actors, created multiple layers of conflicts that span between vertical conflicts of the state and local communities, and horizontally among communities themselves (Resosudarmo *et al.*, 2014; Riggs *et al.*, 2016; Dhiaulhaq and McCarthy, 2020; Siscawati *et al.*, 2017). These tensions intensified with the 1999 Forestry Law (Law No. 41/1999), which categorized customary forests (*hutan adat*) as state forests, reinforcing state authorities over customary territories (Siscawati *et al.*, 2017).

The 2013 Constitutional Court Decision (No. 35/PUU-X/2012) marked a turning point by removing customary forests from state forest classification and reclassify them under rights forests (*hutan hak*). Rights forests are then regulated specifically under Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) Regulation 32/2015. Despite legal progress towards recognizing the rights of customary communities, practical implementation remain slow (Arizona *et al.*, 2024), tenure conflicts persist (Arizona and Illiyina, 2024; Fajrini, 2022; Tarigan *et al.*, 2019), and a

comprehensive legal framework for protecting customary communities continues to be absent, as the Customary Communities Bill (*RUU Masyarakat Adat*) has stalled in the parliament over years (Putri, 2024; Soetjipto, 2022).

1.3 Social Forestry Program

In response to these long-standing tensions and the need for more inclusive forest governance, the Government of Indonesia formalized CBFM through a Social Forestry (SF) program in 2014 (De Royer *et al.*, 2018; Erbaugh, 2019a). The program was later formalized in 2016 through the Social Forestry Regulation 83/2016 (revoked by Regulation 9/2021) by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (now Ministry of Forestry). SF involves a diverse range of approaches, from community sustainable extraction of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) to forest governance based on traditional customs, all within a framework where the state devolves certain rights and responsibilities over forest resources and management to local communities (Erbaugh, 2019b). It emerged as a policy innovation aimed at recognizing and strengthening the role of local communities in forest management with three objectives, (1) equal access and distribution of forest asset; (2) to reduce poverty and improve forest community welfare; and (3) to resolve the long-standing tenure conflicts in state forests (MoEF Indonesia, 2021). With a national target of 12.7 million hectares by 2030, Indonesia's SF program comprises five schemes: village forest, community forest, community plantation forest, customary forest, and forestry partnerships (MoEF Indonesia, 2021).

In the absence of a comprehensive law protecting the rights of customary communities, the customary forest scheme recognizes customary rights over ancestral territories. The other four schemes aim to co-manage state forests with communities through fix-term permits that are not transferrable but extendable. In contrast, the customary forest scheme offers a fundamentally different tenure arrangement. This development followed the 2013 Constitutional Court Decision, which reclassified customary forests as distinct from state forests and recognized the communal ownership rights of customary communities through ministerial decrees without time limits (Resosudarmo *et al.*, 2019; MoEF Indonesia, 2021). The Social Forestry regulation allows customary communities to legally continue their customary practices over their forests and their resources within their territories (Pambudi, 2020; Rakatama and Pandit, 2020).

Despite these progressive policy frameworks, the implementation of customary forest recognition remains slow and uneven across Indonesia's provinces (Simarmata, 2024; Sopaheluwakan *et al.*, 2023). Understanding how this scheme works in practice is essential to assess whether the SF program can effectively address historical tenure insecurity, as well as improve and empower communities (Erbaugh, 2019a). Moreover, in the case of customary

forests, the intent of the SF program extends beyond livelihood improvement to the formal recognition of the rights of customary communities.

West Kalimantan provides a critical context for examining this implementation, as the province is home to diverse Dayak communities (König, 2016). The Dayak people are known for their long-standing customary governance systems, which have historically managed forests through traditional practices and ecological knowledge (Siahaya *et al.*, 2016; Sada *et al.*, 2019).

1.4 Research purpose and questions

Building on this context, this research examines how Indonesia's Social Forestry Program, specifically the customary forest scheme, has influenced the governance of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, managed by the Melayang Hamlet community in West Kalimantan. The community consists predominantly of Dayak Bekati' Rara people. The study employs qualitative fieldwork methods, including interviews and participant observation, to explore the complex interactions between the formal recognition of customary forest, customary communities' governance, community development, and the roles of external stakeholders such as government agencies, NGOs, and development partners.

This research focuses on a case study from Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest located in Melayang Hamlet, Sahan Village, Bengkayang District, West Kalimantan. The Pikul Pengajid Customary Forest was first recognized through a Regent's Decree in 2002, and the community later obtained legal certainty to manage 100 hectares of customary forest through the MoEF decree No. SK 1300/MENLHK-PSKL/PKYHA/PSL.1/3/2018. By examining this case, the study seeks to understand the socio-economic dynamics, governance outcomes, and future potential of integrating state-led forest programs with traditional governance systems.

Drawing from literature reviews, interviews with the community members and stakeholders, and field observations, this research addresses three central questions:

1. How has the recognition of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest impacted the Dayak Bekati' Rara community's rights over and governance of the forest?
2. What are the main challenges and opportunities faced by the Dayak Bekati' Rara community in managing their forest as customary forest?
3. What lessons can be learned from Pikul - Pengajid Customary Forest to strengthen the implementation of CBFM?

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis comprises six chapters that progressively build the understanding of customary forest governance under Indonesia's Social Forestry program. **Chapter 1: Introduction** establishes the research context, rationale, and scope. It introduces the context of Community-

based Forest Management (CBFM), forest tenure reform in Indonesia, and its context through Social Forestry. It situates Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest as the case study within broader debates about customary communities' rights in Indonesia, and presents the research questions that guide the investigation. **Chapter 2: Literature Review** examines existing theoretical and empirical foundations relevant to this research. The chapter is focusing on CBFM approaches, especially on Social Forestry in Indonesia including Customary Forest scheme, and theoretical frameworks used **Chapter 3: Methodology** describes the research design, methodological approach, and data collection methods to gather perspectives from the community and the stakeholders regarding the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest governance in the field. The chapter also addresses ethical considerations, researcher positionality, and methodological limitations to ensure transparency about the research process and its constraints. **Chapter 4: Results** presents the empirical data gathered from the fieldwork. Data is presented through a combination of narrative description, direct quotations from interviews, and observational accounts. **Chapter 5: Discussion** interprets the findings in relation to the research questions and broader theoretical frameworks. implications in addressing the research questions. Finally, **Chapter 6: Conclusion** synthesizes the key findings and their implications for policy and practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Decades of state-centric control, exacerbated by complicated tenure, have led to persistent land tenure conflicts in Indonesia. This chapter explores the theoretical and empirical foundations informing research on customary forest recognition under Indonesia's Social Forestry program. It begins by situating the study within broader Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) approaches, examining key principles, evolution, and success factors characterizing effective community governance. The second section traces Indonesia's complex forest governance—from colonial-era state control through contemporary reform efforts—illuminating how historical policies have shaped current tenure conflicts and explaining Social Forestry as a policy response.

Particular attention is given to the Customary Forest scheme and its legal framework, as understanding this regulatory context is crucial for comprehending both the significance of customary forest recognition and the challenges accompanying it. The third and fourth sections review empirical evidence on the challenges customary communities face before and after formal recognition, examining bureaucratic barriers, competing land claims, capacity gaps, governance issues, and coordination problems. By synthesizing findings from studies across Indonesia, this chapter establishes the conceptual foundation for examining how the recognition of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest has shaped the customary communities' self-governance, rights, and development, while also highlighting gaps in existing knowledge that this research seeks to address through fieldwork.

2.1 Community-based Forest Management (CBFM)

Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) is formally described by RECOFTC (2013) as “initiatives, sciences, policies, institutions and processes that are intended to increase the role of local people in governing and managing forest resources”. This approach to forest co-management between states and communities operates through a range of decentralization and devolution of user rights and responsibilities (Figure 2.1). CBFM aims to achieve outcomes across various dimensions, from socioeconomic (such as community empowerment) to biophysical outcomes (such as forest conservation and sustainable resource management) (Gilmour, 2016; RECOFTC, 2013; Pulhin *et al.*, 2024).

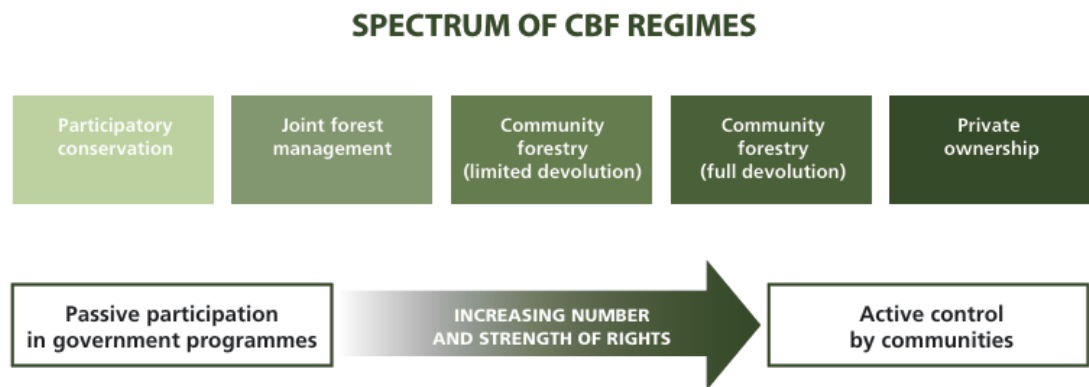


Figure 2.1 Spectrum of CBFM regimes, from passive to active community control (Gilmour, 2016)

CBFM recognizes local communities' dependence on forest resources for their livelihoods and forests for ecosystem services, such as water regulation and soil fertility (Hassen *et al.*, 2023; Reed *et al.*, 2017; Parrotta *et al.*, 2016). Beyond tangible benefits, forests have also shaped sociocultural systems, influencing communities' identities (Charnley and Poe, 2007). Despite these long-standing relationships, communities have often found themselves on the losing end of forest management, facing inequalities in power and benefit sharing as a consequence of centralized state forest management (Sikor, 2010; Peluso, 1992).

With increasing recognition of local and indigenous communities' rights, CBFM has expanded to include social, economic, and conservation-related activities, including the participation of indigenous communities to protect their area of cultural and spiritual importance (RECOFTC, 2013). Over the years, studies by Baynes *et al.* (2015) and Larson and Dahal (2012), as cited in Ota *et al.* (2020a) have identified several key factors for successful CBFM: effective governance, secure tenure and property rights, social equity, sustained government support (including long-term capacity building), and tangible benefits for the local communities.

Since late 1970s to early 1980s, countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have launched CBFM programs (Weiland and Dedeurwaerdere, 2010). One of the most progressive examples globally is found in Nepal (Ghimire and Lamichhane, 2020), where CBFM initiatives have engaged 55% of the rural population to manage 35% of the country's forested area (Thwaites *et al.*, 2018). The program succeeded in halting deforestation and forest degradation, even increasing forest cover (Adhikari, 2005). In Southeast Asia, the Philippines provides another notable example. Although they have practiced CBFM approaches for decades, the country officially adopted a national CBFM strategy in 1995. The official CBFM approach recognized People's Organization (POs), which include IPLCs as key stakeholders in forest management. However, implementation has faced challenges related to constraining policies and limited institutional support (Pulhin *et al.*, 2007).

With Dutch-influenced state-centric forest management system, Indonesia is shifting to more inclusive forest governance by encouraging rural economic development and address tenurial problems through ‘Social Forestry’ (SF) program. The Social Forestry approach and its associated narratives first emerged during the 1978 World Forestry Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia, which introduced the theme “Forests for People.” Although the concept gained limited traction at the time, it began to attract renewed attention in 2014 and was formally recognized as a national program in 2016 through the Social Forestry Regulation No. 83 which was issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. SF program grants legal rights to communities to manage nearly 10% of Indonesia’s state forests sustainably, for their livelihoods and forest protection. The program comprises five schemes: Village Forest, Community Forest, Community Plantation Forest, Customary Forest, and Forestry Partnerships.

2.2 Social Forestry in Indonesia’s Complex Forest Governance

Understanding the importance shift from state-centred forest governance in Indonesia to more inclusive forest governance that recognize the role of local communities requires an overview of the country’s forest governance trajectory. Therefore, this sub-chapter will start with the history of Indonesia’s forest governance since independence in 1945 to the current Social Forestry implementation.

2.2.1 History of Indonesia’s Forest Governance and Tenure Conflicts

Indonesian forest management has been shaped by a long and complex history of colonization, particularly the legal construct of ‘state forest’ established by the Dutch East Indies colonial government. The colonial authorities claimed control over forested areas while disregarding local communities’ rights (Peluso, 1992). This was based on the belief that local communities lacked the knowledge of ‘scientific forestry’ (Galudra and Sirait, 2009) required to manage the two primary functions of forests: as valuable sources of state revenue, especially from timber (Peluso and Vandergeest, 2001), and as regulators of hydrological systems (Galudra and Sirait, 2009).

This principle of state control remained deeply embedded even after Indonesia’s independence in 1945. The 1967 Basic Forest Law (Law No. 5/1967) reaffirmed state control by granting the state full authority over state forests, centralizing forest management under the Ministry of Forestry. The Ministry was given full authority to manage forests, including their resources, for national development. Development agendas were prioritized over the rights and needs of local communities. Under this law, customary territories were not recognized, and consequently, no legal category for customary forests existed (Rachman and Siscawati, 2017). As a result, the livelihood activities of people who had resided in and around forests for generations

were rendered illegal, effectively dispossessing them of their traditional rights and access to forest resources (Peluso, 1992; Riggs *et al.*, 2016).

The state's control facilitated large-scale allocation of forest concessions to logging and plantation companies, starting in the late 1960s and accelerating through the 1970s onwards (Barr *et al.*, 2006). It fundamentally transformed forest landscapes without considering the existence of communities and their rights (Contreras-Hermosilla *et al.*, 2005). This top-down governance approach, characterized by competing and often contradictory land use objectives, generated multiple layers of conflict marked by tenure insecurity and inequitable outcomes (Resosudarmo *et al.*, 2014).

At the heart of these conflicts lies the issue of land tenure. Land tenure refers to the bundle of rights and responsibilities that define how people interact with land as well as the institutions that govern these rights (FAO, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2018). Land is more than just physical space to the communities; it holds deep economic, social, and cultural significance, and tenure systems directly affect how people manage natural resources and sustain their livelihoods (Robinson *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, denial of customary tenure systems and their rights over forest resources became a primary driver of widespread conflicts across regions in Indonesia (Siscawati *et al.*, 2017).

These conflicts manifested in multiple forms and involved diverse actors. Vertical conflicts emerged between the state and local communities over, overlapping claims (especially where forest concessions were granted on customary lands) (Riggs *et al.*, 2016; Bakker, 2023). These tensions were exacerbated by the lack of legal recognition of customary rights and the allocation of forest concessions to corporations without meaningful community consultation (Bakker, 2023). Horizontal conflicts arose among communities themselves, such as between customary communities and transmigrants due to unclear documentation of land tenure history (Dhiaulhaq and McCarthy (2020).

The legal framework became even more complex with the 1999 Forestry Law (Law No. 41/1999), which created the following land classification systems:

- First, the law distinguishes between 'forest' and 'forest area'. A forest is defined as "an integral unit of an ecosystem in the form of lands containing biological resources, dominated by trees in their natural environment". However, a forest area is "a certain area stipulated by the government to be preserved as permanent forest". Crucially, not all forest ecosystems are categorized as forest area. The key difference lies on the government decrees. Conversely, forest area may include non-forest ecosystem such as plantations or even settlements (Peluso and Vandergeest, 2001).

- Second, all land in Indonesia falls into one of two administrative categories: forest area (*kawasan hutan*), or non-forest area or other land use zones – *Areal Penggunaan Lain* (APL). Forest areas fall under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Forestry, while APL falls under the jurisdiction of district governments and the National Land Agency.
- Third, within the forest area, Law No. 41/1999 established a fundamental distinction between state forests (*hutan negara*) and rights forests (*hutan hak*). State forests are defined as forests on land without private titles. State forests can be categorized by function as conservation areas, protection forests, and production forests. On the other hand, private forests include forests established on privately owned land by individuals, cooperatives, or firms. They fall under the jurisdiction of the National Land Agency.

Although the 1999 Forest Law represented some recognition of customary territories (Lindayati, 2002), this law still asserted state power and undermines the rights of customary communities to manage these lands for their livelihoods (Siscawati *et al.*, 2017). Detailed forest area classifications by functions are on Table 2.1, adapted from Rosenbarger *et al.* (2013) which compiled Forestry Law No. 41/1999, Ministry of Forestry (MoF) Regulation P.50/2009, MoF Regulation P.37/2007, and Government Regulation No.68/1998. It is important to note that Table 2.1 does not reflect more recent instruments that enable use of environment services, such as Presidential Regulation No. 98/2021 on the Implementation of Carbon Pricing, MoEF Regulation No. 21/2022 on the Implementation of Carbon Economic Value, and MoEF Regulation No. 2/2025 on Payment for Environmental Services (PES).

Table 2.1 Classification of Indonesia Forests (drawn from Forestry Law No. 41/1999, Ministry of Forestry (MoF) Regulation P.50/2009, MoF Regulation P.37/2007, and Government Regulation No.68/1998 by Rosenbarger *et al.* (2013))

MAIN CLASSIFICATION	SUBCLASSIFICATION	FUNCTION	CRITERIA	PERMITTED ACTIVITIES
Forest Estate (Kawasan Hutan)				
Conservation Forest (Hutan Konservasi; HK)	Natural Reserve (Hutan Suaka)	Preserve animal and plant biodiversity as well as its ecosystem, also functions as an area for life-supporting systems.	Varies according to its subclassification (natural reserve, wildlife reserve)	Research, science, education, and limited tourism
	Nature Conservation Area (Hutan Pelestarian Alam)	Protect life-supporting systems, preserve biodiversity and sustainable utilization of natural resources and their ecosystems.	Varies according to its subclassification (national park, grand forest park, nature recreational park, hunting park)	Research, science, education, cultivation activities, cultural activities, and limited tourism
Protection Forest (Hutan Lindung; HL)	----	Forest estate with main function of protecting life-supporting systems for hydrology, preventing floods, controlling erosion, preventing sea water intrusion, and maintaining soil fertility.	Weighted score ^a of >175 or, (1) slope class of 40% or more; (2) 2000+ m above sea level; (3) soil is extremely vulnerable to erosion with slope class of 15% or more; (4) water catchment area; (5) coastal protection area	Forest area utilization activities (cultivating medicinal/decorative plants, fungi, apiculture, swiftlet nests, capturing wildlife, cattle feed) Utilization of environmental services (water flow, ecotourism, biodiversity, environmental protection, carbon absorption and storage) Extraction of nontimber forest products (rattan, bamboo, honey, resin, fruits, fungi)
Production Forest (Hutan Produksi; HP)	Limited Production Forest (Hutan Produksi Terbatas; HPT)	Forest estate with main function of generating forest products via selective/limited logging scheme	Weighted score 125–174. Must be outside of protection forest, conservation forest, and hunting areas	Timber extraction through selective logging
	Permanent Production Forest (Hutan Produksi Tetap; HP)	Forest estate with main function of generating forest products.	Weighted score <125. Located outside of protection forest, conservation forest and hunting areas	Clear cutting forests and industrial timber plantations
	Convertible Production Forest (Hutan Produksi Konversi; HPK)	Forest estate with main function of generating forest products but spatially reserved for use of development other than forestry	Forest estate area that has been spatially designated for nonforest development purposes	Clear cutting and industrial timber plantations, can also be released to be nonforest land (areal penggunaan lain – APL).
Nonforest Estate (Areal Penggunaan Lain; APL)		Land outside the forest estate designated for nonforestry use such as agriculture, settlement, etc.		

However, a landmark Constitutional Court Decision (No. 35/PUU-X/2012) issued in May 2013 fundamentally changed Indonesia's forest governance. The court ruled that customary forests should be removed from the classification of state forests. Customary forests were reclassified under private forests, recognizing them as forests located within the territories of customary communities or indigenous people. The decision was significant because it potentially gave customary communities the right to not only manage but also own their customary forests, addressing the issues that had undermined local land rights. However, the 2013 court decision did not automatically resolve tenure conflicts in Indonesia. The decision's implementation has been

slow and faced with challenges, leaving many conflicts unresolved to this day (Arizona and Illiyina, 2024). Moreover, Indonesia lacks a special law to protect the customary communities' rights, as the draft of the customary community's bill (*RUU Masyarakat Adat*) has been stalled in the parliament for years (Putri, 2024; Soetjipto, 2022). This absence of legal framework continues to put the customary communities in a vulnerable position for conflicts, evictions, and criminalization (Arizona and Illiyina, 2024; Fajrini, 2022; Tarigan *et al.*, 2019).

2.2.2 Social Forestry

CBFM approaches in Indonesia had in fact been practiced in Indonesia since the late 1990s, where a major structural shift in governance following the transition from the 'New Order' regime (1966 – 1998) to the 'Reformation' era. This era is characterized by democratic decentralization, including the adoption of the framework for broader public participation. In forest management, it was reflected in the introduction of *Hutan Kemasyarakatan* (Community Forests) scheme as stipulated in the Forestry Law No. 41/1999. This scheme enabled local communities, organized into farmer groups, to manage funding and conduct activities (mainly tree planting) within state forest areas. However, it did not provide land rights or substantive decision-making authority (Fisher *et al.*, 2019).

At the same time, advocacy for the recognition of customary communities' rights began to gain momentum, prompting the Government to consider customary practices and land rights under customary forests (*hutan adat*). However, rather than formally recognizing customary forests, the government implemented the *Hutan Desa* (Village Forests) model instead, despite the fundamental differences between customary leadership systems and village administrative governance structures (Fisher *et al.*, 2019).

Finally, in 2014, the term 'Social Forestry' to exercise the CBFM approach was introduced. The Social Forestry was then formally regulated under MoEF Regulation No 83/2016 (later receded by MoEF Regulation 9/2021) with the aim to grant legal access for communities to manage 12.7 million hectares sustainably for their livelihoods and forest protection. SF is defined as "a system of sustainable forest management implemented in state forest areas, or titled forests or customary forests implemented by local communities or customary communities as the main actors to improve their welfare, environmental balance, and social cultural dynamics in the form of Village Forests, Community Forests, Community Plantation Forests, Forestry Partnerships, and Customary Forests" in the MoEF Regulation 9/2021. The formal objectives of the Social Forestry encompass broad institutional, social, economic, and environmental goals; namely reducing inequality in forest management, maintaining socio-cultural dynamics, improving community welfare, and sustaining forest ecosystems. Therefore, each scheme within the SF program has its own characteristics and is designed to target different community groups, as

detailed in the Table 2.2, adapted from Resosudarmo *et al.* (2019)'s summary of MoEF regulation 83/2016 on Social Forestry.

Table 2.2 Characteristics of Social Forestry Schemes

FEATURES	SCHEMES				
	Village Forests	Community Forests	Community Timber Plantations	Partnership	Customary Forests
State Forests or Rights Forests	State Forests	State Forests	State Forests	State Forests	Rights Forests
Type Of Rights	Usufruct/Management	Usufruct/Management	Usufruct/Management	Usufruct/Management	Communal ownership
Rights' Legal Document	Permit	Permit	Permit	Cooperation Agreement	Decree
Function	Protection and Production Forests	Protection and Production Forests	Production Forests	Production, Protection, Conservation Forests	Production, Protection, Conservation Forests
Rights Holders	Village institution representing village	Group or groups of people	Group of people or individuals	Unspecified – either group or individuals	Customary (<i>adat</i>) community
Period Of Rights	35 years, possible extension	35 years, possible extension	35 years, possible extension	Unspecified	No time limit
Area Under Permit	No limit	No limit	Member: up to 15 Ha, Cooperatives: 5000 Ha	timber utilization: 2–5 Ha; NTFP: no limit	No limit
Forest Cover	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Permitted Utilization	NTFP, forest area, ES, timber in Production Forests	NTFP, forest area, ES, timber in Production Forests	timber (planted and from secondary regrowth), other forest products	NTFP, forest area, ES, timber in Production Forests	NTFP, ES, timber in forests with production function
Rights & Responsibilities	Non-transferrable; forest status and function alteration prohibited	Non-transferrable; forest status and function alteration prohibited	Non-transferrable; forest status and function alteration prohibited	N/A	Forest status and function alteration prohibited
Specific Prohibition	Oil palm prohibited; existing trees can be maintained up to 12 years.	Oil palm prohibited; existing trees can be maintained up to 12 years.	Oil palm prohibited; existing trees can be maintained up to 12 years.	Oil palm prohibited; existing trees can be maintained up to 12 years.	Oil palm prohibited; existing trees can be maintained up to 12 years.
Priority Objective or Target Communities	Conflict resolution, peatland and/or ecosystem restoration	Conflict resolution, peatland and ecosystem restoration	Conflict resolution, peatland and ecosystem restoration	Communities in or around forests under encumbered rights or forest manager; primary livelihood dependent on area	Customary (<i>Adat</i>) communities
Benefit Sharing Mechanism	N/A	N/A	N/A	Specified in cooperation agreement	N/A

Source: Resosudarmo *et al.* (2019)

MoEF Regulation 83/2016 on Social Forestry was superseded by MoEF Regulation 9/2021, primarily to align with Indonesia's Omnibus Law on Job Creation (Law No.11/2020). Indonesian government enacted 49 implementing regulations to the Omnibus Law, which amended 76 laws across various sectors including forestry (Mahy, 2022). The 2021 regulation strengthened the legal position of SF which previously operated only through ministerial regulation, by incorporating it into the Job Creation Law framework (Gunawan *et al.*, 2024). SF is incorporated into this law as it encouraged entrepreneurialism through forest-based businesses, with Social Forestry Business Group (*Kelompok Usaha Perhutanan Sosial* – KUPS) as the primary mechanism for community economic development (Satrio *et al.*, 2022). As stipulated in MoEF 9/2021, SF enables communities to establish KUPS for economic benefits, although KUPS formation is encouraged rather than mandatory (Budi *et al.*, 2021).

To date, the SF program's target of 12.7 million hectare has not been achieved. According to official data, only 6.64 million hectares of state forest are managed under the SF program, just over half of the intended goal (Directorate General of Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership, 2024). In response to this slow progress, a higher-order regulation was introduced in 2023, through Presidential Regulation No. 28/2023 concerning Integrated Planning for the Acceleration of Social Forestry Management. The 2023 Presidential Regulation introduces the integrated planning approach through cross-sectoral policy alignment, integration of SF in national and regional development planning, budget allocation, and strengthening SF collaborations with stakeholders.

2.2.3 Customary Forests

In Indonesia, the term 'Customary Law Communities' or 'Customary Communities' is usually used rather than 'Indigenous People'. According to Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environment Protection and Management, they are defined as "a group of people who have lived for generations in a certain geographical area, have ancestral origins and/or a common place of residence, cultural identity, customary law, a strong relationship with the land and the environment, and a value system that determines economic, political, social, cultural, and legal institutions". Wilson (2008) describes customary communities' perception of nature and land as a sacred connection. To honour and protect the nature, they have their own traditional ecological knowledge to manage resources. However they are often unwritten and not legally regulated; frequently embedded in myths, rituals, and taboos (Berkes, 1999). Customary communities, as legal subject with their own traditional rights, are acknowledged and mandated in chapter 18B of the Indonesian Constitution. As they are deeply connected and inseparable from their ancestral lands and everything within them (Cajete, 2000), they are closely tied to their *ulayat* rights. Indonesian Basic Agrarian Law (BAL), Law No. 5 of 1960, defines *ulayat* rights to communities'

communal rights over the land, including the natural resources within the area such as forests and water.

For a long time, the contradictory regulations (the 1967 Basic Forestry Law and the 1999 Forestry Law) have harmed customary communities' rights, especially in their relations with forests and their resources. As Schlager and Ostrom (1992) explain, centralized governance systems often disregard local institutions that have long-sustained common-pool sources. This failure includes the lack of recognition of communities' bundle of rights (Table 2.3) which determines the extent to which communities can benefit from and govern their resources.

Table 2.3 The bundle of rights of common-property resource

TYPE OF RIGHT	ATTRIBUTE	DESCRIPTION
Operational level rights	Access	The right to enter a defined physical area
	Withdrawal	The right to obtain resource units
Collective choice rights	Management	The right to regulate internal use and improve the resource
	Exclusion	The right to determine who can access or use the resource
	Alienation	The rights to sell, lease, or transfer management and exclusion rights

Source: Schlager and Ostrom (1992)

Because a single, comprehensive law concerning customary communities in Indonesia has not been enacted, the Rights Forests regulation (MoEF Regulation No. 32/2015, which was superseded by MoEF Regulation No. 17/2020, then MoEF Regulation No.9/2021) and SF regulations (MoEF Regulation which No. 83/2016, which was revoked by MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021) have become the principal operational instrument for implementing and recognising customary communities' rights over their customary forests. Determination of customary forests can originate from both state and/or non-state forests. The other criteria for the customary forest status determination are: (i) located within the customary territory; (ii) is a forested area with clear boundaries and is managed in accordance with the relevant customary law; and (iii) customary communities are still actively collecting forest products to fulfill their daily needs.

The existence of the customary communities needs to be checked and proved first before further verification of the customary forest (Figure 2.3). In the MoEF Regulation No. 83/2016, which refers back to MoEF Regulation No. 32/2015, the customary community existence should be recognized through regional regulations (*Peraturan Daerah – PERDA*) if the customary forest is located in a state forest area, and PERDA or other related legal documents that prove their existence, issued by the corresponding local or district government, if the customary forest is located outside the state forest area. However, in the MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021, customary communities' existence formally needs PERDA (if it is in a state forest area), and a PERDA or a

decree from a regional head (if it is outside of a state forest area), although there is room for flexibility on Article 71. The article stated that if PERDA is not yet available, but the customary area has been determined by the local government's head, the ministry can issue an indicative-area decision (*Wilayah Indikatif Hutan Adat*) as a principal approval while waiting for the technical conditions.

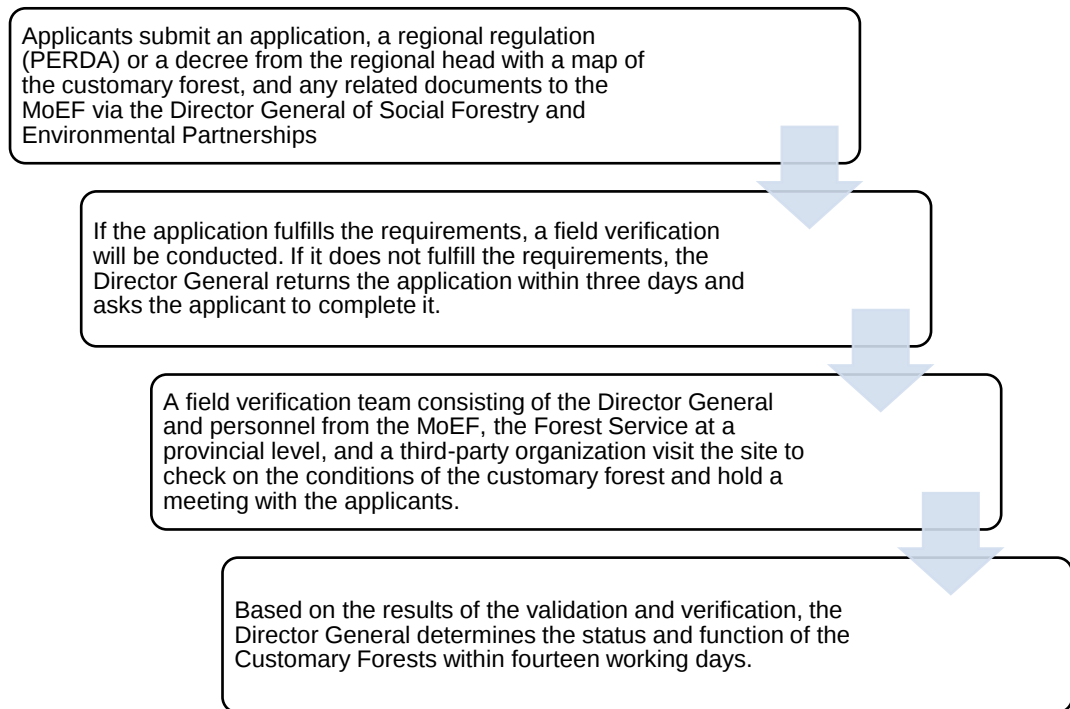


Figure 2.2 Customary Forest application procedure as stipulated in MoEF Regulation 9/2021

After the recognition of the customary community, a formal application is then sent to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry by the provincial government. After that, the verification team in the ministry will do further ground check, and spatial plan synchronization to acknowledge the customary forest (MoEF Indonesia, 2021). This bureaucratic process can be challenging due to factors like limited resources (Arizona *et al.*, 2024), diverse stakeholder interests (Sopaheluwakan *et al.*, 2023; Purwanto, 2022), and the need for complex written documentation (Harada *et al.*, 2022).

As of October 2024, MoEF has already issued 156 decrees acknowledging customary forests, covering a total of 332,505 hectares of community-managed forests under the Social Forestry program (MoEF Indonesia, 2025). In exercising their rights, the respective customary communities are also tasked with managing their customary forests sustainably and are explicitly prohibited from changing the status or function of the customary forest (e.g., selling or converting). While MoEF Regulation 83/2016 still refers the rights and responsibilities for customary forests to the rights forests' rights on MoEF Regulation 32/2015, MoEF Regulation

9/2021 has regulated them comprehensively as presented in Table 2.3, which summarized the rights and responsibilities for customary forests.

Table 2.4 Rights and responsibilities for customary forests

FEATURE	MoEF REGULATION 32/2015	MoEF REGULATION 9/2021
Rights	- Receive incentives - Receive protection from disturbances, destruction and environmental pollution - Manage and utilize rights forest in accordance with local wisdom - Utilize and use traditional knowledge in utilizing genetic resources within the rights forest - Receive protection and empowerment for local wisdom in the protection and management of rights forest - Utilize timber forest products, non-timber products and environmental services in accordance with forest area function - Obtain timber legality certificate	- Utilize the community forestry area - Utilize the environmental services - Collect timber forest products (limited to subsistence level) - Collect non-timber forest products - Implement forest management activities in accordance with the customary law and not contrary with the statutory legislation - Obtain empowerment to improve welfare
Responsibility	- Maintain the forest's function - Implement sustainable forest management principles - Restore and enhance forest function - Secure and protect their forest including protection from forest and land fires	- Carry out the principles of sustainable forest management - Manage and use the customary forest in accordance with local wisdom - Maintain the customary forest's function - Restore and improve the forest's function - Protect the customary forest from forest and land fires

Source: MoEF Regulation 32/2015 and MoEF Regulation 9/2021

2.3 Customary Forests pre-recognition challenge

The 2013 Constitutional Court decision served as a groundbreaking turning point for customary forests recognition in Indonesia, addressing rights long ignored by the government (Arizona and Illiyina, 2024; Hidayat *et al.*, 2018). The decision emerged from a judicial review filed by *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* (AMAN) (the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago) that presented six witness cases, including the Semunying Dayak Iban community in West Kalimantan, demonstrating how customary communities' rights were systematically violated (Arizona and Cahyadi, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2019).

The Ministry of Forestry, through the Directorate General of Social Forestry, has pushed a faster pace in the recognition process. However, as of July 2024, only 262,250 hectares of customary forests have been recognized through Ministerial Decree (Arizona *et al.*, 2024). The figure represents merely 1.1% of the more than 20 million hectares area identified by *Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat* (BRWA) (Registry of Indigenous Territories) as potential customary forests. Both AMAN and BRWA are non-profit organizations that actively advocate for customary communities in Indonesia.

2.3.1 Bureaucratic and Regulatory Challenges

Despite the government commitments, the recognition process takes years with complex bureaucracies that are confusing for the customary communities (Simarmata, 2024; Rakatama and Pandit, 2020; Rahayu *et al.*, 2020a). Customary communities must prove their existence by demonstrating their customary territory, rules, and institutions first to secure the PERDA from the local governments as stipulated in MoEF 9/2021 article 64. This process itself can take up to three years (Tanner *et al.*, 2020).

Further, the problem is compounded by coordination constraints at the national level, particularly between the Directorate General of Social Forestry (responsible for administering permits) and other units that work in silos, creating bottlenecks in processing applications (Galudra, 2019; Maryudi *et al.*, 2022). Often, when local governments already take speedy action, the national recognition takes longer. In Kerinci District, 13 customary forests were already recognized locally, but only 6 received national certification by 2018 (Harada *et al.*, 2022).

The support in the pre-recognition from local governments is also reported often missing (Tanner *et al.*, 2020; Galudra, 2019). Therefore, in alignment with the study on the Kerinci case by Harada *et al.* (2022), successful recognition often depends on NGOs support, which helped communities navigate the complex bureaucratic process, as also reported by Arizona *et al.* (2019); Rahayu *et al.* (2020a). The lack of administrative capacities to prepare the required documents in communities becomes a significant barrier in securing customary forest recognition (Harada *et al.*, 2022; Arizona *et al.*, 2019)

2.3.2 Competing Land Claims and Corporate Interests

Recognition of customary forests often faced the overlapping claims between the customary communities and existing corporate concession areas (Myers *et al.*, 2017). In other cases, claims over state conservation areas also complicate recognition. Such cases require specific intervention to unravel the tangled claims before the recognition process can proceed (Harada *et al.*, 2022; Myers *et al.*, 2017).

Conflicts between the customary communities and neighbouring areas over concession land are extremely prevalent in Borneo Island, with vast areas already converted to oil palm plantations (Cramb and McCarthy, 2016; Levang *et al.*, 2016; Berenschot *et al.*, 2024). The existing corporate concessions were granted their licenses before the 2013 Constitutional Court Decision. This has complicated the recognition process, as legal uncertainties over removing lands under prior existing claims from concessions create barriers (Fisher *et al.*, 2018), such as the case from Semunying (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

In this case, an area including 1,420 hectares of customary forest was destroyed and converted into oil palm plantation by PT Ledo Lestari (Human Rights Watch, 2019). The company did not involve the community nor undertake prior consultation or Free Prior Informed

Consent (FPIC) processes (Dunasta A, 2016). Human Rights Watch (2019) also notes that the compensation given was minimal and largely failed to account for destroyed customary forests and community livelihoods, or relocation from their traditional longhouses. The Semunying Dayak Iban community remains unrecognized despite documentation of rights violations and subsequent international advocacy efforts (Human Rights Watch, 2019). The community is now surrounded by plantations, faces chronic flooding from forest clearing, and has lost access to traditional resources. This case is not only about seizing the community's territory but also about destroying its viability and traditions, and severing the values and culture of the community (Dunasta A, 2016; Kurnia Christmas *et al.*, 2020).

2.4 Post-recognition challenges for Customary Forests

The formalization of customary forest rights through legal recognition represents only the first step in a longer process toward achieving sustainable forest management and community welfare outcomes. As Kusters *et al.* (2022b) argue in their Theory of Change framework (Figure 2.4), legal recognition alone only serves as a foundation for the intended impacts across environmental, socioeconomic, and governance dimensions. The pathway from formal rights recognition to desired outcomes depends on multiple enabling conditions and sustained support mechanisms being in place.

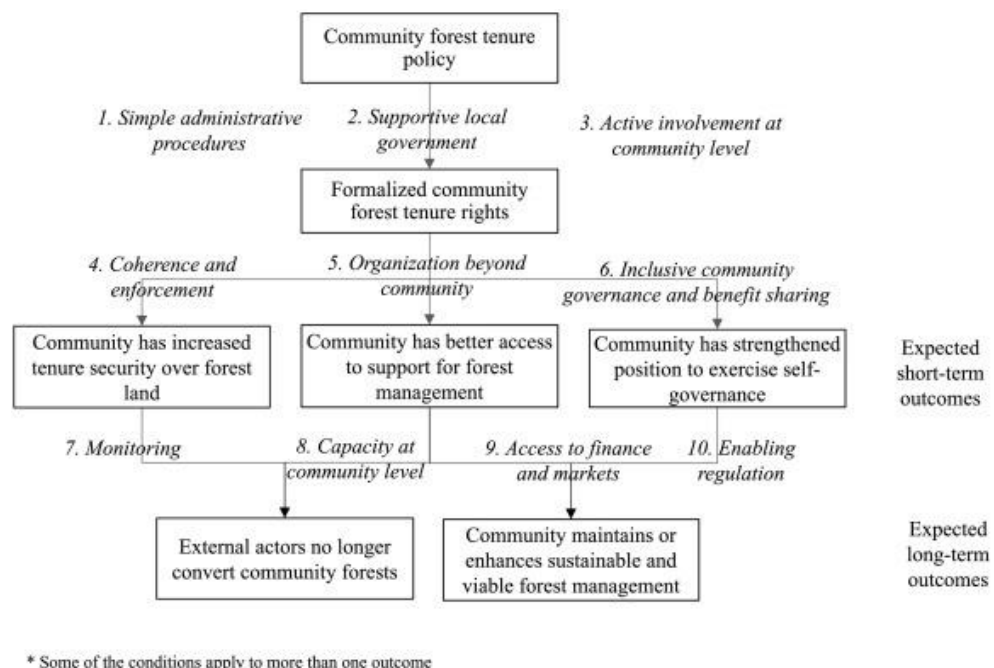


Figure 2.3 Theory of change and key conditions for community forest tenure rights formalization to achieve intended long-term outcomes (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b)

Recognizing the need for these enabling conditions, the Indonesian government has implemented various post-recognition support programs, including technical assistance, capacity development, empowerment activities, and market linkage initiatives (Rahayu *et al.*, 2020a; De

Royer *et al.*, 2018). While such multi-stakeholder governance arrangements were also encouraged in predecessor regulations, they are now emphasized in the Presidential Regulation No. 28/2023. This regulation promotes NGOs and civil society involvement through mechanisms such as the Working Group for Social Forestry that facilitates permit delivery and provides the necessary support that the post-recognition phase requires (Fisher *et al.*, 2018; Rahayu *et al.*, 2020a).

2.4.1 Capacity and knowledge gaps

Despite the availability of support programs, many communities still face severe capacity constraints, especially in administrative skills such as for management planning and monitoring (Rahayu *et al.*, 2020b). While they already have their traditional knowledge to manage forests, these bureaucratic requirements prove to overwhelm communities with limited administrative experience. This capacity gap becomes particularly acute when communities attempt to develop their forest-based enterprises through their Social Forestry Business Groups or *Kelompok Usaha Perhutanan Sosial* (KUPS) (Hidayat *et al.*, 2025; Daeng Massiri *et al.*, 2020). The gap is especially seen in business management skills, understanding of the value chains and their actors, and knowledge of market requirements, which require more than just training (De Royer *et al.*, 2018; Rahayu *et al.*, 2020a).

2.4.2 Internal governance and elite capture

The challenges also emerge from within communities themselves. The process of formalizing customary forest rights can exacerbate internal conflicts over resource access and benefit distribution (Toumbourou *et al.*, 2025; De Royer *et al.*, 2018). Not all community members benefit equally from recognition; women and youth particularly find themselves excluded from governance structures and benefit-sharing arrangements (Anugrah *et al.*, 2022; Yulianti *et al.*, 2024; Toumbourou *et al.*, 2025). Unclear rules for resource use and benefit distribution can undermine collective action and hinder the community members' participation (Friedman *et al.*, 2020b).

2.4.3 Inadequate Integration of Multi-stakeholder Support

While the multi-stakeholder approach represents a promising approach, coordination challenges persist (Maryudi *et al.*, 2022; Galudra, 2019; Fisher *et al.*, 2018). Support from different actors, government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and private sectors often arrives in fragmented and uncoordinated ways, creating confusion and inefficiencies. NGOs support tends to be project-based and time-limited (following the funding period from donors), leaving communities without sustained assistance once external funding ends (Rahayu *et al.*, 2020b; Sahide *et al.*, 2020). The quality and effectiveness of facilitators and extension workers may vary considerably across regions (Galudra, 2019). Further, coordination between national and local government agencies remains weak, resulting in contradictory directives and

bureaucratic delays that undermine communities' efforts to operationalize their newly recognized rights (Maryudi *et al.*, 2022).

2.5 Summary

This literature review examines the shift toward more inclusive forest management in Indonesia through community participation, following the global Community-based Forest Management approach. Indonesia's forest governance has been shaped by a complex colonial history that established state-centric management systems, despite millions of people residing in and around forests and depending on them for their livelihoods; a situation that has created persistent tenure conflicts. However, policy innovations have gradually enabled communities to co-manage forests. Most significantly, customary communities have gained recognition of their customary territories, including their customary forests. While these long-ignored rights are slowly being acknowledged, they remain incompletely protected, as no comprehensive law safeguarding customary communities' rights exists. Through the Customary Forest scheme under the Social Forestry program, customary communities have gained rights to exercise self-governance using their traditional knowledge and customary rules to manage their customary forests.

The Social Forestry Program aims to protect forest ecosystems while simultaneously promoting community development and well-being, addressing ecological, social, and economic goals. However, implementation faces structural challenges both before and after recognition, related to bureaucracy, capacity constraints, inclusivity issues, and inadequate sustained support. While legal recognition of customary forests is necessary, it proves insufficient to achieve program goals. This chapter establishes the foundation for examining the extent to which Indonesia's Social Forestry Program (specifically the Customary Forest scheme) supports community rights, governance, and forest management in the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest managed by the Melayang Hamlet community in West Kalimantan.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research explores the role of the Social Forestry Program in customary forest management by using a constructivist approach. Constructivism emphasizes that reality is not passively received, but actively constructed through social processes, cultural practices, and subjective creation of meanings (Crotty, 1998; Galbin, 2014). Customary forest governance is therefore not merely a technical or legal arrangement, but a system rooted in the community's cultural values, identity, and history (Ameneshewa *et al.*, 2023). They are not static but are constantly shaped by interactions with external actors and development interventions (Wiersum, 1997; Dressler, 2025). While state actors and the external perspective perceives the concept forest from the lens of land tenure, legality, or economic sources, the community may have different perspectives to see it as a sacred ancestral space with spiritual and relational dimensions (Ford *et al.*, 2020). This research thus examines not only measurable governance outcomes, but also with shifting relationships, meanings, and identities that emerge from the interaction between customary systems and state-driven policies.

To capture these contextual and dynamic processes, this research employs a qualitative case study design. This methodology is particularly suited for exploring complex real-world issues shaped by biophysical, socio-economic, cultural, and political factors, all central to customary forest management Baxter and Jack (2008). Through in-depth fieldwork grounded in participants' lived experiences, the study adopts an interpretative approach sensitive to the context-specific nature of meaning and knowledge (Grossoehme, 2014; Lim, 2025), while also acknowledging how the researcher's own background and perspective inherently shape the interpretative process. This approach enables an examination of how environmental governance is shaped by social and political dynamics on the ground (Doolittle, 2015).

3.1 Study site: Pikul -Pengajid Customary Forest in West Kalimantan

The primary case study for this research is the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, which is managed by the Melayang Hamlet community, dominated by Dayak Bekati' Rara people in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. This site provides a rich and highly contextual setting for examining the intricacies of customary forest management. The community's relationship with the forest is shaped by generations of traditional ecological knowledge, traditions, and contemporary engagements with stakeholders through the Social Forestry program.

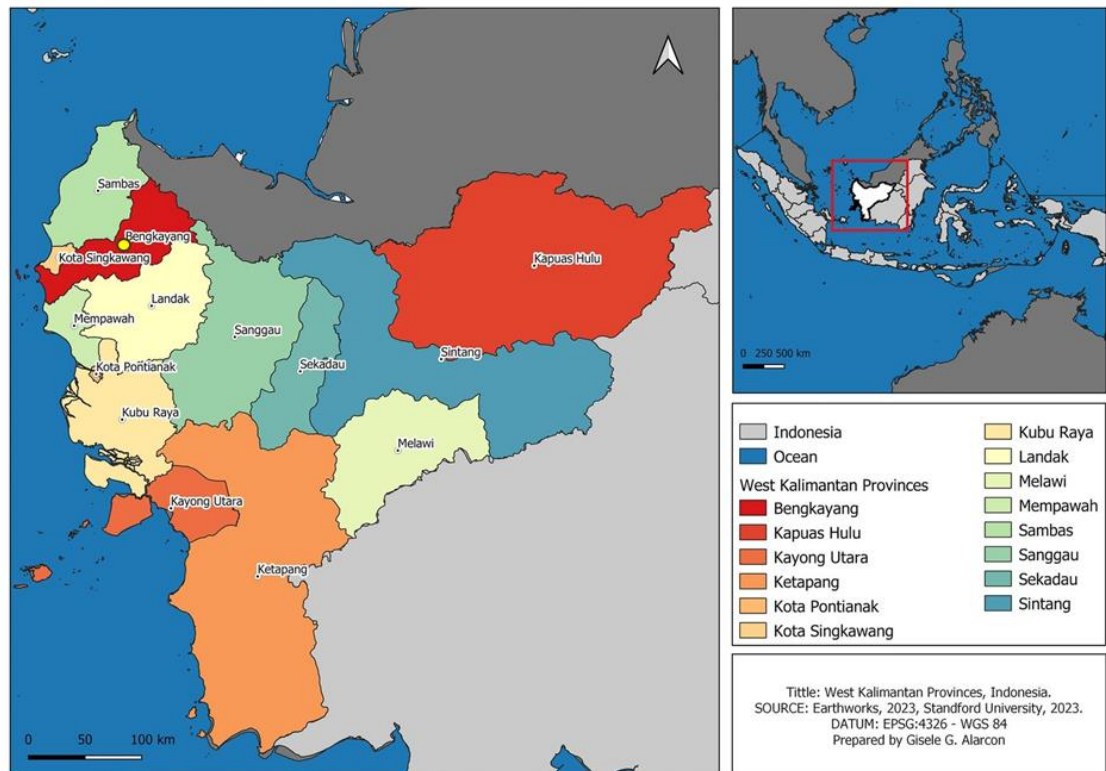


Figure 3.1 Map of West Kalimantan Province, located in the Indonesian part of Borneo Island, showing the location of Bengkayang District. Source: EPICC Project (2023)

The Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, located in Melayang Hamlet, Sahan Village, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan, is within the Dayak Bekati' Rara community. Bengkayang Regency is located in the northern part of West Kalimantan as shown in Figure 3.1.

The Pikul Pengajid Customary Forest was first recognized through the Head of Bengkayang District' Decree No. 131 of 2002. In 2018, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry formally recognized their 100 hectares of customary forest through decree No. SK 1300/MENLHK-PSKL/PKYHA/PSL.1/3/2018. Prior to this recognition, the area was classified as an "Area for Other Uses" (Area Peruntukan Lain – APL) (See Figure 2.2).

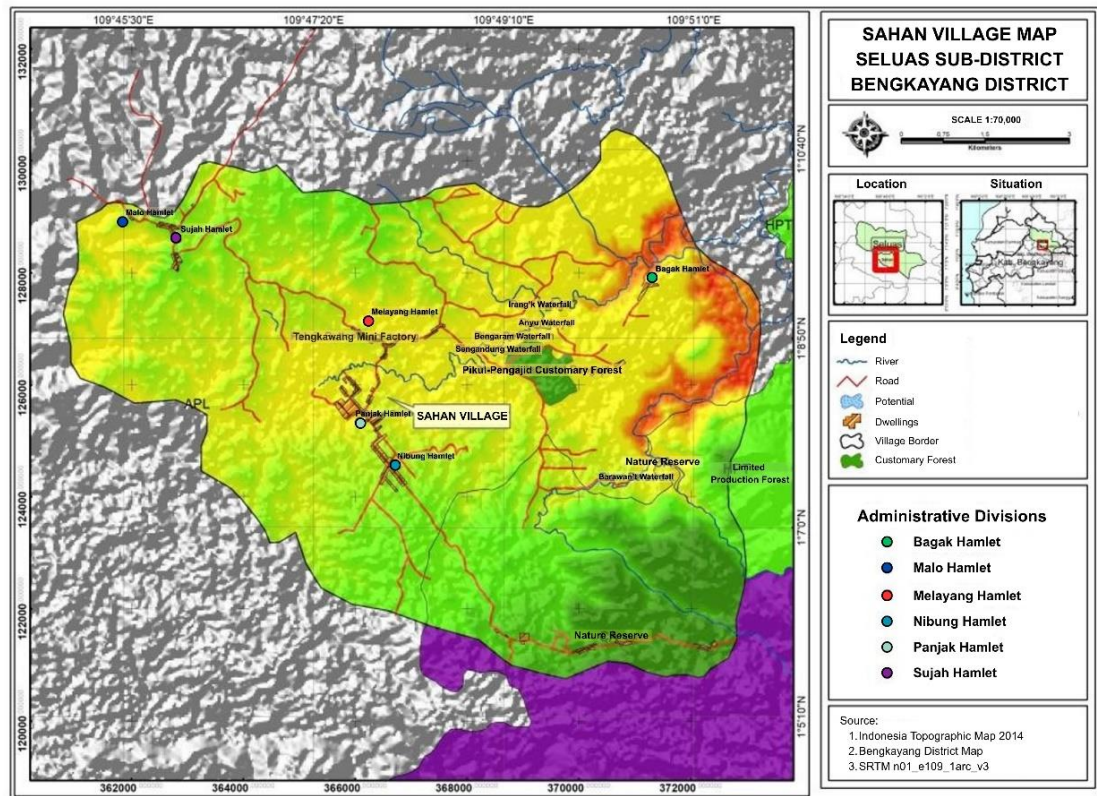


Figure 3.2 Map of Sahan Village showing Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest and surrounding hamlets. Source: Bengkayang FMU

The Melayang Hamlet community still depend on the forest for their livelihood, such as for traditional medicines, spiritual practices, and food. However, under their customary law, cutting trees and harvesting timber are prohibited (Pahlevi, 2023). Their forest is rich in *tengkawang* or illipe nut (*Shorea* spp.) trees, which grow exclusively in the rainforests of Kalimantan (Pahlevi, 2019). The seven species of *tengkawang* in their customary forest and their extinctions status are listed in Table 3.1. *Tengkawang* can be used as a substitute for cocoa butter in cosmetics, pharmaceutical ingredients, and margarine (Darmawan *et al.*, 2022). The Dayak people have long utilized *tengkawang* oil for traditional medicine. This traditional ecological knowledge is transmitted orally from ancestors to descendants, between parents and children, from shamans to their successor, and sometimes through spiritual dreams or clairvoyance (Pahlevi, 2023). Since 2014, the community has been supported by the Institut Riset dan Pengembangan Teknologi Hasil Hutan (INTAN) with funding assistance from the KEHATI Foundation and Samdhana Institute at different periods.

Table 3.1 List of *Shorea* found in Pikul Pengajid Customary Forest

NO	SPECIES	LOCAL NAME	IUCN Redlist STATUS
1	<i>Shorea seminis</i>	Tengkawang Batu	Least Concern
2	<i>Shorea pinanga</i>	Tengkawang Minggu	Least Concern
3	<i>Shorea macrophylla</i>	Tungkul Putih	Least Concern
4	<i>Shorea stenoptera</i>	Tengkawang Tempiras	Near Threatened (NT)
5	<i>Shorea leprosula</i>	Meranti Bunga	Vulnerable (VU)
6	<i>Shorea mecistopteryx</i>	Tengkawang Layar	Vulnerable (VU)
7	<i>Shorea palembanica</i>	Kulon	Critically Endangered (CR)

Source: Pahlevi (2023)

3.2 Methods

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by a list of questions, followed by follow-up questions based on the respondents' answers (Rubin, 2021). Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, in which the researcher identified key stakeholders involved in the case study project.

I accessed participants through multiple pathways. INTAN and government institution representatives were reached through the researcher's professional connections active in West Kalimantan's Forest development, while the KEHATI Foundation was first contacted independently via e-mail. For community access, connection from INTAN and Head of Bengkayang FMU connected me with the community leader. The leader then facilitated contact with eight community members of Melayang Hamlet. Two other community members were encountered independently at a local shop next to *tengkawang* mini-factory and consented to be interviewed.

Participants were then grouped based on the type of institution or their roles in the project, such as members of the local community, government agencies, and NGOs. This method ensures that diverse perspectives from various stakeholders are represented in the study. Individual face-to-face interview were conducted with community members of the Melayang Hamlet, the Head of Bengkayang FMU, and representatives from INTAN and the West Kalimantan Provincial Environment and Forestry Office. Online interviews were conducted with representatives from the KEHATI Foundation and Directorate General of Social Forestry at the Ministry of Forestry. Both interview formats allowed each stakeholder representative the opportunity to express their views openly.

Table 3.2 List of interview participants according to their affiliations (n=20)

TYPE OF STAKEHOLDERS	CODE	AFFILIATION	GENDER (M/F)	INVOLVEMENT IN PIKUL- PENGAJID CUSTOMARY FOREST MANAGEMENT
Melayang Hamlet Community Members	C1	Dayak Bekati' Rara	F	Active
	C2	Dayak Bekati' Rara	M	Active
	C3	Migrant	M	Active
	C4	Dayak Bekati' Rara	M	Not active
	C5	Migrant	M	Not Active
	C6	Dayak Bekati' Rara	M	Not Active
	C7	Migrant	F	Not active
	C8	Dayak Bekati' Rara	F	Not active
	C9	Dayak Bekati' Rara	M	Not active
	C10	Dayak Bekati' Rara	M	Active
	C11	Dayak Bekati' Rara	M	Not active
Government institutions	G1	Bengkayang FMU	M	Yes (but not from the recognition process)
	G2	West Kalimantan Provincial Environment and Forestry Office	F	Yes
	G3	West Kalimantan Provincial Environment and Forestry Office	F	Yes
	G4	Directorate General of Social Forestry – Ministry of Forestry	M	Yes (but not from the recognition process)
Non-Government Institutions	N1	KEHATI Foundation	M	Yes (but not from the recognition process)
	N2	KEHATI Foundation	M	Yes (but not from the recognition process)
	N3	KEHATI Foundation	F	Yes (but not from the recognition process)
	N4	INTAN	M	Yes
	N5	INTAN	M	Yes

In accordance with the ANU and BRIN Ethics Protocol, the confidentiality of all interview participants is protected through anonymity. The fieldwork was conducted for three weeks in July 2025. Documents for participants: Participant Information Sheet and consent form can be found in Appendix 2 and 3. Before the fieldwork was conducted, the research was approved by the ANU

Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol H/2025/0223) and the Ethical Committee on Social Studies and Humanities of Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency (No: 543/KE.01/SK/06/2025). As shown in Table 3.2, a total of 20 participants with different affiliations were interviewed.

3.3 Researcher Positionality

As a Sundanese researcher from Indonesia, I approach this research from Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest and the implementation of Social Forestry program as both insider and outsider. As an insider, I share values rooted in respect for nature and collective responsibility, principle that resonate to many other communities across Indonesia. This shared cultural grounding enables an empathetic understanding of the Melayang Hamlet community, particularly Dayak Bekati' Rara people's relationship with their customary forest.

However, I also acknowledged my position as an outsider to the specific local context, traditions, and lived experiences of the Dayak Bekati' Rara people. I am aware that my cultural and academic background, as well as research training and institutional affiliation within a university setting inevitably shape how I perceive, interpret, and represent the knowledge shared by interview participants. Recognising this, I approach this research with humility and reflexivity throughout the research process, critically reflecting on how my own assumptions and positionality influence data collection, analysis and interpretation.

By articulating this positionality, I aim to ensure transparency and reflexivity in the research process. This study is guided by a commitment to ethical engagement, cultural respect, and the accurate representation of community voices. Ultimately, my intention is to contribute to a deeper understanding of how social forestry can support both environmental sustainability and customary communities' rights, while honouring the knowledge, values, and governance systems of customary communities such as the Dayak Bekati' Rara.

3.4 Interview questions

The interview questions were designed to explore participants' perceptions in alignment with the study's objectives. These questions aim to capture a broad understanding of experiences, knowledge, and expectations surrounding customary forest management and its formal recognition. The interviews focus on the following key themes, and the list of interview questions is on Appendix 1:

- Understanding and awareness of Customary Forest management and community roles
- Awareness of the Social Forestry scheme and Customary Forest recognition
- Expectations and goals for forest governance after Customary Forest recognition
- Key factors to strengthen customary forest governance: to identify perceived challenges

3.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

Following ethical approval, three weeks fieldwork period was conducted in Melayang Hamlet, Pontianak, and Jakarta. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted in Indonesian after obtaining written and oral consent from participants using consent forms in Indonesian. Participants agreed to have their responses anonymized using codes based on their affiliation category.

Nine interviews with representatives from Government and Non-Government Institutions were transcribed using TurboScribe (an artificial intelligence tool), while 11 interviews with community members were manually transcribed. All transcripts were translated into English using Claude, an artificial intelligence tool. The anonymized, translated transcripts were organized into a matrix spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel.

Participant observations were also conducted throughout the one-week fieldwork period in Melayang Hamlet, focusing on their customary forest-related, agriculture, and *tengkawang* mini-factories activities, with field notes recorded manually in a notebook while maintaining participants anonymity.

Thematic analysis was conducted using predetermined themes, with interview responses summarized under each question and theme. Emergent findings outside the predetermined themes were also recorded to enrich the descriptive results on Chapter 4, alongside findings from participant observations.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the stakeholders' perspectives on the governance of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, as obtained from the interviews and observations. It begins with the history of the customary forest, emphasizing the perspectives from the Melayang Hamlet community, particularly Dayak Bekati' Rara community members. It then describes how the now formally-recognized customary forest impacted the community's rights over and governance of the forest and its resources. This is followed by the perceived challenges and opportunities faced by the community, and lessons learned from the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest. It is important to note that references to "the community" in this chapter do not represent every individual within it. Not all members were interviewed, and among those who participated, some expressed limited interest toward customary forest. Therefore, the findings primarily reflect the perspectives of the majority of community members who are engaged with or affected by the customary forest governance.

4.1 Community's rights over and governance of the forest

4.1.1 History of Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest

Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest is a primary forest that has existed since the Dayak Bekati' Rara community first settled in the area now known as Melayang Hamlet in Sahan Village, Bengkayang District, West Kalimantan. This forest is their home, and originally surrounded them with thousands of hectares of biodiversity-rich landscape stretching across the now West Kalimantan Province. However, much of the wider forest area has since been illegally logged and converted to other uses, leaving 100 hectares of primary forest.

The history of land clearing in Sahan Village is extensive. Community members still recall the presence of PT. Ester Antartika, an oil palm concession holder, in the mid-1990s, but the history goes back even further. Logging in West Kalimantan began in the 1967 with the establishment of Yamaker (Yayasan Maju Kerja), a foundation created by the Indonesian Armed Forces. In late 1960s, the Indonesian Armed Forces were stationed along Indonesia – Malaysia border for military operations against the insurgent communist groups, Pasukan Gerilya Rakyat Sarawak (PGRS) and Pasukan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara (PARAKU) or known as PGRS/PARAKU.

From that time onward, Yamaker continued their logging operations, including in Sahan Village in the early 1980s, followed by another timber concession holder, CV. Sumber Bangunan, in the late 1980s. Oil palm companies then started to enter the village in the mid-1990s, although they operated for only few years. The first was PT. Ester Antartika, followed by PT. PSA which was Malaysian-owned.

One elder, who once served as the Head of the Hamlet, recounted that as a youth, he had been recruited by a timber company, only to later realize that he was being exploited to gain the community's trust and suppress resistance. He eventually withdrew from the work and denounced the company's practices. Although his family was pressured by the military troops, he and the community succeeded in stopping the logging. Since then, the cleared lands have been claimed by local residents.

As a consequence of these timber harvesting and land clearing activities since the 1980s, only about 100 hectares of natural forest remains intact along a small river. This remaining area of forest, shown in Figure 4.1, stands as the result of the community's resistance. In his interview, the then Hamlet head recalled how they had to brandish traditional weapons, *Mandau* and *Landak*, to force the company personnel to leave the area. The customary forest is situated within Melayang Hamlet, the only hamlet in Sahan Village inhabited by the Dayak Bekati' Rara community.



Figure 4.1 Trees within the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, illustrating the area's well-preserved vegetation

Since then, the community has committed to protecting the forest as part of their responsibility to their ancestors. The forest now monitored by a council formed by customary leaders. Under customary law, the forest and its diverse tree species are protected, including the *tengkawang* tree, which is known as a symbol of the Dayak, as reflected in the saying "Wherever there is tengkawang, there are Dayak people".

The initiative to protect the forest under customary law was formally acknowledged by the Head of Bengkayang District in 2002. A customary (*adat*) ceremony was conducted to officially designate the area as a customary forest. Since then, the customary forest has been managed

according to customary rules monitored by the customary forest council. The customary forest is considered collective property, with prohibitions on tree cutting and wildlife hunting. Community members are permitted to collect fallen timber with the authorization of the customary council, for communal purposes such as constructing a church, making a coffin, or rebuilding houses damaged by fire. The customary forest council consists of the *adat* leaders, elders, and community members who still understand the *adat* law and practices. The system to choose the *adat* leaders is now formal through voting, whereas in the past they were chosen because of their charisma and skills. One of the interviewed community members expressed their concern that traditional decision-making has been weakened by formal political processes. They also conveyed that, as a consequence, *adat* leaders now might lack genuine knowledge of customs.

In 2014, a local Non-Governmental Organization, INTAN, began supporting the community to optimize the potential of *tengkawang*. INTAN itself is initiated by the alumni of Tanjungpura University, a local university in Pontianak, the capital city of West Kalimantan. Over time, INTAN facilitated connections between the community with external stakeholders, including with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. INTAN gave assistance in obtaining a formal decree from the Minister. The formal decree recognized the customary forest within the Social Forestry program. Through the Ministerial decree, the community has gained broader recognition and support to assert their rights, as summarized in Table 4.1, and discussed below.

Table 4.1 Summary of main themes related to the community's rights after the recognition of Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, categorized according to different forms of rights (following Schlager and Ostrom (1992) "bundle of rights", as modified by RRI (2012))

FORM OF RIGHTS	THEMES
Operational level rights	
- Access	All community members may enter, outsiders require permission
- Withdrawal	Community members may collect non-timber forest products (e.g., <i>tengkawang</i>). Cutting large tree is restricted and requires <i>adat</i> approval.
Collective choice rights	
- Management	Customary leaders and community manage the forest through customary rules and to determine what they want to do
- Exclusion	The customary council has authority to impose <i>adat</i> sanctions on violators
- Alienation	Under the customary law that agreed by the community, the customary forest is an inalienable collective property, it can't be sold, lease, or transferred
Duration of rights	- The community believes the customary forest is inherited from the ancestors and must be preserved for future generations - State-regulation (MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021 on Social Forestry Management) affirms the perpetual nature of rights for customary forests

4.1.2 Operational level rights

With a long history of illegal logging and land-use conversions in the region, the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest holds profound significance for the Melayang Hamlet community, particularly to the Dayak Bekati' Rara people, who form a majority of the local population, alongside some immigrant groups. Interviewed community members report that most community members have become increasingly vigilant in protecting the forest, which is regarded as an ancestral heritage inherited from previous generations and has a central role in the community's cultural identity. Moreover, local beliefs associate the presence of certain trees with specific group, for instance, the *tengkawang* tree is considered emblematic of the Dayak, while the coconut tree is associated with the Melayu. Among the Dayak, *tengkawang*, or *embawang* in Bekati' Rara language, features prominently in the mantras chanted by shamans during traditional rites. Accordingly, the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest, where the *tengkawang* trees are found, embodies both spiritual and social values. Most of the interviewed community members also recognize the importance of preserving the forest for future generations, both to protect wildlife species at risk of extinction and to safeguard traditional ecological knowledge and values embedded in environmental stewardship. They believed protecting the customary forest also means protecting people and sustainability of their community.

Access to and use of the forest are regulated by customary rules that specify what can be harvested and by whom. Community members are permitted to collect non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as *tengkawang* fruits. Harvesting *tengkawang* is even encouraged during the annual harvest season. In contrast, the cutting of trees and hunting of wildlife are strictly regulated. Timber may only be collected with approval from the customary council and solely for communal or social purposes. Violations of these rules are sanctioned under *adat* customary law.

The customary council is responsible for customary forest governance. The council members are the elders or individuals recognized for their wisdom and deep understanding of customary law. The council oversees decision-making in matters such as conflict resolution and determining sanctions for rule violations. The sanction may range from warnings to penalties such as paying fines or by *adat* sanctions (e.g., rites with offerings), depending on the circumstances. For significant events, such as the formal recognition of the customary forest from the Head of Bengkayang district, customary rites are held. Rites serve to reinforce compliance with established rules while simultaneously reaffirming the community's spiritual connection to their ancestors. Through these rites, adherence to *adat* is emphasized as both moral and cultural obligation, linking natural resources stewardship with ancestral inheritance. Some interviewed community members, and especially member of the customary council, envision this governance system as a mechanism to integrate sustainable resource management, social cohesion, and the continuity of cultural traditions.

4.1.3 Collective choice rights

The designation of customary forest not only considers the forest as ancestors' inheritance, but also the importance of ecological benefits for their daily life, as mentioned by majority of the interviewed community members. Some also mentioned the microclimatic differences inside and outside the customary forest, which they attributed to the ability of big trees to produce oxygen. Others observed that wild animals are no longer present, except for some monkeys. The interviewed community members believed this was due to the surrounding land being converted for farming and oil palm plantation, making it unsuitable for wildlife movement.

At the same time, they also acknowledged that most community members depend on farming outside the customary forest for their daily income. The community still practices swidden agriculture; the main crop is upland paddy, supplemented by other agricultural plants such as eggplant, tamarind, chili, chive, cassava, and other secondary crops. Cultivation is rotated across several parcels of land they own (often one person owns a few plots in different areas). The process typically begins with *nebas* or slashing from June to July, as observed during fieldwork in July 2025 (Figure 4.2). Then in August they burn the weeds on the plot they are going to plant. The ashes from the burnt weeds serve as natural fertilizer, reducing the need for chemical inputs. From September to October, they continue with *nugal* or the upland paddy planting.

Because the shifting cultivation is labour intensive, community members work together on different plots daily, forming a system of mutual cooperation known as *belalek*. The landowner provides payment or wages for contributions to the shared tasks. But *belalek* is not only about sharing tasks, but also maintaining harmony within the community. Before *nugal* (planting), an *adat* rite is usually performed to ask for blessings and ensure a bountiful harvest for everyone. The harvest season usually occurs from March to May and culminates in *gawai*, the harvest festival. *Gawai* is one of the most important occasions of the year for the Dayak people, when the community gathers to share their harvest and express gratitude through traditional dances and collective celebrations.

Farming activities are possible because the surrounding areas are categorized by the state government as Areas for Other Purposes (*Area Penggunaan Lain* or APL). Prior to recognition, the customary forest area was also classified as APL. However, through the recognition process, it has been reclassified as rights forest. Interviewed representatives from government institutions expressed their respect for the community's initiative to register their customary forest, which achieved this reclassification. While APL status allows them to manage the land for plantations or other development, the reclassification to rights provides crucial legal protection. Importantly, this ensures the forest cannot be converted into large-scale plantations by outside companies.



Figure 4.2 Melayang Hamlet community members slash weeds to prepare for upland paddy planting through the practice of *belalek*

Some interviewed community members shared their trauma of being deceived by an oil palm company. At first, several were recruited as foremen to mobilize broader community supports for the company's operations. However, once the company obtained the access to the land, those community members were dismissed and replaced by outsiders considered to have better education. Some also suspected that the company's true intention was timber as extraction, as they cleared the forested area and collect the logs before beginning oil palm planting. As a result, some interviewed community members were firm about not wanting an oil palm company in their area, they chose to continue managing their own land for agriculture, with some maintaining the oil palm the company had already planted and others beginning to cultivate it independently.

These community members established their own small oil palm plantations and sold fresh fruit bunches to intermediaries known as Delivery Order Agents, who link plantation owners with mills. Many stated that they prefer managing their own land, although small, rather than having a large oil palm company in the village to employ them. They explained that if people end up as labourers on their own land, they cease to be masters of it. In the long run, even future generations would remain labourers on land once belonged to their families. They emphasized the importance of being able to control or manage their land by themselves, rather than being directed or controlled by others.

Internal land tenure conflicts over private lands are rarely reported, though some do occur over the claimed ancestors' inheritance. To minimize such risks affecting the customary forest, a road encircling the customary forest was constructed as its boundary (Figure 4.3). However, some interviewed community members recalled that it repeatedly collapsed and could not hold the

gravel. After several failed attempts, they held an *adat* rite at the road site to convey their intentions and seek their ancestors' approval. Interviewees reported that following the rites, the road held firm. Some community members believed this showed the sacredness of the customary forest.



Figure 4.3 Adjacent agricultural plantations and the customary forest area, separated by a boundary road constructed to reduce land tenure conflicts

The belief in spiritual consequences is also reflected in the prohibition against cutting down trees, which is thought to bring bad luck. However, some interviewed community members admitted that they no longer hold such beliefs, viewing them instead as stories once used to deter rule violations and now considered old-fashioned. To address this shift, the elders apply a system of sanctions to ensure compliance with customary rules. Not only do these sanctions create fear of punishment, but words spread quickly within the community, making people feel ashamed. In this way, social pressure reinforces adherence to *adat* and strengthens the role of customary law in forest stewardship. As one interviewed elder of the Dayak Bekati' Rara explained,

[C]ustomary Forest is owned without having to be owned, it is a common property for common needs. (C10)

The elder emphasized that the customary forest management is rooted in traditional practices that value mutual respect, cooperation, and compassion. These principles extend not only to human relationships, but also to all beings. For example, it is prohibited to scream or make loud noises inside the forest, as such disturbances are believed to disturb the wildlife. A similar belief also applies to the nearby Berawan't Waterfall. For generations, the interviewed community members have been told not to be loud around the waterfall. If they do, it is said that the sky will

soon turn cloudy, just as its name “*berawan’t*” (in Bekati Rara’ language) or “*berawan*” (in Indonesian) means “cloudy”. Once the rain begins, the current becomes too strong and dangerous for people to swim.

However, sanctions for violating rules in the customary forest are also open to discussion. As one interviewed community member noted,

[T]he sanctions from the customary law is firm, but there is still consideration and can be discussed and consulted. (C11)

Immediate consequences include confiscation and investigation. Depending on circumstances and intent, sanctions may involve replanting seedlings, paying monetary fines (with funds going into community accounts), or performing an *adat* rite that require sacrificial elements, including cattle. Decisions are made through discussion with customary leaders. Nonetheless, some individuals still break the rules, believing that if no one sees them, it is acceptable.

With the decline of customary practices especially among the younger generation, several community members emphasized the need for stronger regulation. This concern was one of the reasons why community leaders, with support from INTAN, applied for official recognition of their customary forest through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. In 2017, when the community showcased the *tengkawang* products in Jakarta with INTAN, some officials from the Ministry interested with all the complete documentation and information about *tengkawang* and community, the Director General at that time asked if they wanted to apply for the formal recognition under the Social Forestry Program, knowing that they already received recognition from regional government. After several months of process in mapping and technical verifications, they secured the decree in 2018.

The 2018 Ministerial Decree not only acknowledged that the forest would be managed under customary law; it also secures tenure and provides stronger legal protection, as some community members were aware. While the detail of Social Forestry program was not widely familiar to some community members interviewed, they perceived the decree increased their visibility and networks, allowing the community to gain broader recognition and access to program, resources, and partnerships.

Decisions-making regarding partnerships remain in the hands of the community, which determines with whom and in what ways they want to collaborate. A representative from a government institution explained that, in practice, they seek to connect the community with potential partners with relevant knowledge. Ensuring partner expertise and compliance is considered important to prevent fraud and mismanagement that could undermine community interests. The community then discusses among themselves whether the proposed activities align with their aspirations. For instance, when the idea of coffee planting was introduced, the

community did not immediately agree, noting their lack of experience with coffee cultivation and uncertainty regarding its market prospects.

4.1.4 Duration of rights

For some of the community members interviewed, the Ministry decree carries a meaning that goes beyond acknowledgement or recognition by the state government. It is seen to secure legal tenure and validates customary law. The customary forest belongs to the community, and place important meanings in their daily life and cultural identity. As it is recognized as an inheritance from the ancestors, something to be protected for the current and future generations, it means that the forest should exist forever alongside their existence. The concept of perpetuity, as believed by some interviewed community members, is also supported by the Social Forestry regulation. Unlike other Social Forestry schemes that provide permits for a limited duration, the recognition of customary forests is perpetual, as it follows customary law. This means that the rights to manage the forest are not temporary concessions but are recognized as belonging to the community across generations.

At the same time, the interviewed community members also realized that they are collectively responsible for the sustainability of the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest. They emphasized that while legal recognition is important, it alone is not sufficient for the forest's survival. The continued practice of values such as mutual respect, cooperation, and responsibility toward ancestors, together with strong customary leadership are also important. Customary leaders and elders play a central role in guiding decision-making, monitoring forest use, and ensuring that customary law is applied fairly. One of the customary elders interviewed also mentioned that the acknowledgment or rights given doesn't mean that they could do anything as they please, but they must fulfil the responsibilities to protect the assigned forest.

4.2 Main Challenges and Opportunities in Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest Management

4.2.1 Opportunities

The Social Forestry program is still not widely known in the community. Only a few interviewed community members were aware that the recognition of the customary forest is part of the Social Forestry, but most were not. Nevertheless, almost all of them believed that the recognition of their customary forest has brought positive impacts. The most significant impact has been the increased attention to their area. Since the recognition of the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest in 2018, and even earlier with the local recognition from the Head of Bengkayang District, numerous research projects have been conducted in the forest both by local and international researchers. These studies have ranged from species-focused work to broader ecological and social research involving the community.

Some researches have even extended into the nearby Gunung Nyiut Nature Reserve as the two sites are located in close proximity. Yayasan Planet Indonesia, a non-governmental organization focused on community-led conservation in the area, has also invited the representatives from the community forest to raise awareness about wildlife conservation and the potential of the customary forest as sanctuary, which, however, would imply its categorization as a protected area. This was only an informal discussion, but one of the elders (C10) remarked that they needed to learn more about its implication, especially since it concerns their customary forest status. For now, the community is focusing on rebuilding conservation awareness among its members.

Several interviewed community members demonstrated awareness of the relationship between their customary forest and the nature reserve. They understood that the Gunung Nyiut Nature Reserve is strictly protected by the state as a conservation area, where endangered species such as the helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*), the icon of West Kalimantan, persist. In comparing the two forest areas, they noted that while both are protected and resource extraction is prohibited, sanctions differ. They believe that in the customary forest, penalties can still be discussed and negotiated, whereas in the nature reserve violations are subject to enforcement under state law. Moreover, the nature reserve is actively protected by forest rangers from the Ministry of Forestry and Yayasan Planet Indonesia.

The customary forest has become a research site for many students from Tanjungpura University in Pontianak. The university collaborates with local governments and has been welcomed by the village community to conduct research there. At the same time, the university encourages local youth to pursue higher education by providing affirmative quotas for potential students from Sahan village, where the Melayang hamlet is.

In bridging communication with external institutions, the community is supported by the Bengkayang Forest Management Unit (FMU). As a regional government institution, the FMU works together with the community in managing the customary forest, addressing their concerns, and connecting them with other institutions. For example, a recent tree planting event around water sources near the customary forest was supported by the regional water company, *Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum* (PDAM). A FMU representative noted that their role is to link the community with the right partner. Despite limitations in human resource and funding, the FMU assists the community by providing information about opportunities and sharing expertise, such as in drafting funding proposals. One successful example was the funding from FOLU Net Sink Small-Grant Program, managed by the Ministry of Forestry through the Environmental Fund Management Agency. As the closest field-level government institution, the Bengkayang FMU also monitors the customary forest regularly and supports the community in addressing bottlenecks in management. This includes mediating between the community and partners, and providing administrative supports when cases require official backing.

Another important opportunity noted by the interviewed community members is that they are now more visible to the state government. A particular reason for this is that one of their leaders, Damianus Nadu, received the Kalpataru award from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2021 for pioneering efforts to protect the 100 hectares of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest from illegal logging and forest conversion. In 2019, Damianus Nadu also received the Social Forestry figure award, and the customary forest won the National Champion Award for Social Forestry Management.

The community members believe these achievements and the resulting public attention are linked to their openness in welcoming visitors. Unlike the rejection shown toward large companies that disregarded their rights, they received guests and researchers warmly, considering hospitality an integral part of their culture. One community member challenged the stereotype of the Dayak as an exclusive, close community feared for their shamanic knowledge and history as cold-blooded warriors”. In reality, he explained, the Dayak uphold mutual respect towards others.

[I]f people treat us with respect, then of course we would respect and treat them likewise, even nicer [...] Because that is how our culture and values are [...] They guide us. (C9)

He also recalled that historically, the Dayak Bekati’ Rara originated from Bengkayang and historically settled in what is now Sahan village as mediators between other Dayak sub-ethnic groups in conflict. Since their arrival, they have always protected the land, and the current generation feels a strong duty to protect it.

Local leaders see the increased attention to their area, especially the customary forest, as a potential turning point for revitalizing cultural knowledge among the younger generation. The elders usually appoint someone to guide visitors or researchers to the forest and nearby attractions, such as waterfalls, but they hope this role can be extended to younger people. To do so, young people must first learn about the forest ecosystem and its cultural significance so they can confidently share knowledge with others.



Figure 4.4 Sengandung Waterfall, the smallest among the waterfalls in Sahan Village and the closest to the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest

Leaders also see opportunities to expand into ecotourism. Already, neighbouring villagers visit the waterfalls on weekends (such as to Sengandung Waterfall seen in Figure 4.4), and there is interest in leveraging this momentum for broader markets. They believe ecotourism could appeal to younger generations, who may be more interested in social media marketing and tourism-related activities. Recently, the community secured funding for the construction of a traditional house, envisioned as both an information hub and a space to showcase Dayak Bekati' Rara culture.

As part of the Social Forestry program, the community formed several Social Forestry Business Groups (KUPSs), including those for *tengkawang*, nurseries, and ecotourism. KUPS organization and their members are legalized through village decree and endorsed by the Bengkayang FMU. At present, the community is focusing on *tengkawang* as their primary commodity. *Tengkawang* can be utilized for various purposes: its timber is strong and of good quality (although timber is not the primary objective of maintain *tengkawang* trees in the customary forest); the resin is essential for boat-making and traditional glue production; and the most common use is the oil extracted from the fruits. Now the community is making the *tengkawang* margarine by freezing the extracted oil. *Tengkawang* oil has long been used by the Dayak Bekati' Rara as herbal medicine and cooking oil, long before the use of palm oil. Traditionally, they extracted the oil manually using a traditional tool called *apit* shown in Figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5 *Apit*, the traditional *tengkawang* oil extraction tool made from ironwood, which is no longer used and is currently displayed in the mini-factory.

The community's *tengkawang* processing activities, combined with forest protection, have attracted donor support, such as that from the KEHATI Foundation, which administers the US and Indonesia government cooperation, through their Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) Kalimantan program. Moreover, the *tengkawang* in Pikul-Pengajid customary forest is unique because its fruiting season occurs annually, sometimes twice, whereas in other areas it only occurs two to four years. With TFCA Kalimantan funding, channelled through INTAN between 2021-2023, production has been scaled up using oil-extracting machines and electric generator in a mini factory (shown in Figure 4.6). Some community members are now employed in this facility. The community also continues to receive training to diversify and improve product quality in order to meet standards from the National Standardization Agency, as well as other market-required certificates such as from Food and Drug Authority, Business Identification Number, and Halal certification. Currently, *tengkawang* is recognized as raw material for pharmaceutical products and cosmetics, with growing use in lipsticks and lip balms due to its high melting point properties. on July 2025, for their consistent production and market development, including small-scale exports to Malaysian, the KUPS was recognized by the Ministry of Forestry as a top tier "Platinum" group. From 2023 to 2024, *tengkawang* margarine generated approximately IDR 231 million (AUD 23,100) for the community. However, bookkeeping is still managed by INTAN on behalf of the KUPS while they also continue to strengthen this institutional capacity within the community.



Figure 4.6 Machinery in the mini factory to extract *tengkawang* oil

In 2024, KEHATI Foundation initiated a project to advance bioprospecting efforts. *Tengkawang* was chosen as a focal species due to its endangered status, cultural value, and economic potential. Through this project, KEHATI Foundation and INTAN have supported certification processes, scientific studies on *tengkawang* properties, and the documentation and formalization of customary laws relating to *tengkawang* trees. These are important as the foundation to secure the intellectual rights to traditional ecological knowledge about *tengkawang* for the community. Community members hope this will safeguard their customary practices from being forgotten or misinterpreted over time.

4.2.2 Challenges

The current management of Pikul-Pengajid customary forest is not without challenges. Physically, the most pressing issue is land-use change, which was also one of the motivations for seeking state recognition. To minimize the risk, the community constructed a road that now encircles the customary forest as its official boundary. Community members believed this was an effective way to secure the forest and prevent disputes, since the earlier ‘living borders’ of fruit trees or bamboo could easily be removed. While the threat may not be as large as those once posed by concession holders, privately owned plots for oil palm and other plantations continue to exert pressure. Oil palm undeniably offers attractive market returns but also brings tenurial challenges.

Another challenge is related to declining compliance with customary law and practices. Several community members admitted that, because customary forest management depends on collective cooperation and trust, some individuals secretly take fallen logs without permission or kill animals if unobserved. Encounters with dangerous animals, such as snakes, illustrate this

divergence: some justify killing them for self-defence, while others regard such encounters as bonanza, a godsend thing to bring home. These examples show how people may interpret customary rules in the customary forest differently, often to justify extracting resources for personal gain.

Declining participation in voluntary activities provides another sign of shifting values in the community. The elders believe that mutual cooperation is part of their community values. However, realistically, people especially those in younger generations are still in their survival mode, they prioritize activities which able them to generate daily income. For them, social work such as tree planting is unattractive source of livelihood compared to other opportunities. Economic pressure also shapes community engagement with the *tengkawang* business. Although harvesting *tengkawang* fruits is encouraged for further process at the mini factory, some community members felt that the income was insufficient for their livelihood. Collecting *tengkawang* fruits is labour intensive, yet the returns are low. The dried fruits are sold to the mini factory for around IDR 5,000 per kilogram (about AUD 0.50). On average, one person can sell around 10 kilograms per day, earning IDR 50,000. In comparison, working as a labourer on another farm provides daily wage of IDR 60,000 to 70,000 (AUD 6 – 7) per day. Community members remarked that if the price were higher, it would encourage greater participation. They also noted that going in the customary forest is also riskier than daily farming. However, since the harvesting season occurs only once a year, they felt it should ideally be a moment of pride and collective effort, something that would spark greater enthusiasm and pride in contributing to *tengkawang* fruits processing to margarine in the mini factory.

The mini factory also faces limitations. Although the production process has become more efficient with machinery, the supply of raw fruits still depends on seasonal availability. At times, the potential of *tengkawang* harvests is not fully realized, leaving many fruits uncollected. In such cases, people from neighbouring villages gather the surplus in customary forest. And during the off-season, fruits are sourced from other parts of West Kalimantan. This is because there are only two processing facilities for raw *tengkawang*: one in Sahan Village owned by the community and another one is in Sintang owned by the Forest Wise. Forest Wise is a subsidiary company to Forestwise Netherlands with larger processing capacity and extensive networks, while the mini factory in Sahan Village focuses on *tengkawang* sourced from local and surrounding areas in Bengkayang. Further, the access to stable markets is not always guaranteed, and price fluctuations directly affect income from *tengkawang* products (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7 *Tengkawang* margarine produced by the community's mini-factory, obtained by freezing the extracted oil and packaged in small jars for distribution

Despite encouragement for the entire Melayang hamlet community to participate in *tengkawang* harvesting, participation remains inconsistent. Some community members cited economic constraints, while others expressed reluctance or disinterest. Their reluctance is emerging because a few individuals dominate activities in the mini factory, including in training sessions provided by INTAN or other institutions. These perceived if invisible barriers hinder some community members from participating, contributing their idea, or giving their suggestions. They demand more socialization and transparency in the operations of the mini-factory because they believed the active involvement of the 'elite' is for their personal benefit. They also stated that, to be to be recruited in the mini factory, they need to have a close connection with the elites. In contrast, the KUPS and trainers argue that they have encouraged inclusivity as the trainings are open to everyone, and the participants will receive compensation money for joining.

From another perspective, the KUPS head and the mini factory workers viewed limited participation as a natural stage of development. A KUPS representative believed that he needed to demonstrate first how the *tengkawang* business and the training programs could bring tangible benefits to the community. If the initiative succeeded, he argued, broader participation will eventually follow. This perspective was shared by the interviewed mini factory workers. They explained that operating the machinery to process the *tengkawang* fruits requires specific skills, as does following compliance procedures to maintain product quality. Patience, therefore, is necessary to complete the training and put it into practice. The workers also noted that, on days when there is no raw *tengkawang* supply to process, they continue to work on their farms or as labour in other farms.

Finally, a deeper concern is the weakening of customary values and tradition, as well as leadership renewal. Community members acknowledged that only a few elders continue to fully uphold traditions, remember histories, and have the special ability to maintain spiritual connections with ancestors through rites (as seen from example on Figure 4.8). Many, including external stakeholders, pointed that one of the Dayak Bekati' Rara elder who is also a shaman and leads the KUPS is pivotal to the customary forest's recognition and ongoing success. The interviewed community members said they rely heavily on him and remain obedient to his guidance. Even during interviews, when asked about the meaning of the customary forest, some community members identified him as the one who knows it best.



Figure 4.8 A Dayak Bekati' Rara elder performing the 'Pagar Rumah' rite to seek ancestral protection for their descendants

This leadership, networks, and dedication are considered irreplaceable. However, there is growing concern about regeneration and succession planning in the interviewed community members: who will succeed him, and how can younger people be adequately prepared to carry this complex responsibility? The interviewed community members emphasized the urgent need for youth to begin learning from the current leader, ensuring continuity of both leadership skills and cultural knowledge. This preparation is crucial because of the required expertise extends far beyond conventional leadership abilities. While basic leadership skills can be taught and learned through practice, the knowledge and ability to perform customary rites presents a much greater challenge.

However, according to the KUPS leader, his shamanic or spiritual abilities are spiritually determined, as a chosen one by the ancestors rather than simply learned; and that character and charisma are equally important in leading customary communities. As the customary law's application extends beyond the customary forest to encompass the entire territorial scope, the

leader must possess the ability to effectively engage not only with community members but also with outsiders.

4.3 Perspectives from Donors and NGOs

4.3.1 Recognition of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest

Government officials from the Ministry and the West Kalimantan Provincial Environment and Forestry Office acknowledged that land use and tenure pressures from oil palm expansion are very high around the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest in Bengkayang and Landak Districts. Forest conversion to large-scale oil palm plantations is taking place everywhere across West Kalimantan, mostly by large Indonesian and Malaysian companies. As a result, land tenure conflicts between companies and communities, especially customary communities, are common. The conflicts mostly escalated because of the overlapping land ownership between companies and communities. Many of these companies operate on land that has been cultivated by the communities or protected by the customary communities for generations. Sometimes conflicts are escalating into intimidation and even criminalization of the vocal community members, like the conflict between the Dayak Iban in Semunying Jaya village with PT. Ledo Lestari in the neighbouring customary forest in Bengkayang District since 2004 (see Chapter 2.3.2).

Interviewed officials recalled that the recognition of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest in 2018 involved a particularly fast process. Because the customary forest has been acknowledged by the district government since 2002. This enable the state-level recognition to be finalized in only three and a half months. The process included two field verifications carried out by a team of academics and government officials. By contrast, officials noted that recognition today can take up years, as customary forest recognition must first be preceded by the local government's recognition of customary communities and their territories. Customary communities' verification may draw on written records, physical remains, or elders' testimonies.

The officials added that the Hamlet leader's active role and support from INTAN were considered crucial in securing the Ministry recognition in 2018. INTAN had been present since 2013 in Melayang Hamlet, beginning with the *tengkawang* school program to revive and strengthen cultural knowledge, before broadening their engagement through forestry expertise. Because INTAN had already gained the community's trust, they could easily engage and work together with community members to complete the required documents for SF recognition.

4.3.2 Social Forestry Program

According to government officials interviewed, the recognition of customary forest transforms informal customary rights into formal legal status, without changing existing management practices. This recognition affirms the authority of customary communities over their forest while aligning their management with national forestry and environmental regulations.

Although under customary forest scheme communities are not required to submit annual reports, they are still responsible for managing their forests sustainably, preventing illegal activities, and ensuring customary practices align with broader legal and environmental frameworks. Coordination with government institutions is strongly encouraged to strengthen the monitoring process.

Since the pre-recognition process, under the Social Forestry program regulated in the MoEF regulation No. 9/2021 regarding Social Forestry Management, the communities have the right to be mentored or facilitated by facilitators. The facilitators could be appointed by the government officials or third parties such as from NGOs or appointed by neighbouring private companies as their Corporate Social Responsibility program. The interviewed official from Ministry of Forestry noted that they allocate 270 national facilitators across Indonesia, with 59 based in West Kalimantan. However, none were assigned to the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest, since INTAN was already providing intensive facilitation and had earned the community's trust. Limited staff and budget constraints were cited as the reasons for this.

The constraints also affected the limitations of the Ministry in monitoring and evaluation. Although annual evaluations should be carried out by the Ministry, none have been conducted since the formal SF recognition of the forest. Ministry staff are preoccupied with processing Social Forestry designation and recognitions, making comprehensive evaluation nearly impossible. In practice, to monitor the activity in Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, Bengkayang FMU conduct informal oversight through weekly phone calls and periodic visits to identify and resolve emerging problems before they escalate.

Given staff and budget constraints, the government officials are open to external support in roles more than just as a facilitator. Although it is up to the community as to whom they wanted to work with, the institutions need to follow safeguard mechanisms. At the provincial level, the Department of Environment and Forestry West Kalimantan requires NGOs working with communities to have formal agreements, such as Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) to ensure accountability. The institutions also need to have their operating licenses.

The KEHATI Foundation is one of the debt-swap programs between the US and Indonesian government for forest conservation in Kalimantan. They channel their funds to established NGOs in the field, such as INTAN. Although the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest lies outside their focused area called Heart of Borneo region (Kapuas Hulu – West Kalimantan, West Kutai and Mahakam Hulu - East Kalimantan) and the Berau Forest Carbon program in East Kalimantan, they believed INTAN's initiatives as aligned with their priorities of biodiversity protection, economic development, climate change mitigation, and governance strengthening. Moreover, the support given would be managed for activities to support the community. For INTAN themselves, they see that the general community still don't know what to do with the potential of the

community forest. Given its forestry background, INTAN then started to explore the use of *tengkawang* and how it could be able to support the Melayang Hamlet community's livelihood. KEHATI Foundation supported INTAN activities from 1 April 2021 to 30 April 2023 with total funds of IDR 2.1 billion (around AUD 193,500).

4.3.3 Economic Development and Capacity Building

Beside KEHATI Foundation's objectives and their TFCA program goals mentioned earlier, their support aims to ensure that the community receive real impact from managing or protecting their forest. The current *tengkawang* business model in Sahan village demonstrates tangible benefits while revealing significant limitations. Between 2022-2023, *tengkawang* sales generated 231 million rupiah from processing 20 tons of *tengkawang* fruit in the mini factory (signboard of mini factory shown in Figure 4.9). The community has obtained crucial certifications that enable wider market access, including Indonesian Food and Drug authority approval for *tengkawang* margarine, business identification numbers, distribution permit, sales permit, and halal certification.



Figure 4.9 Signboard of the tengkawang mini-factory located in front of Melayang Hamlet, showing the customary community's ownership and the logos of supporting institutions (KEHATI Foundation through TFCA-Kalimantan, Bengkayang FMU, and INTAN)

However, these achievements remain insufficient to fulfill the community's livelihood needs as *tengkawang* harvest is seasonal. Families require daily cash flow for basic expenses, and so farming or other agricultural activities remain the main income while *tengkawang* provides supplementary income. This additional income is not necessarily used wisely: interviewees reported that community members increasingly engage in online gambling, which operates with

winner announcements 3-4 times daily; and that compensation for attending training sessions is often diverted to gambling rather than household needs.

Interviewees noted that while the community has strengths in customary regulations and traditional forest management, they still face limitations in skills to extract the *tengkawang*. Since the traditional ecological knowledge in the community is unwritten, the differences in properties between the seven species of *tengkawang* (see Table 3.1) in customary forest is not fully understood. The content of *tengkawang*, such as fat percentage and character in the smokiness, is still being researched. The interviewed representative from KEHATI Foundation said that for now they still mixed the production in *tengkawang* mini factory from all the seven species found in the customary forest.

The marketing and distribution challenges also reveal structural disconnection from viable markets. Despite having processing capabilities and certified products, the community remains dependent on INTAN facilitation to connect with customers in distant cities like Aceh, Medan, and Yogyakarta. Local consumption appears limited, as interviewees noted that in West Kalimantan cities, few people use and even know *tengkawang*, even though it is known as a mascot for West Kalimantan.

4.3.4 Coordination and Structural Challenges

Implementation of the Social Forestry program, both before and after the community forest recognition, requires partnerships not only between government and external institutions, but also operational partnerships between government institutions beyond the forestry sector. Although the government officials interviewed believed that they can maintain good communications, coordination is still seen as challenging and confusing by those who work in the field.

From the field-level perspectives, the interviewed participants see that ministries still work in silos. They cited often-overlapping programs such as Social Forestry by Ministry of Forestry and Tourism Villages by Ministry of Tourism. Another example is the entity under government programs. Under the Social Forestry Program administered by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the community is required to establish the Social Forestry Business Group or the KUPS. However, KUPS is not a formal business entity. To legally market their products, a KUPS should transform to a cooperative which administered by the Ministry of Cooperatives, or Village-owned enterprise (BUMDes) administered Under the Ministry of Villages and Development of Disadvantaged Regions. Navigating complicated bureaucracy like these not only remains challenging for the community, but also for the facilitators.

At the implementation level, overlapping authorities also persist, such as between Balai Perhutanan Sosial (extension of Ministry of Forestry) and FMU (extension of Regional Forestry office). In addition, program continuity and consistency are often challenged by changes in leadership. Shifts in priorities between different administrations can cause established activities

to be modified or discontinued to align with new directives or initiatives introduced by incoming directors.

Another challenge in coordination from the non-government institutions' perspectives is that local knowledge remains at the grassroots level and does not reach provincial or ministerial decision-makers. *Tengkawang*, despite being a provincial symbol, is not listed in West Kalimantan's annual statistical report by the Regional Statistics Bureau. They also noted that government promotion of local products like *tengkawang* was described as minimal and believed that few people in the capital city know what *tengkawang* is. Meanwhile, the regulatory environment adds layers of complexity, a 2012 Trade Ministerial regulation prohibiting *tengkawang* seed exports hinders the *tengkawang* seed collectors from buying *tengkawang* seeds from farmers, because there are only two processing facilities for raw *tengkawang* in West Kalimantan.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter addresses the research questions by analysing the governance of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest through community and the other stakeholders' perspectives presented in Chapter 4. The analysis begins by examining the rights structure established through customary forest recognition under Indonesia's Social Forestry program, including the implications of land status transformation from APL to Forest Zone. It then evaluates the challenges and opportunities faced by the community in exercising these rights, before drawing broader lessons for community forest governance in Indonesia. The research questions as proposed in Chapter 1 are as follows:

1. How has the recognition of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest impacted the Dayak Bekati' Rara community's right and governance of the forest?
2. What are the main challenges and opportunities faced by the Dayak Bekati' Rara community in managing their forest as customary forest?
3. What lessons can be learned from Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest to strengthen the implementation of CBFM?

5.1 Rights over Forest and Natural Resources Management

This section will discuss the first research question. Drawing in the findings presented in Chapter 4, the analysis examines three key dimensions: the transformation of land status and its implications, the bundle of rights established through the 2018 Ministerial Decree, and the relationship between formal rights, responsibilities, and implementation challenges. The analysis reveals how customary forest recognition operates as both forest protection mechanism and regulatory framework, granting comprehensive rights while imposing state oversight.

5.1.1 Land Status and Community Response

The Pikul-Pengajid customary forest case represents a significant achievement in Indonesian forest tenure landscape. While most communities struggle to fully escape state forest designations, the Melayang Hamlet community, dominated by the Dayak Bekati' Rara people, actively pursued recognition of customary forest under Social Forestry program to secure autonomy. To date, 160 customary forests in 19 provinces of Indonesia have been recognized, with total of 333,687 hectares (Ministry of Forestry, 2025). These include some of first customary forests recognized from state forest tenure in 2016: Ammatoa Kajang in South Sulawesi from Limited Production Forest (313 hectares) (van der Muur, 2018), Wana Posangke in Central Sulawesi from Nature Reserve (6,212 hectares) (Nutfa *et al.*, 2023), and Kasepuhan Karang in Banten (486 hectares comprising 462 hectares from Gunung Halimun-Salak National Park and 24 hectares from other land-use zone, APL) (Arizona *et al.*, 2019). What distinguishes this case

is that it originated entirely from APL and was reclassified into forest-zoned land, rather than transitioning from state forest. As with all formally recognized customary forests following the 2012 Constitutional Court Decision No. 35, Pikul-Pengajid became a rights-based forest rather than state forest. Technically, APL status grants communities rights to convert forest to other uses, making it highly vulnerable to commercial pressures and land conversion (Sahide and Giessen, 2015). In contrast, the aspiration of Melayang Hamlet community reflects a conscious choice to seek stronger legal safeguards against these pressures, given the long history of land-use conflicts in their area (see Chapter 4.1.1).

The recognition process in Pikul-Pengajid customary forest differs from the customary forest within state forest zones that require customary community acknowledgement through regional regulations (PERDA). Under the regulation that was valid at the time (MoEF Regulation Number 32 of 2015 concerning Rights Forest), they were able to proceed with the Bengkayang Head of District's Decree of 2002 which acknowledges the Customary Forest. In contrast, in the newer MoEF Regulation Number 17/2020, customary forests converted from APL require regional regulation (PERDA) or Governor decree and/or Head of District's decree to legally acknowledge the customary community (see procedure in Figure 2.3).

The customary forest recognition through the Ministerial Decree SK.1300/MENLHK-PSKL/PKYHA/PSL.1/3/2018 grants the community rights to manage, utilize, and protect forests and their resources in accordance with their customary law. To the community, protecting the forest also means protecting themselves, by maintaining their connection to nature (Dawson *et al.*, 2021). At the same time, the recognition also gives them the authority to maintain their traditional governance and decision-making system that regulate access and use based on their customary rules. However, these rights also accompanied by obligations under MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021 (see Table 2.3), including maintaining forest functions, implementing sustainable forest management principles, and protecting the forest; in practice, although not obligatory, this is usually formalized in the customary forest management plan. This regulatory framework distinguishes customary forest status from APL lands: while it secures legal protection and shields the forest from external conversion, it also introduces new regulatory requirements that were not previously applied to APL. This arrangement appears well-suited to the community's objectives of customary forest protection and livelihood security. It ensures the customary forest is safeguarded through legal protection without constraining their agriculture activities outside customary forest, as these remain as APL.

5.1.2 Rights Granted Through State Recognition

The Ministerial Decree establishes comprehensive rights for the Melayang Hamlet community as stipulated in MoEF Regulation No. 83/2016 which was superseded by MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021 (see Table 2.3.), although most community members remain unaware that

customary forest scheme falls under the broader Social Forestry program. Assessed against (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992) bundle of rights framework as modified by (RRI, 2012), the community holds multiple levels of rights that distinguish customary forests from other Social Forestry schemes.

Operational rights grant all community members access to the forest while requiring outsiders to obtain permission from the customary council. Withdrawal rights distinguish between encouraged non-timber forest product collection, particularly *tengkawang* fruits during harvest season, and strictly regulated activities like tree cutting, which requires customary council approval for communal purpose only (church construction, coffins, disaster-damaged houses). Collective choice rights enable the community to manage the forest through customary rules, make autonomous decisions about external partnerships, and determine permissible activities. The community are also able to channel their aspiration through the KUPS although the participation of the community members is still inconsistent. The customary council exercises exclusion rights through sanctions ranging from warning and monetary fines to *adat* rites requiring cattle sacrifice, depending on the circumstances and severity of regulation violations. Alienation rights establish the forest as inalienable collective property that cannot be sold, leased, or transferred, as also prohibited in the MoEF Regulation 9/2021.

The duration of rights fundamentally distinguishes customary forests from other Social Forest schemes (see Table 2.1). While the other schemes granted management permits for fixed periods, customary forest ownership recognition is perpetual, as affirmed by MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021. This permanence asserted the community's connection with the forest as ancestral inheritance requiring intergenerational preservation. It stands as an explicit recognition of their pre-existing territorial claims and cultural connections to the land.

Recognition enables additional economic and institutional rights. The community can establish processing facilities and form legally recognized Social Forestry Business Groups (KUPS), which allow them to obtain product certifications (food safety, *halal* certification, business permits), and access both government and non-government funding programs. They also receive technical assistance and training from INTAN, their long-standing partner since 2013, to strengthen capacity in *tengkawang* processing at the mini factories. However, no dedicated government facilitator has been allocated to support them. But most importantly, governance autonomy is preserved: the community retains the authority to enforce customary law, conduct traditional rituals and ceremonies, resolve conflict internally, and maintain ultimate decision-making power within the limits of state regulation (e.g., prohibition on tree cutting) and laws (e.g., on property rights).

5.1.3 Responsibilities and Accountability

These comprehensive rights are coupled with responsibilities operating at multiple levels. Recognition under MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021 establishes rights and responsibilities for customary forest management. While communities are given autonomy to manage forest according to customary law, the regulation introduces responsibilities for sustainability. Community understanding of responsibilities in protecting the customary forest goes beyond legal compliance, but as an inherited obligation for them to preserve their culture and ensure intergenerational stewardship (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). The customary council exercises these responsibilities through conflict mediation and enforcement of customary law, integrating sustainable resource management with traditional practices for social cohesion (Gultom *et al.*, 2025).

The practical effectiveness of these rights and responsibilities, however, depends heavily on factors beyond the formal recognition framework. Economic pressures lead some community members to prioritize immediate income over collective forest protection, although, still, no one dares to break the rules to cut down trees. The high market price of oil palm, which fosters the expansion of smallholder plantations, also creates pressure on the customary forest. Both MoEF Regulation No. 9/2021 and customary law prohibit the customary forest from being planted with oil palm.

Another factor is the change and dynamics in the community; younger generations show declining participation in voluntary conservation activities and weakening adherence to traditional beliefs. Valuing forest protection makes more sense to the community when it provides them direct benefits (Boedhihartono, 2017). Therefore, legal recognition alone does not ensure forest survival; sustained community commitment and accountability in protecting the customary forest remain fundamental (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b; Kraus *et al.*, 2021). Further, as also mentioned by Kraus *et al.* (2021), state monitoring capacity to assess whether customary forest recognition able to sustain the forest is important but remains limited. In Pikul-Pengajid customary forest, no formal Ministry monitoring and evaluation has been conducted since 2018, creating reliance on regular visits and oversight by Bengkayang FMU, alongside community self-monitoring through customary law enforcement mechanisms.

5.2 Opportunities and Challenges

This section analyses the opportunities and challenges arising from the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest recognition from 2018 until present. The opportunities arise from the community being able to maintain day-to-day governance autonomy while remaining accountable for sustainable forest management. However, the gap between rights and practical implementation capacity reveals that recognition provides legal status without necessarily addressing underlying structural conditions in the community.

5.2.1 The emerging opportunities in Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest

The recognition of Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest has generated opportunities beyond legal protection. Most importantly, it formalized the community's tenure rights, enabling them to decide how to manage their customary forest, as they have gained formal rights to enforce local rules and monitor resource use (Gilmour, 2016; Siscawati *et al.*, 2017). The recognition has empowered communities to decide their own forest management strategies, and so promotes self-determination, which is crucial for the continuity of their cultural practices (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). In practice, they have greater autonomy to shape their own economic, social, and cultural development, better protected from external pressures that might interfere, such as from large agricultural concession holders, although pressure from small private plantations still persists.

Another important impact of the recognition is the increased visibility and attention from the government. Located close to the country's border and far from provincial and national capitals (see West Kalimantan map in Figure 3.1), the community previously experienced few government visits. Recognition, particularly combined with awards to the KUPS leader, has brought regular official attention and creating channels for government engagement. The community has been able to feel the government presence in their village.

This visibility has enabled network expansion and resource access through the KUPS, which functions as the legal institution channelling donor support and development partnerships (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). The *tengkawang* mini-factory exemplifies a hybrid economic model emerging from recognition, operated with supports from donor, government, and community capitals from the reinvested profits (Altman, 2001). It diversifies income sources beyond farming, though forest-based activities remain secondary to the more lucrative agricultural practices in household economies rather than the main source of income. The viability of this model still depends on continued external support and market development (Altman, 2001), in this case for traditional forest products.

Recognition has also reinforced social cohesion around the shared goal of forest protection. The common commitment to preserving the customary forest contributes to collective ownership and community identity (Orazani *et al.*, 2023). However, at the same time, the benefits and burdens of the recognition are not uniformly experienced across the community. Participation in *tengkawang* protection and training opportunities varies, shaped by various factors from economic constraints to individual interest levels. This variation suggests that while recognition creates opportunities, their accessibility and distribution within the community require ongoing attention (Gilmour, 2016).

Growing external attention in the customary forest has created potential for cultural revitalization and youth engagement with traditional practices (Maclean *et al.*, 2023). Leaders envision leveraging attention for intergenerational knowledge transmission, using customary

forest as an anchor for reconnecting younger generations with traditional practices and ancestral inheritance (Scheyvens and Kaire Gataulu, 2025). This represents an important opportunity, given documented trends of declining traditional knowledge and reduced youth participation in customary activities (see Chapter 4.1.3). As noted by Ruckstuhl *et al.* (2023), cultural revitalization serves not only community continuity but also protects community rights over their traditional knowledge, particularly as bioprospecting initiatives around *tengkawang* raise issues of intellectual property and benefit-sharing (see Chapter 4.2.1).

However, whether increased visibility can reverse these trends depends on how successfully opportunities translated into meaningful youth involvement and whether economic realities allow younger generations to prioritize cultural engagement alongside livelihood needs. The active involvement of the community and their traditional knowledge also presents opportunities co-creating forest management knowledge that integrates Traditional Ecological Knowledge with contemporary science (Yanou *et al.*, 2023; Lambert and Mark-Shadbolt, 2021; Ginting *et al.*, 2025; Budiman and Oue, 2025). This requires governments to move toward inclusive decision-making processes that recognized communities as knowledge holders and co-managers rather than merely program beneficiaries (Dawson *et al.*, 2024).

5.2.2 Challenges faced in Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest

Despite the opportunities arise from the recognition, the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest faces multiple interconnected challenges. Some challenges existed prior to recognition, while others emerge from or are amplified by the recognition itself. This section will discuss those challenges that constrain the community's ability to fully realize the potential of customary forest governance.

Economic Constraints

The Pikul-Pengajid customary forest is located within a challenging landscape context that limits what governance alone can achieve. The widespread forest conversion in West Kalimantan has left the customary forest as an isolated 100 hectares fragment surrounded by oil palm plantations (Figure 5.1) and agricultural lands. This landscape fragmentation predates recognition and means that protecting the customary forest from the pressures of the continuing presence of privately-owned oil palm plantation surrounding have been an ongoing priority.

The market price and demand for oil palm are undeniably attractive for the community, and the alternative economic model established through recognition still faces structural barriers that hinder financial sustainability, as Altman (2001) described in a hybrid economy context. Despite production capacity and product certifications, the mini-factory operates within fragmented supply chains that depend on NGO facilitation to connect with buyers in distant cities. This dependency creates vulnerability to market disruptions and limits the community's ability to negotiate favourable term independently (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). As also noted by Marsono *et al.*

(2023), the mismatch between forest-based income cycles and daily economic needs creates fundamental tensions: *tengkawang* harvesting generates lower daily returns compared to agricultural labour, making participation economically unattractive despite its cultural significance (see chapter 4.2.1).



Figure 5.1 Small privately-owned oil palm plantations located around the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest

Regulatory frameworks further constrain market development as the Minister of Trade prohibits the export of *tengkawang* seeds which limits market options to domestic processing facilities (Regulation Number 44/M-DAG/7/2012 states that live *tengkawang* plants with tariff heading (HS) 0602.90.90.00 and *tengkawang* seeds with HS code 1207.99.40.00 are prohibited from being exported). It resulted in *tengkawang* seed collectors reluctance to buy *tengkawang* seeds from farmers. With only two such facilities in West Kalimantan, the community's mini factory and Forest Wise in Sintang, seed collectors face restricted buying options, constraining farmer income potential. These structural constraints mean that while recognition creates legal space for forest-based economic activities through KUPS, it does not ensure market viability or adequate returns to compete with alternative livelihoods (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). Economic pressures manifest in concerning social patterns, including increases in online gambling participation, even among those receiving training compensation, reflecting broader struggles with inadequate and irregular income flows. The seasonal nature of *tengkawang* fruiting also means seasonal income. On days outside the harvesting season then the mini-factory source raw materials from other regions during off-seasons, adding costs and logistical complexity, which again still depend on the NGO facilitation.

NGO Dependency

Dependency challenges were evident from the start. In the preparation, formal requirements such as customary forests mapping exceed community capacity without corresponding support. After the recognition, preparation of documents such as management plans and funding proposals (when needed) require facilitation from INTAN, creating dependencies that raise questions about long-term sustainability when external supports phases out (Lega *et al.*, 2024; Harada *et al.*, 2022). This gap between formal requirements and practical capacity reveals a structural challenge in Social Forestry program design: recognition assumes institutional capabilities that communities may not possess, creating ongoing dependency on external facilitation (Gbedomon *et al.*, 2016).

Government officials as well as the community are dependent on NGO support. Government monitoring and support capacity also remains limited. No formal Ministry evaluations have been conducted since 2018 recognition, leaving oversight to Bengkayang FMU. The shortage of national facilitators (see chapter 4.3.2) illustrates broader capacity constraints within Social Forestry program. This creates a paradox where formal recognition imposes compliance requirement, such as periodic report on the implementation of social forestry management to the minister (Article 72(1) MoEF Regulation No 9/2021). However, the state lacks capacity to monitor compliance or provide adequate support, leaving communities dependent on NGO intermediaries.

Inequitable Participation and Benefit Distribution

The institutional structures created through recognition, particularly the KUPS, do not automatically ensure equitable participation or benefit distribution (Toumbourou *et al.*, 2025). Patterns of involvement in *tengkawang* processing and training opportunities reveal uneven access within the community. Some community members perceive barriers to participation in mini-factory operations, citing needs to be part or close to those in power (Adhikari, 2005; Toumbourou *et al.*, 2025). These perceptions, whether reflecting actual exclusion or communication gaps, indicate that formalizing forest-based economic activities through KUPS can concentrate benefits rather than distributing them broadly (Toumbourou *et al.*, 2025; Rakatama and Pandit, 2020).

The concentration of technical knowledge and operational roles among a smaller group, while potentially reflecting skill requirements and training investments, raises questions about pathways for broader community involvement. Recognition creates new economic opportunities but does not automatically include mechanisms to ensure inclusive access to these opportunities or transparent governance of the institution managing them (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). The challenge lies not in the recognition itself but in how the institutional arrangements required by the Social Forestry program interact with existing community power dynamics and social structures (Toumbourou *et al.*, 2025).

Traditional Knowledge Transmission

Perhaps the greatest long-term challenge in the community is manifest in concerns about leadership succession and traditional knowledge transmission in the context of formalized traditional governance structures (Akhmar *et al.*, 2023). The current success of Pikul-Pengajid customary forest governance depends substantially on the KUPS leader, who combines customary authority, traditional knowledge, and modern institutional skills, a combination community members and stakeholders acknowledge as exceptional and difficult to replicate. Recognition formalizes governance arrangements but does not address how to ensure continuity when critical knowledge and authority reside in individuals rather than transferable institutional structures.

This challenge extends beyond individual leadership to broader patterns of cultural transmission. Fewer elders retain comprehensive knowledge of customary law, traditional ecological knowledge, and ritual practices. Moreover, younger generations demonstrate declining interest in customary practices and reduced participation in voluntary conservation activities, drawn instead toward income-generating opportunities that formal education and modern economic integration make available (See chapter 4.1.3).

Recognition validates customary governance but simultaneously requires integration with state bureaucratic processes, creating tension between traditional authority based on spiritual knowledge and modern institutional leadership based on administrative capacity (Lawasi *et al.*, 2024). Whether communities can develop mechanisms that maintain both dimensions, preserving cultural legitimacy while building institutional capacity that does not depend on exceptional individuals, remains an open question critical to long-term sustainability of customary forest governance under the Social Forestry program.

5.3 Lessons from the Pikul Pengajid Customary Forest

This chapter will discuss the lessons synthesized from the earlier chapters on the challenges and opportunities from Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest after its recognition by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2018. The lesson learned would be separated in three sub-chapters, for the community, government institutions, and for donors and Non-Government Organizations.

5.3.1 Lessons learned for the community

The case from Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest reveals that formal recognition can transform the community into visible institutional actors subject to external expectations. Recognition has positioned the community as a collective entity negotiating with government agencies, NGOs, and other external stakeholders, requiring unified representation of community interests. This necessitates internal governance mechanisms that can produce legitimate collective decisions while managing diverse and sometimes conflicting member interests (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b).

The imperative for collective consensus emerges from the expectation that communities speak with a unified voice. Establishing a shared vision and direction becomes important for self-governance that address the community needs (Agrawal, 2001). The case from Sahan Village community demonstrates that consensus building depends on inclusive process where diverse voices need to be heard and incorporated into decisions. The perception among some members of barriers to participation in KUPS activities suggests that formal institutional structures alone do not ensure inclusive decision-making. Communities must actively cultivate internal processes that bridge differences to produce decisions that reflect genuine collective agreement rather than elite preferences presented as community consensus (Rakatama and Pandit, 2020).

Not only in the decision-making process, but the outcome of the activities, need transparency to address the different perspectives in the community. Sahide *et al.* (2020) asserted that when external resources flow through KUPS structures, transparency in financial management and benefit distributions becomes critical for sustaining community trust and participation. The reported perceptions of the barriers to join the KUPS activities, whether real or perceived, can undermine institutional legitimacy. It is important to have mechanisms for sharing information about institutional operations, financial flows, and decision-making rationales, recognizing that transparency serves not merely as administrative needs but as an essential requirement for maintaining and make good use of the social cohesion opportunity (Friedman *et al.*, 2020b).

The authority, in this case the KUPS leader of the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest, demonstrates that effective leadership requires bridging multiple domains: customary authority and modern institutional management, community values, traditional ecological knowledge, and bureaucratic compliance (Lawasi *et al.*, 2024). The current KUPS leader's combination of his spiritual knowledge, customary legitimacy, and modern institutional skills is exceptional, exemplifies boundary-spanning leadership capacity. This may require early apprenticeship pathways for emerging leaders, especially for skills that can be passed or learned such as management skills and institutional arrangements where the spiritual skills might require more than leadership but also gifted by the ancestors (Akhmar *et al.*, 2023).

Another important skill that could be learned or passed to the younger generation is to maintain their networks. As recognition opens access to networks, connecting communities with external actors from various background, maintain the network is as important (Shirleyana *et al.*, 2023). But the experience in Pikul-Pengajid also shows that effectively leveraging these networks requires strategic selectivity, choosing partnerships aligned with community aspirations while maintain autonomy over fundamental decisions. Being able to equally position the community with the external actors becoming important, to be able to put the community's aspiration first (Kusters *et al.*, 2022a). Communities benefit from developing both formal institutional mechanisms for partnership management and informal relationship-building capacities that create trust and understanding across cultural and institutional boundaries.

5.3.2 Lesson learned for the government institutions

The Pikul-Pengajid customary forest case offers important lessons for government institutions implementing the Social Forestry program, particularly how government institutions can support rather than constrain customary forest governance in the face of complicated procedures. The experience reveals persistent coordination challenges across the government agencies and administrative levels. Overlapping similar initiatives create confusion and administrative burden for communities navigating bureaucratic requirements (Scott and Gong, 2021; van Noordwijk, 2020). Different entity requirements, such as KUPS for Social Forestry business and the cooperative administered by separate ministries, illustrate how lack of coordination in the central level translates into practical obstacles for communities. Effective support for customary forest governance requires mechanisms for inter-agency coordination that harmonize requirements, align program timing, and create unified points of contact for communities rather than expecting them to navigate fragmented bureaucratic landscapes independently.

Effective supports also require listening to community aspirations, constraints, and knowledge rather than imposing standardized interventions. Government agencies might consider how to institutionalize responsiveness: creating structured mechanisms for community input into program design, allowing modification of standard requirements based on local contexts, and evaluating success based on community-defined outcomes rather than solely on administrative compliance (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). As Cavaye (1999) and Banjade *et al.* (2017), this suggests the need for capacity building not only for communities, but also for government officials (Cavaye, 1999), to develop skills in participatory planning (Lawson *et al.*, 2022), cross-cultural communication (Lewis, 2000), and adaptive management that allows programs to evolve based on implementation experience (Dovers and Hussey, 2013).

Lastly, as community members emphasised, formal recognition makes them feel respected and valued, it highlights the importance of state acknowledgment beyond its legal effects. The ministerial decree and the awards for the KUPS leader validate the community efforts and traditional governance in ways that strengthen community identity and commitment. This suggests opportunities to use the customary forest recognition to affirm community agency and traditional governance rather than treating decree issuance as merely administrative procedure (Almeida, 2016).

5.3.3 Lessons learned for donor and Non-Government Organizations

The role of partners in the Pikul-Pengajid case shows both the potential and limitations of external support for customary forest governance. The most critical lesson is the importance of long-term engagement, concerning the inadequacy of project-based support for governance challenges requiring sustained capacity building (Kim and Bang, 2025). INTAN's continuous

engagement since 2013 enabled trust-building, iterative learning, and adaptive support that short-term projects cannot provide. KEHATI Foundation's support for *tengkawang* processing evolved from initial product development by providing machines and electric generator, to continuous trainings to build capacity, to supporting product certifications, responding to emerging needs and opportunities rather than following strict predetermined project plans. This continuity allowed identification and response to challenges, such as market access constraints or certification requirements, as they arose rather than assuming all needs could be anticipated at project design (Kusters *et al.*, 2022a).

However, even long-term engagement creates dependencies when communities are not able to continue activities without external facilitation. The continued reliance on INTAN for bookkeeping, market connections, and required documents writing demonstrates how support can inadvertently create sustained dependencies rather than building independent capacity (Kusters *et al.*, 2022a). Development partners face the difficult challenge of providing necessary support while simultaneously working toward their paradox to support communities in developing capacities that reduce need for external facilitation over time (Girgis, 2007).

Therefore, comprehensive capacity building is essential. Kusters *et al.* (2022a) argued that it has to extend beyond technical training to cover multiple dimensions: product development and certification, financial management and planning, market analysis and development, planning documents writing and reporting, conflict resolution and governance, documentation of traditional knowledge and customary law, and without forgetting the main aim for managing the customary forest sustainably. The experience from Pikul-Pengajid customary forest shows that neglecting any dimension may undermine others: technical capacity for productions means little without market access. But it is also important that building one skill would lead to another: enhancing governance capacity enables the community to have their own say to manage partnerships rather than becoming passive recipients for external initiatives (Hacker *et al.*, 2012).

Capacity building also requires attention to inclusive access. When training and technical assistance reach only those within close circle to leadership, external support can reinforce rather than challenge existing inequalities within communities (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). Development partners might consider how to structure support to actively promote inclusive participation, perhaps through tiered approaches that provide foundational training broadly while offering advanced specialization to interested members, or through explicit attention to barriers that prevent certain community members from accessing opportunities (Parsons *et al.*, 2025).

To conclude, the structural challenge evident from this case is that communities need support precisely because they lack capacities that formal recognition assumes, yet providing support creates dependencies (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). Several approaches might mitigate this tension. First, development partners can explicitly design exit strategies from the start, identifying capacity

milestones that indicate readiness for reduced support and creating graduated transitions plans rather than abrupt project endings (Aarseth *et al.*, 2017; Duthy and Bolo-Duthy, 2003). Second, support can prioritize systems and institutional arrangements over individual skills, for example, establishing community customary-law documentation together rather than doing it on behalf of communities (Duthy and Bolo-Duthy, 2003). Third, development partners could facilitate peer learning networks connecting multiple customary forests, enabling communities to support and learn from each other (Friedman *et al.*, 2020a).

The risk of dependency also suggests need for advocacy addressing structural barriers beyond community control, such as regulatory constraints on *tengkawang* markets, fragmented government coordination, or inadequate state monitoring capacity (Kusters *et al.*, 2022b). Development partners can use their convening power and policy influence to address systemic constraints that no amount of capacity building can overcome, complementing community-level support with policy advocacy that creates more enabling conditions for customary forest governance (Kusters *et al.*, 2022a; Yami and Mekuria, 2022).

5.4 Summary

Several interconnected findings emerged from the case in Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest. Indonesia's Social Forestry program enables customary communities to formalize their customary forest tenure rights through decree from Ministry of Forestry (formerly Ministry of Environment and Forestry), which requires verification processes. Recognition in this case was supported by multiple pre-conditions working together. Long-term development partner support proved essential. INTAN's continuous engagement provided technical assistance and facilitated bureaucratic process; support from local government enabled; coordinated administrative processes. However, the most critical factor is the aspiration and active involvement of the Melayang Hamlet community, dominated by the Dayak Bekati' Rara people with strong traditional governance systems. Their customary values, norms, and sanctions have historically proven effective in maintaining the customary forest sustainability, providing a foundation for formal recognition. This governance effectiveness stems from the community's spiritual connection to the customary forest as ancestral heritage, deeply embedded in their belief systems.

Recognition created significant short-term outcomes and opportunities. Most importantly, the community gained tenure security, enabling them to enforce their customary law in their customary forest. The formal institution (KUPS) provided better access to networks and support for forest management. It also channels support from government and development partners. Recognition also strengthened the community's position to exercise self-governance according to their traditional systems. However, realizing these opportunities depends on establishing transparent and inclusive governance within the KUPS, including equitable benefit-sharing

mechanisms that ensure all community members can access opportunities, not just those close to leadership.

However, in practice long-term outcomes remain conditional and uncertain. The community's ability to resist external conversion pressures (particularly from surrounding palm oil plantations) and maintain sustainable forest management depends on factors often beyond their control. The community faces interconnected economic and cultural pressures that threaten sustainable forest management. Market viability for *tengkawang*, the community's primary product, faces structural barriers including regulatory constraints and complicated administration bureaucracy, contributing to prices too low to compete with agricultural activities. This economic pressure directly drives cultural erosion: younger generations have little choice but to pursue farming for more predictable and higher income, abandoning traditional forest-based livelihoods. This shift disrupts the intergenerational transmission of traditional ecological knowledge essential for sustainable forest management.

On the other side, support from external institutions is needed, creating reliance on NGO supports and FMU oversight. Achieving sustainable forest-livelihoods also requires communities to be able to access market independently. This necessitates a gradual transition away from dependency on NGO intermediaries, which in turn requires building community capacity while preserving and transmitting traditional ecological knowledge across generations.

The impacts on forest conservation, improved livelihoods, and increased self-determination depend on whether these enabling conditions can be achieved. Forest conservation becomes viable if economic alternatives from forest products can meet community livelihood needs without dependency on agricultural activities or oil palm cultivations. However, a fundamental challenge persists: *tengkawang* and other non-timber forest products cannot realistically compete with oil palm's profitability through conventional market mechanism alone.

Rather than forcing *tengkawang* to compete with oil palm commercially, a hybrid economy approach recognizes that customary communities sustain livelihoods across multiple economic domains simultaneously (Altman, 2001). It recognizes that economic viability comes from supporting all three interconnected domains: the state sector (e.g. through policies or subsidies), the market sector development (e.g. through premium niche markets or diversify revenue streams from combining *tengkawang* business with ecotourism), and the customary sector (e.g. through maintaining traditional forest-based practices). Improved livelihoods therefore require support that values traditional knowledge and values alongside market access. Therefore, genuine self-determination of the customary community depends on ensuring both capacity development and equity within the community, so that benefits and decision-making power are distributed fairly rather than concentrated among the leadership circles.

These findings are broadly consistent with Kusters *et al.* (2022b)'s Theory of Change for community forest tenure rights formalization, introduced in Chapter 2.3. The core pathway they described, from tenure security through enabling conditions to sustainable outcomes, remains valid. However, the case in Pikul-Pengajid also suggests modifications to the framework. While challenges are broadly similar across cases, each context requires tailored approaches. Figure 5.1. presents an adapted version of Kusters *et al.* (2022b)'s framework reflecting specific insights from Pikul-Pengajid customary forest case:

1. Long-term NGOs support and a gradual transition (conditions #4 and #11) address the finding on the importance of sustained external facilitation with intentional capacity building to eventually reduce dependency. Community self-sufficiency cannot be assumed as an automatic outcome of the customary forest recognition.
2. Formal institution with transparent and inclusive governance (condition #6) acknowledges the importance of the formal institution in opening opportunities for communities to access broader networks and channel supports, while also emphasizing transparency and inclusivity.
3. Traditional knowledge transmission (condition #9): the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest case shows intergenerational knowledge transfer is critical and fragile. It is threatened by youth migration and shifts to agricultural work as an impact of economic pressures.
4. Explicit conditional pathways for expected impacts. Comprehensive forest conservation depends in part on *tengkawang* or other non-timber forest products being sufficiently economically viable to hinder land conversion (which is currently not the case), improved livelihoods require favourable markets, and self-determinations require internal equity.

These conditional statements reflect realistic constraints observed in practice.

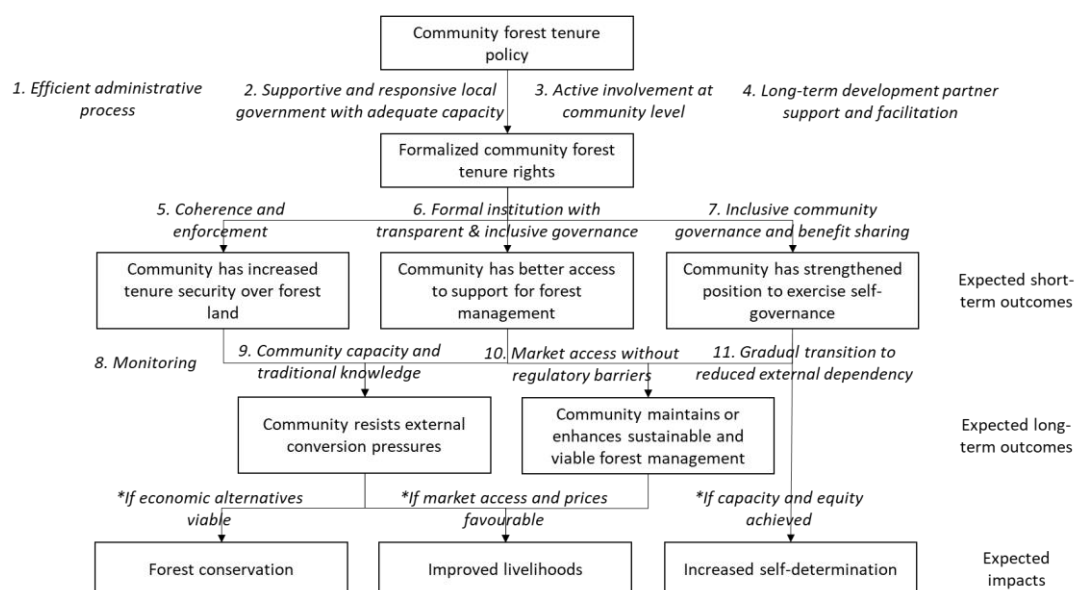


Figure 5.2 Theory of Change and key conditions to achieve long-term outcomes and impacts for Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest, adapted from Kusters *et al.* (2022b)

While these modifications reflect the Pikul-Pengajid customary forest context, they address dynamics likely to be relevant to other customary forest cases facing economic competition, cultural transitions, and NGO dependency, and demonstrate the utility of Kusters *et al.* (2022b) framework.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Indonesia's Social Forestry program, especially through the Customary Forest scheme, recognizes community rights over their forest. Yet, little is known about how formal recognition translates into effective governance beyond permit issuance. While substantial literature exists on the legal and policy frameworks of SF program, less attention has been paid to how recognition shapes daily community practices, power dynamics, and the enabling conditions for self-governance to succeed. Post-recognition outcomes remain poorly understood, particularly to bridge the gap between formal rights recognized and practical implementation capacity.

Addressing this need, this research examines how the recognition of customary forests can better realize customary community rights and inform Social Forestry policy and practice in Indonesia. With Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, as a case study, this research identifies how recognition affects communities' right and governance of the forest, the opportunities and challenges that arise, and the lessons learned from implementation.

The findings reveal interconnected opportunities and challenges emerging from recognition. Recognition created significant opportunities: formal tenure security enabled communities to enforce customary rules and resist external pressures; the SF Business Group (KUPS), formed by communities as a program requirement, provided access to funding and expanded networks; *tengkawang* centred activities generated hybrid economic models while reinforcing cultural identity and promoting traditional ecological knowledge; and shared commitment to forest protection strengthened social cohesion. However, some critical challenges constrain these opportunities: structural capacity gaps created dependency on NGO facilitation; inequitable participation persists despite formal institutional structure; and weakening traditional knowledge transmission raises concern about future leadership succession.

These findings show that recognition alone is insufficient. The case reveals a fundamental paradox: formal recognition, even in the application process, imposes compliance requirements (e.g., area maps, proof of community's identity, formal declaration letter from community) assuming capabilities that communities may not possess, while the state lacks adequate sufficient facilitators to provide necessary support. This creates ongoing dependency on NGO intermediaries, raising questions about long-term sustainability when external support phases out. It is important to avoid the risk that hard-won recognition ends up with unsustainable outcomes.

Direct action is needed from all stakeholders to address this matter. Government institutions should work together with all stakeholders to develop long-term support frameworks rather than focusing solely on permit issuance and quantitative targets (e.g., number of hectares recognized, number of customary communities, number of KUPS established). The Ministry of Forestry must establish regular monitoring systems to ensure recognized communities maintain the sustainability of their customary forest. Inter-agency coordination must be improved so it could

support communities and their limited bureaucratic capacity. Development partners should design exit strategies from the start, identifying capacity milestones and creating graduate transitions rather than abrupt withdrawals. Most importantly, communities must be supported, not merely expected, to develop inclusive decision-making mechanisms and transparent benefit-sharing systems that prevent formal institution from reinforcing existing inequalities, if any.

The lessons from the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest case have broad applicability. With appropriate contextualisation and interpretation, these findings are relevant not only to other customary forest cases but also to the four co-management schemes within Indonesia's Social Forestry program, and to CBFM practices globally. Indonesia aims to allocate 12.7 million hectares under Social Forestry by 2030. If the structural challenges persist, this target will remain merely a number without corresponding actual contribution to effective community self-governance. More broadly, this study contributes evidence to the global focus on community-based natural resources management, particularly relevant as countries pursue forest tenure reforms and Indigenous community recognition. The findings show that acknowledging community existence and rights provides a foundation for self-governance, but recognition is only the beginning. Implementation for meaningful outcomes requires that the state and communities are on an equal footing and develop shared interests. Such cooperation requires creating conditions for genuine community self-determination within appropriately adaptive and responsive policy frameworks that address the structural constraints communities face. These findings align with and extend Kusters *et al.* (2022b) Theory of Change for community forests. The case demonstrates that while the core pathway from tenure security to sustainable outcomes holds across contexts, achieving these outcomes requires tailored enabling conditions specific to each community's dynamics. The adapted framework offers a tool for policymakers and practitioners to identify critical enabling conditions and realistic pathways for achieving tenure formalization outcomes across diverse contexts.

These findings point to several critical research gaps. First, more studies on community decision-making processes and internal power dynamics would help design programs that promote equitable participation rather than reinforcing elite control. It would also be beneficial to understand dependency patterns and local knowledge on traditional leadership succession mechanisms, and how these might be changing in contemporary circumstances. Second, from an ecological perspective, ethnobotanical studies and ecosystem assessments in customary forests would document how community self-governance impacts forest sustainability and how these forests maintain biodiversity despite surrounding land-use changes, providing evidence for the effectiveness of community-based conservation. Understanding both social and ecological dimensions could inform more effective approaches for Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) and related approaches, that build on community governance strengths while addressing the structural constraints that recognition alone cannot overcome.

Further, sustaining post-recognition outcomes requires adaptive management strategies that consider both ecological and socio-political dynamics, continuous stakeholder engagement, and willingness from all parties (especially government institutions) to adjust approaches based on field reality rather than persisting with standardized models which may create dependency while expecting self-sufficiency.

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Appendix 1: List of Guiding Questions

(Translated to Indonesian)

For Community Members

A. Understanding and Awareness of Customary Forest Management and the Role of Customary Communities

1. What does customary forest mean to you? Why is it important?
2. What is the difference between customary forests and ordinary forests?
3. Are there customary practices or rules related to customary forests?
4. Does this greatly influence customary forest management?
5. Has anyone ever violated customary law? When? What sanctions were given?
6. Have there ever been conflicts or are there currently conflicts regarding forest management with other parties?

B. Awareness of the Social Forestry (SF) Scheme and Forest Recognition

7. What was the motivation and background for then legalizing the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? What is its history?
8. Were there any challenges in the pre- and post-recognition process of the customary forest?
9. Was there anything different before and after the Customary Forest Decree was granted?
10. What do you understand about customary forest recognition in the SF scheme? What are the rights and obligations of customary communities? Is it working well now?
11. Do you feel that your rights as customary communities have been fulfilled, are they sufficient? How should it be? What is actually needed?

C. Expectations and Goals for Forest Governance After Customary Forest Recognition

12. Do you think the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest is currently well managed? What influences it?
13. Currently what is being developed is *tengkawang*, why *tengkawang*? Is it sufficient to drive and meet the community's economy?
14. Is the *tengkawang* management already self-sufficient? Already independent?
15. Are there other plans being developed or aspired to be promoted in the future?
16. Has the legalization of the customary forest and its institutions made coordination with other institutions smoother?
17. Have you or members ever received support (such as training or financial assistance) related to forest management?
18. What are your hopes or expectations after the recognition of the Customary Forest?

D. Key Factors to Strengthen Community-Based Forest Management

19. In your opinion, what is needed to ensure the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest remains protected? How is the process of involving community members and regeneration?
 20. What is the role of customary knowledge in realizing sustainable outcomes?
 21. How can government institutions, NGOs, or other stakeholders better support your community in forest management?
-

For Government Institutions

A. Understanding and Awareness of Customary Forest Management and the Role of Customary Communities

1. What was the motivation and background for legalizing the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? Was there any special urgency in its selection?
2. What is the history before the establishment and recognition of the customary forest? Were there any recorded conflicts within the community or with outsiders?
3. What is your view on the role of customary communities in maintaining forest sustainability through local wisdom and existing customary principles?

B. Awareness of the Social Forestry (SF) Scheme and Customary Forest Recognition

4. What was the process for recognizing the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? Were there any challenges in the process?
5. Since the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest originally was in APL (Other Land Use Area), was there then a difference in the pre- and post-recognition of the customary forest?
6. How can Social Forestry (SF) support the recognition of indigenous communities and customary forest management? Has it been optimal in achieving its goals?
7. Are there any major challenges in implementing the SF scheme in the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? If so, what are they? (Such as compliance related to rights and obligations in SF regulations)
8. What policies or programs does your institution have to support customary forest management?
9. How does your institution support customary communities in the customary forest recognition process as well as current customary forest management? Are communities now involved in making related decisions?

C. Expectations and Goals for Forest Governance After Customary Forest Recognition

10. What benefits are expected from customary forest recognition through the SF scheme for customary communities and also the environment?
11. In general, what are the main obstacles in ensuring effective customary forest governance or management?

12. Do these obstacles also appear in supporting the management of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest?

13. What is the monitoring and evaluation process for the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? Has it been assessed as good so far?

D. Key Factors to Strengthen Community-Based Forest Management

14. What factors do you think support the current management of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest?

15. What institutional support (policies, funding, capacity building) is available to help customary communities manage their customary forests?

16. How is the collaboration between central and regional government institutions? Is it optimal?

17. How can collaboration with communities be improved to achieve sustainable forest governance?

18. Are there any ongoing initiatives or future plans to strengthen the governance of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest?

For Non-Governmental Institutions

A. Understanding and Awareness of Customary Forest Management and the Role of Customary Communities

1. What was the motivation and background for supporting the management of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest?
2. How is your organization involved in supporting customary forest recognition in the SF scheme?
3. Do you know or record any conflicts before customary forest recognition? Are they still occurring now or have they been resolved?
4. Did the existence of these conflicts affect the current social situation of the community? Regarding openness to the government and outsiders?
5. What kind of support does your organization provide to customary communities involved in customary forest management?
6. How does your institution view the role of customary communities in forest management? What local wisdom do you think is very important and influential, especially in the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest?

B. Awareness of the Social Forestry (SF) Scheme and Customary Forest Recognition

1. Do you think the customary forest scheme in SF affects the full fulfillment of customary communities' rights, regarding territorial rights and livelihood rights? What do you think it should be? What is lacking and what has been achieved?
2. Do you think customary communities can already be fully the main actor in customary forest management?

3. What challenges do you observe in implementing the SF scheme for customary forests?
4. How does your institution address or intervene?
5. Is there a difference in the process of providing support for customary and non-customary forest management?

C. Expectations and Goals for Forest Governance After Customary Forest Recognition

1. What are the main obstacles that need to be overcome in the management of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest?
2. Do you think customary communities is already sufficiently independent and has good capacity in customary forest management and also its institutions?
3. How is the involvement of all customary communities' members and regeneration?
4. How are the institutions in the community?
5. What are your expectations regarding the long-term governance of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? Are there other potentials that have been identified?
6. What is the role of Non-Government Institutions in ensuring the sustainability of the Pikul-Pengajid Customary Forest? And other customary forests in general if any?

D. Key Factors to Strengthen Community-Based Forest Management

1. In your opinion, what is the key to managing the Pikul customary forest?
2. Are there any best practices or lessons learned from supporting the management of the Pikul customary forest? How can this continue to be maintained?
3. What is the condition of the partnership between customary communities, NGOs, and government institutions? Is it good enough or does it need to be strengthened?
4. What about facilitation? Is there a facilitator from the government at the Pikul customary forest?
5. How is the monitoring and evaluation process? Is it already running?

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet



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Participant Information Sheet

Researcher

My name is Rizka Dewi Zuleika. I am originally from West Java, Indonesia, and am currently a Master's student at the Fenner School of Environment and Society, the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia. I am pursuing a Master of Environment degree and conducting research for my thesis on the management of customary forest in West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Project Title

The Role of Social Forestry in Sustaining the Pikul Pangajid Adat Forest, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Outline of the project

Description and Methodology: Forest management often fails in their objectives of forest conservation and sustainable management because they overlook the role and rights of local communities. Hence, Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) is implemented to achieve both sustainable forest management and community development through decentralization that involves local people in decision-making, planning, and benefiting from forests. In Indonesia, the Social Forestry (SF) scheme is a CBFM scheme led by the national government that grants both local communities and Indigenous communities the legal right to manage a total of 12.7 million ha. One of the SF schemes is customary forest which formalizes the rights of customary law communities to continue their customary tenure systems in their territories. This research will explore the implementation of SF in Indonesia, focusing on its challenges and opportunities, through a case study of Pikul Pangajid, a customary forest in Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan. The study will examine the impact of customary forest recognition on Dayak Bakati Rara customary law community through the social forestry scheme and its implementation. It will investigate the perspectives of the community and different stakeholders involved in supporting customary forest management. To collect research data, I will use semi-structured interviews and field observations

Participants: I will conduct individual interviews with representatives from various categories of key stakeholders involved in Pikul Pangajid Customary Forest management. Stakeholders involved including Dayak Bakati Rara community, government institutions, and NGOs. The proposed number of participants for this research is 20 individuals.

In addition to interviews, this research will involve non-intrusive observation of daily or forest-related activities, such as forest monitoring, forest product extractions, or meetings, where relevant. Photography may be used to document forest use activities only with the informed consent of those photographed.

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Interview participants will be recruited through purposive sampling based on criteria informed by secondary data obtained from supporting institutions in the field, such as community leaders (*tokoh adat*), Social Forestry facilitators, or NGO staffs. The observation will be conducted over the interview participants' activities. These initial contacts may recommend other relevant individuals, and participation will remain entirely voluntary.

Use of data and Feedback: The data gathered during fieldwork will be analysed for my thesis. Upon completion of my thesis, a summary of the research findings will be shared with the participants through email or other mutually agreed-upon communication channels.

Project Funding: This research is funded by the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University and Australian Awards Scholarship.

Participant Involvement

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in this research is voluntary, and there is no coercion involved. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without needing to provide a reason, up until the work is prepared for thesis submission or publication. Additionally, you are free to refrain from answering any questions during the interview that you do not wish to address and from the activity you wish to not be observed or photographed. Should you choose to withdraw from the research, please inform me directly or indirectly (via email, telephone, or WhatsApp), and the information you have provided will no longer be used and will be destroyed accordingly.

Written, but if not possible due to local cultural norms, verbal consent will be obtained for both interview and observation process. If someone does not wish to be observed, this will be respected, and they will not be included in field notes or documentation.

What does participation involve: Upon agreeing to participate in the research, each participant will undergo an interview consisting of a series of questions as follows (the interview will be recorded audio and written notes will be made):

- Their understanding and awareness of the Dayak Bakati Rara community's rights especially in forest management and benefit sharing
- Their experience in managing customary forest under the Social Forestry scheme, including the challenges and opportunities faced

The observational component of this research will focus on how the community manage the customary forest, such as community meetings and daily activities in the forest. However, it will only be conducted in settings where participants have explicitly consented to being observed. Prior to any observation, individuals will be informed of the purpose and nature of the activity, and consent will be sought.

Location and duration: Interviews will be conducted either in person at a mutually agreed time and location or online via Zoom, and will last no longer than 60 minutes. Observations will take place in the customary forest, aligned with the timing and location of daily activities.

Risks: This research topic focuses on the involvement of indigenous communities in governments' program focusing on forest management. Some participants may have

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experienced trauma related to this issue, such as tenurial conflict and recognition, which could be sensitive and cause discomfort. To mitigate this risk, you are not obligated to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable.

There is also a risk that participants may be identified by third parties. As such, to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the researcher has taken measures to guarantee the non-disclosure of any names to other parties during both the fieldwork and in the final research report

Benefits: It is unlikely that you will personally benefit from participating in this research. However, your involvement will significantly contribute to generating knowledge about the impact of social forestry scheme to customary forest management in Indonesia.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality will be maintained during both data collection and result publication as far as the law allows. Access to the data will be restricted to myself as the Principal Investigator and my supervisors. The published material will not have any information or means of identifying individuals.

Privacy Notice

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_010007. It contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint

Data Storage

Where: All written notes will be securely stored in a locked bag or cabinet until they are transcribed into electronic files. Additionally, electronic data, including audio recordings and photos, will be transferred from the recording device and camera to a password-protected ANU computer. Furthermore, this data will be backed up on a password-protected ANU student account, personal laptop, and portable hard drive for added security.

How long: All data used in this thesis research will be stored as digital files and retained for up to one year from the thesis submission date.

Handling of data following the required storage period: Should the data remain unused after this storage period, all electronic data will be deleted, and written data will be destroyed.

Queries and Concerns

Contact details for more information: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research, please contact me as the Principal Investigator:

Rizka Dewi Zuleika
Fenner School of Environment and Society

The Australian National University

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College of Systems and Society
The Australian National University
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Phone: +61 450 890 019, Email: rizkadewi.zuleika@anu.edu.au

Or my supervisors:

- Professor Peter Kanowski, Email: peter.kanowski@anu.edu.au
- Dr. Ida Aju Pradnja Resosudarmo, Email: daju.resosudarmo@anu.edu.au

Contact details if in distress: Emergency number in case of distress:

In West Kalimantan:

- Drs. Jacobus Luna, M.Si Hospital, Phone: +62562 441618 or +62 8514 1489 626 (Text)
- West Kalimantan Psychiatric Hospital, Email: rsjiwa@kalbarprov.go.id and Phone: +62562 6421136

In Jakarta

- Soeharto Heerdjan Psychiatric Hospital, Phone: +62 21 5682841
- Dharmawangsa Psychiatric Hospital, Phone: +62 21 7394484

Ethics Committee Clearance

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol H/2025/0223).

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

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Appendix 3: Consent Forms

Written Consent Form



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CONSENT FORM for research participants

(translated into Indonesian)

[The Role of Social Forestry in Sustaining the Pikul Pangajid Adat Forest, West Kalimantan, Indonesia]

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and I have had any questions and concerns about the project

(listed here _____)

_____)

addressed to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the project. YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to this interview being audio-recorded YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to my activity being observed YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to my activity being photographed YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to be identified in the following way within research outputs:

Pseudonym YES ☐ NO ☐

No attribution YES ☐ NO ☐

Signature:.....

Date:.....

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Oral Consent Script



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ORAL CONSENT SCRIPT for research participants (translated into Indonesian)

[The Role of Social Forestry in Sustaining the Pikul Pangajid Adat Forest, West Kalimantan, Indonesia]

I have read to you the Information Sheet about the research project.
Was this information clear? Do you have any questions about the project?

Do you agree to participate in this project?

- Do you agree for this interview to be audio-recorded?
- Do you agree for your activity to be observed?
- Do you agree for your activity to be photographed?

When I prepare the research outputs, I can attribute information to you in three ways: full name, pseudonym, or I can use NO attribution and hold your information confidentially.

- Would you like to be referred to using a pseudonym (false name)?
- Would you prefer that your information be not attributed to anyone at all?

May we start the interview now?

Date of script being read:.....