Land cover changes before and after implementation of the PHBM program in the Kuningan District, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

The State Forestry Corporation, hereinafter called Perhutani, has been implementing a program called the Management of Forest Resources with the Community or Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Hutan Bersama Masyarakat (hereinafter called PHBM) since 2001 in an attempt to protect and conserve the existing forest while alleviating poverty. Our research was aimed at examining land cover changes during pre-implementation (1997–1999) and after implementation of the PHBM (1999–2009). Further analysis was conducted to compare forest cover changes in PHBM and non-PHBM villages during 1999–2009. The results show that forest cover decreased during 1997–1999. However, during 1999–2009, reforestation increased markedly across the entire study area, in both PHBM and non-PHBM villages, although PHBM villages had higher increases in reforestation. Even under population pressure, reforestation was successful in PHBM villages because the people were aware of the current and future benefits of the PHBM, and people realized that the government was acknowledging the property rights of local peoples. The PHBM also provides a secure feeling since the government and the Perhutani program assured the people that the program would be fully implemented.

Keywords: community involvement, land cover changes, forest cover changes, Kuningan District, Perhutani, PHBM


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