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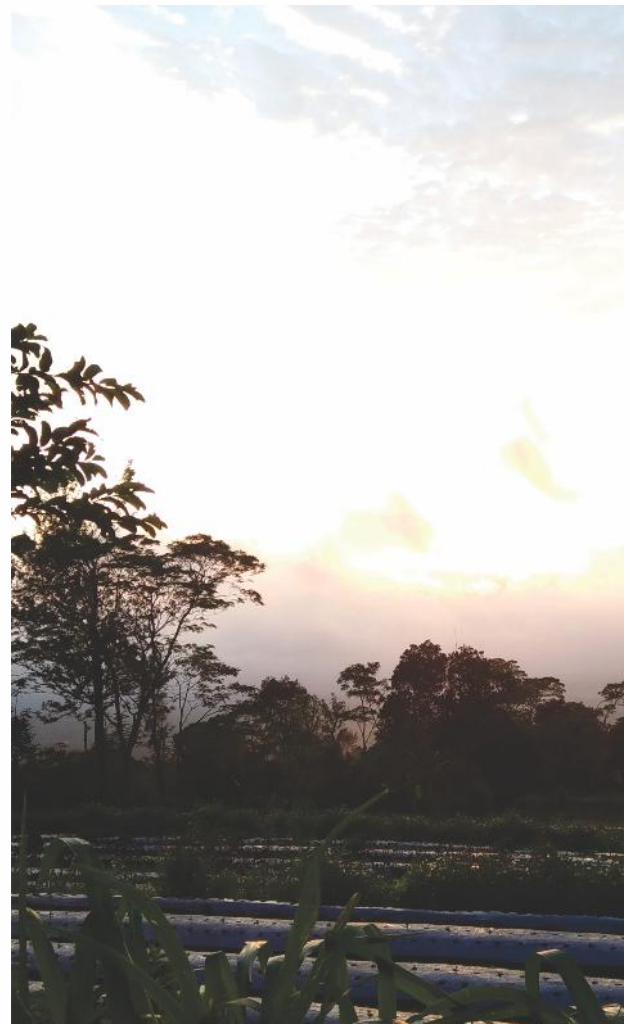
EDITORIAL

Sustainable landscape improves the quality of development as it supports the sustainability of its benefits to the people. On the other hand, disruption to the environment can increase risk to disaster, which in turn can lead to a decrease in household income. The Indonesian National Disaster Management Body (BNPB) has indicated that there is a general lack of preparedness to disaster among the community. One of the national media has reported that since 2016, mitigation efforts to natural disaster in Indonesian have only been developed in 5,128 villages.

On the other hand, the government has shown its strong commitment to rural development. In 2017, the Indonesian government has allocated IDR 6.3 billion in village fund for 7,809 villages in Central Java. Challenges include assessment of environmental risk values to enable participants of village discussion forums to integrate environmental conservation and disaster mitigation practices into infrastructure, economic, and social capacity development projects. However, not all village governments are capable of developing village development plans for non-physical or long-term purposes.

In this matter, village facilitators play pivotal role in assisting village government to organize village financial. Village facilitators should have adequate knowledge and skills for this purpose. Business Watch Indonesia has collaborated with other stakeholders in conducting various activities to improve the capacity of village facilitators in Central Java.

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The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Strengthens the Efforts in Achieving Sustainable Landscape through the Agricultural Product Market Development Program



BOYOLALI - “A low carbon guideline will be developed to help farmers and the rest of the community in practicing agricultural activities through the Lestari Verification. Through this verification process, farmers are trained on how to produce low carbon agricultural products that make them more competitive in the market segments, which will in turn improve the price of their products,” said Ferdinand Lahnstein, the Vice Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in his opening speech during the launching of the program on 19 January 2018 in Setabelan Village, Selo, Boyolali.

The launching of the program was attended by administrative officials of the villages in Merapi and Merbabu Volcanoes area, relevant government institutions including Boyolali District Office for Agriculture, Crop Estate, and Forestry; Local Office for Community and Rural Empowerment; Gunung Merbabu National Park Office; and Gunung Merapi National Park Office.

The Program can potentially provide benefit to around 12,000 households or 50,000 beneficiaries who live in the buffer zones of Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu and depend their lives on their ecosystems. The strategy will not only protect the ecosystems of Merapi-Merbabu volcanoes but also strengthen the economic condition of most community whose lives depend on the ecosystems. The Merapi – Merbabu landscape covers 5 districts and 14 sub-districts within Ring 1 and affects the life and livelihood of more than 500,000 population living in the landscape as well as the low land regions.

The majority of the people living in Merapi – Merbabu are vegetable farmers and cattle farmers, who are still in need of skill and knowledge development on good agricultural practices and conservation techniques. They have low productivity and unstable income as a result of lack of access to the wider markets.

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands' program aims at improving the knowledge of the farmers and the wider community on post-harvest management and market access through sharing of technology and farmers' training, which will involve national as well as international experts. The program will also involve the participation from and collaboration of different stakeholders, including through the Sustainable Food Landscape Secretariat (SKPB). The Secretariat is a multi-stakeholder platform in Central Java with a vision of a sustainable landscape in Central Java.



The Government Has Targeted the Cultivation of 200,000 Hectares of Soybeans in Central Java

Data from the Ministry of Agriculture in *Outlook Kedelai 2016* has projected an annual decline of an average 2.9% in soybean yields during 2016-2020. Competition in the use of land with other sectors or commodity, especially rice, is among the reasons for the decline. On the other hand, demand for soybeans at the national level has been projected to increase by 14.7% annually. In 2020, the national demand for soybeans is estimated at 2.87 million tons.

This has made Indonesia depend more on imported soybean. With the current condition of this sector, the production is projected to reach only 900,000 tons in 2020. If nothing is done for anticipating this, it is estimated that there will be a deficit of 1.9 million tons in 2020. According to the Indonesia's National Statistical Agency, import of soybean during 2017 has reached 2.67 million tons with a value of 1.15 billion US Dollars.

This year the Ministry of Agriculture is targeting expansion of soybean area to stop the import of soybean as well as to expedite soybean self-sufficiency program in 2019 from the original target in 2020. Central Java is mandated to cover 200,000 hectares for soybean cultivation. If the land can produce 1.5 tons per hectare, or equal to the current national productivity rate, Central Java can produce 300,000 tons of soybean at the end of 2018.

Ensuring seed availability

The above target also means demand in seed availability. About 70% of the seeds needed are from Grobogan variety, where 60 kg of seeds of this variety will be required per hectare. The rest 30% refers to the government soybean production cost ceiling, which is 50 kg per hectare. To support the targeted cultivation of soybean on 500,000 hectares of land, Central Java would need about 11,000 tons of soybean seeds.

On the other hand, to ensure the targeted high yield, it should be ensured that the seeds pass quality assurance or certification. The Seed Control and Certification Body of Central Java Province, the only government institution with the authority to certify seeds in Central Java, can only produce 5 thousand tons of seeds each year.

With the seed viability of only 2-3 months, accurate time scheduling of seed supply is very important. The seeds should be proportionally available in each planting season. The Central Java Assessment Institute for Agricultural Technology has indicated that there are three planting seasons in Central Java. 50% of the soybean is produced in the third planting season, 30% in the first planting season, and 20% in the second planting season. The soybean from the first season can be used as seeds for the second growing season, and so on. With the assumed production of 1.5 ton per hectare, another 7,500 hectares of land are needed to produce the required seeds.

Where else to plant soybean?

Soybean is not the only commodity to be included in the government's plan for agricultural extensification. Corn and rice are other two commodities that have also been included. On the other hand, there is an increasing depletion of agricultural land in Central Java. The data from the Agricultural Ministry and the Agricultural Land Statistics for 2012-2016 shows that during this period, there was a 2% decrease of agricultural land in Central Java. In 2016, the total agricultural land areas in Central Java remained 1.7 million hectares, which already included dryland areas, moors, and unutilized land.

To address this, land extensification for soybean cultivation will not involve entirely clearing of new land areas. Soybean will also be grown under the plantation trees, on embankment, and similar areas. Soybean will be also planted by increasing the planting index by utilizing fallow land.

The Central Java Provincial Office for Agriculture and Crop Estate has identified several districts that are suitable for soybean extensification, including Kebumen, Karanganyar, Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Jepara, Klaten, and Pati. Not all farmers in those regions have the experience in growing soybean.

Farmer mentoring as the safety net for successful implementation of the program

The lack of knowledge and experience in soybean cultivation is one of the factors that increases the chance of failure in soybean cultivation. To address this problem, facilitation and mentoring of farmers will be intensified. The Human Resource Management Body (BPSDM) has trained thousands of extension service officers to help achieve the target for the cultivation of soybean on 500,000 hectares of land. Voluntary extension service officers in each region will be mobilized to support the implementation of this program. The Central Java Provincial Office for Agriculture and Estate Crop will also involve several universities in this mentoring program.



It All Started with A Training; Now Mekar Indah Women Farmer Group Is the Pioneer of Chilli Farming in Balerante Village

Women play important role in sustainable landscape management of Central Java since half of Central Java province population are women. For that reason, Business Watch Indonesia has often engaged the participation of women in its activities. One of the activities where women is actively involved is the training on vegetable farming for women farmers of Balerante Village of Kemalang Sub-District, Klaten District.

Balerante is only 5 km away from the peak of Mount Merapi. Mount Merapi is one of the world's most active volcanoes and has erupted a couple of times, throwing sand and rock materials from the eruptions. Many sand mining sites have emerged around the village accordingly and have encouraged most of the villagers to work as sand miners. On the other hand, many land areas have only been utilised as grazing land since some of the villagers are livestock farmers.

In view of the situation, Business Watch Indonesia has collaborated with “Mekar Indah” Women Farmer Group to start vegetable farming to promote horticulture as an alternative source of income as well as healthy food for the villagers. To start the collaboration, a nursery for vegetable seedlings and a demonstration plot have been set up. Business Watch Indonesia has also provided the women farmers with relevant knowledge through the provision of a Training of Trainers on Agroforestry, Environmentally-Friendly Agriculture and Mount Merapi Conservation .

A demonstration plot of 1000m² has been set up specifically as the learning site for the women farmers. Each group member has also supported the learning by setting up their own nursery on their own land. The following vegetable crops are grown on the demonstration plots: tomato, cauliflower, leeks, eggplant, and celery.

The approach has successfully encouraged the rest of women farmers in Balerante village to start to grow vegetables. Not only that, “Mekar Indah” Women Farmer Group has also called for the participation of other stakeholders in their activities. The Group has finally managed to get funding support from BRI Syariah Yogyakarta, a local Bank, of IDR 4 million per farmer for chili cultivation. In 2018, “Mekar Indah” Women Farmer Group has been supported further by the Balerante Village government through the allocation of the Village Fund for facilitating community empowerment activities, including the activities targeted for “Mekar Indah” Women Farmer Group.

