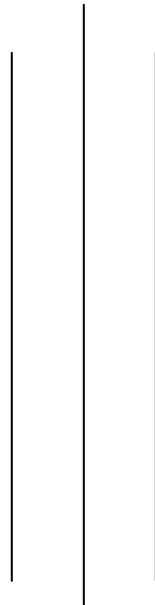


THE RELEVANCE OF PEATWISE PROJECT
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF MASTER PROGRAM IN INTERNASTIONAL CLASS

BY
UNPAR PEATWISE PARTNER



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN
MANAGEMENT OF TROPICAL PEATLAND
(CIMTROP)

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A. BACKGROUND

The development of modules and syllabus for master program are developed by a team consists of four universities (two are from developed country in Europe and two are from developing country in South east Asia), joint together in PEATWISE Project/ASIA LINK Project entitled “*New Education Tools for Sustainable of Peatlands in the Humid Tropics*” This project is relevant to the planning for the establishment of Master Program in International Class (MPIC) at University of Palangka Raya (UNPAR), Central Kalimantan, Indonesia.

The concept for establishing the MPIC that was introduced since 1995 has gained support from The British Council Jakarta for three fiscal years (2001-2003). In that the British Council had provided budget for comparative study to UK for workshop/seminar, and consultation as well as for capacity building of UNPAR staff by UK institution. When high level meeting was conducted in Nottingham University on March 2003, Pro Vice Chancellor Nottingham University and Ambassador of Indonesian in UK have given green light for establishing MPIC at Palangka Raya University.

Since the MOU between UNPAR and Nottingham University was signed up in 1994, the University of Nottingham as one of the main institutions in Europe that has responsibility to develop UNPAR staff through collaborative research activities, seminar/workshop and UNPAR staff development and education for Master and PhD program in UK. This has been one of strategies to develop UNPAR’ staff capacity so that they will be capable to manage and run the MPIC in the future.

B. CONSTRAINTS

After we have undergone some phases of the process of the establishment of the MPIC, there have been many constraints encountered:

1. Response of the UNPAR leaders needs a long time to support this program. This is due to limited experience and lack of English language competency.
2. According to UNPAR leaders, that the university team should formulate the proposal for MPIC establishment. In reality, the task force team has just been established by the rector of UNPAR and notified to CIMTROP on October 20, 2004. Actually, this was proposed by CIMTROP on July 2004 and agreement letter was issued on September 21, 2004. As a result, the consultation process with the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE), Department of National Education of The Republic of Indonesia was also postponed because the proposal of the MPIC has not been completed.
2. At the beginning UNPAR staff who has finished their Master and PhD programs were hoped would be able to support us to develop some concepts, but they could not, because they must get job outside university to earn life. There was not enough compensation from salary system provided by government through the university. CIMTROP cannot provide them compensation as they need. Therefore there are many teaching staff of Palangka Raya University are engaged in other activities outside the university.

C. FEASIBILITY AND RELEVANCE OF MPIC AND PEATWISE

1. The MPIC is very relevant to solve UNPAR and Local Government constraints especially English language, because this course must be started through the English course for one year period before entering the Master class.
2. The MPIC has gained support from the Directorate General of High Education, Department of National Education, Republic of Indonesia.
3. Peat wise modules are very relevant:
 - 3.1. They comply with the Main Scientific Pattern of UNPAR (The Mission Statement of UNPAR) which is focusing on the development of science and technology of river catchments including peatland, wetland and swamp forest.
 - 3.2. Accommodated all of modules which was formulated for the MPIC resulted from the comparative studies in UK and supported by the British Council
 - 3.3. Peatwise modules are very relevant to the main problem in Central Kalimantan, where the peatland ecosystem was destroyed by lack of knowledge of government about peat and peatlands. Through the market survey last year (year 1st Peatwise project) from 30 respondents we got: 53.3 % of the respondents said that the MPIC should address specific issue that is peat; 40.0 % said that the modules formulated by Peatwise team have represented all topics ; 72.4 – 96.4 % said that six modules were classified as relevant to very relevant.
 - 3.4. Peatwise modules will give opportunity for UNPAR staff to enter class in Europe and Malaysia. This is important and considered as an effort to enhance and develop wide of human perceptions on the problems we are facing in Central Kalimantan in specific and in Indonesia in general.
 - 3.5. As Peatwise modules are developed based on International Standard, they will be very interesting to the international society. Therefore, they will attract great interest of many expert from all over the world. In this way Palangka Raya University will developed as a center for international research on tropical peatland.

D. COMMUNITY RESPONSES

According to the communities' comments and hope (from the grass root level till government), the establishment of the MPIC at Palangka Raya University can be described as follows :

1. If the implementation of the master program is exactly like what you have proposed (Suwido's concept), it is strongly believed the human resources development of Central Kalimantan in specific will be accelerated, and they will be enhanced to be able to interact with the international experts.
2. The local government officers and the local communities have often asked for the information as when the MPIC will be established. They are very enthusiastic about the program. They would like to prepare their staff and the family members to follow the program.
3. The requirement proposed in the MPIC, that all of the participant of MPIC should be trained in English language training program for about 0.5 –1 year is considered to be reasonable.

4. It is believed that if the MPIC is established and managed in accordance with our concept working closely with the international institution, the development of Palangka Raya University can be accelerated and it will be well known all over the world.

E. CONCLUSION

1. The MPIC must be established; other wise PEATWISE product will be useless and the University of Palangka Raya will not gain benefit from it.
2. The international institutions, especially those are strongly related and have developed collaboration with Palangka Raya University, are hoped to keep supporting the MPIC, because the planning for its establishment has been notified to the international community.
3. The MPIC establishment by using peatwise modules is a break through for the human resources development. Therefore, the advanced support from the government through the DGHE must be put into the realization of the MPIC program.