

# Local Governments Play Key Role in Building Democracy in Indonesia

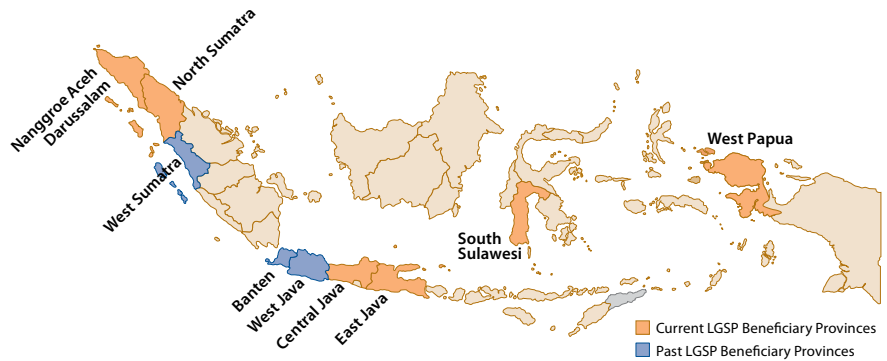
Key national legislation was passed in 1999 and 2004 that introduced “big bang” decentralization in Indonesia. Since then, the introduction of participatory processes, improved local government management, and transparent and accountable local legislative practices are paving the way for Indonesia to fully experience the benefits of a democratic society. These tools, introduced through a series of projects funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, are empowering local governments and councils to respond to the priorities of their citizens.

For more than 20 years, RTI International has worked to help Indonesia create a foundation for effective and accountable democratic governance in Indonesia. RTI’s latest contract—the Local Governance Support Program (LGSP)—is a four-and-a-half-year project (March 2005–September 2009) that aims to foster an environment in which local governments are responsive to citizens’ needs. The program is strengthening the capacity of local legislatures and civil society to perform their legitimate roles of legislative representation and oversight, and citizen participation in the decision-making process.

Specific technical assistance includes

- Training to improve finance and budgeting functions of local government
- Enhancing strategic participatory planning to facilitate citizen input
- Improving the capacity of local legislative councils and civil society
- Strengthening management systems for service delivery

LGSP works in 45 districts across 6 provinces, including special initiatives in West Papua (co-funded by BP Berau Ltd.) and Aceh, where the project also works with the World Bank’s Support for Poor and Disadvantaged Areas (SPADA) program.



## Building Commitment and Capability to Improve Service Delivery

Since 2005, LGSP has conducted numerous workshops and provided technical assistance to local government officials and citizens on public service management to help deliver better services to the community. LGSP also works with local councils to increase citizen participation and transparency in the budget process through a performance-based budgeting training series. As a result, a number of local districts have opened up their budgeting process and calendar to the public and are encouraging citizens to monitor the process.



LGSP supports the Local Development Planning Agency of Sukoharjo, Central Java in training facilitators from 12 local villages in preparing long-term development plans. [Photo: LGSP Staff]



Decentralization brought new responsibilities to local councils, whose members found themselves ill equipped to play their part in good local governance. However, through the project's technical assistance and training, local government partners have improved their capacity and demonstrated a change in attitude toward transparency and collaboration with civil society. And civil society organizations have improved their capacity to engage in local governance issues in order to demand better public services.

LGSP spearheaded the introduction of a number of tools for citizen involvement, including citizen report cards and computerized approaches for procurement and pro-poor budget analysis and tracking.

Beyond the training sessions, LGSP is also assisting local government and civil society partners to establish and sustain working partnerships. One way is by introducing service improvement action plans (SIAPs), which are designed to improve the delivery of particular public services (such as health care, education, economic growth, and sanitation) and increase public awareness of these services. Each SIAP is prepared by a multi-stakeholder group consisting of local government and civil society representatives and implemented by the local government unit responsible for the delivery of the service. Well-performing SIAP services in LGSP partner districts are used as a base for the district to improve its services independently after the end of the project.

Successful service improvements are evident throughout partner districts. For example, to improve the management of subdistrict health clinics, the municipal health authority of Madiun, East Java, piloted a computerized customer database in one of its subdistricts. Following staff training and a successful service trial, the system was introduced throughout Madiun.

### Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Good Governance

LGSP provides support and advice to partners at the local, provincial, and national levels, including the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), and government training centers (Bandiklat) in order to strengthen the enabling environment for good governance and ensure the sustainability of results. Part of this support consists of guidance on and formulation of regulations and guidelines. For example, LGSP assisted the



Women from Mojokerto, East Java, train to become planning forum (musrenbang) facilitators. [Photo: LGSP Staff]

Directorate of Planning in developing a ministerial decree on regional development plan preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. LGSP also supported the MOHA's legislative initiative to encourage local jurisdictions to partner with one another and to contract out services, and developed training materials and training of trainers in collaboration with a local university.

In strengthening the legislative function of local councils, five local regulations (Perda) promoting transparency and nine promoting citizen participation and oversight have been passed in LGSP-supported districts, with 15 more expected to be passed by the project's end.

LGSP is also strengthening the capacity of its partners (government agencies and service providers) to carry forward the work and adapt materials to respond to local needs. Replication and dissemination of LGSP technical and training manuals will help partners continue their work past the program's closure in 2009.

This project is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under Contract No. 497-M-00-05-00017-00, RTI No. 0209547, March 2005–September 2009.

LGSP is implemented in collaboration with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and Computer Assisted Development, Inc. (CADi).

#### For more information about this project, please contact

Jim S. McCullough, Technical Manager

E-mail: [jsm@rti.org](mailto:jsm@rti.org)

Judith Edstrom, Chief of Party

E-mail: [jedstrom@rti.org](mailto:jedstrom@rti.org)

Web site: <http://www.lgsp.or.id>

RTI 5965 0209



RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Our staff of more than 2,800 provides research and technical expertise to governments and businesses in more than 40 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy and the environment, and laboratory and chemistry services. For more information, visit [www.rti.org](http://www.rti.org).

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

