

Institutionalizing Climate Change Responses in the Forestry and Land-Use Sector: The Case of REDD+ Governance in Indonesia

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Abstract

The transformation of forest governance in low- and middle-income countries has been accelerated due to increased international pressure for climate change adaptation. These efforts, however, have been severely limited by inefficiencies within the forest-related state institutions tasked with addressing governance challenges, such as coordination, mediating political interests, and strategy-setting. This article contributes to the discussion of forest governance by providing an alternative view of such constraints. Using the case of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) program in Indonesia, we examine the institutionalization process of the climate agenda in the forestry sector and how it influences forest governance transformation. We argue that the climate agenda has been institutionalized in Indonesia's forest institutions by embedding climate objectives within the existing institution, a process known as layering. However, such assimilation of climate governance within the existing bureaucracy has arguably limited its transformative capacity. Despite the downsides, institutional layering has proved to be more resilient for long-term climate investment in a non-climate consensus country like Indonesia. We highlight the importance of examining the domestic political setting for explaining the institutionalization process of climate objectives. The interplay between politics and institutions provides a critical lens for understanding limitations to the transformative capacities of forest governance over time.

Keywords: Institutional Transformation, REDD+, Forest Governance, Historical Institutionalism, Zero Deforestation, Climate Institutions, Institutional Change, International Political Economy

1 Introduction

The role of domestic institutions in addressing climate issues has become more prominent since the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015. States have pledged to reduce

their national emissions as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), resulting in increased pressure to move forward with the global climate agenda. Climate debates have also shifted from analyzing the interaction ‘between’ nations to political dynamics ‘within’ nations, or what scholars describe as bottom-up logic (Falkner, 2016). Understanding the global performance of the Paris Agreement requires further observation of how nations align themselves internally to transition from their business-as-usual (BAU) practices and comply with global climate norms. In this context, the notion of state capacity to tackle governance challenges and steer domestic resources has become more substantial in generating a meaningful contribution to the Paris goals (Hein et al., 2018).

However, in so doing countries face significant constraints. Most countries are struggling – at least during the early phase of climate institutionalization – to develop capacity to mobilize domestic resources for climate action (Hochstetler, 2021; Yoseph-Paulus and Hindmarsh, 2016). This problem is closely linked to country-specific developmental paths, particularly with regard to domestic institutional configurations. Dominant developmental paradigms embedded within the policy apparatus, such as concerns over poverty alleviation, energy security, and unemployment, frequently undermine the salience of climate objectives within domestic institutional debates (Halsnæs and Verhagen, 2007).

Examining these developmental paths is useful for understanding the constraints faced by low- and middle-income countries undertaking climate action. In this article, we add to this literature, highlighting that a path-dependent explanation is insufficient to capture the institutional dynamics, given its focus on examining institutional stability. The concept has often been criticized for being too deterministic and neglectful of forces of change that could otherwise be important to explaining institutional evolution (Crouch and Farrell, 2004). Over time, institutions, despite their stickiness, may come to serve functions that are different from their original design; through continuous political contestation, institutional values may gradually change (Mackay et al., 2011). From this perspective, focusing on how (competing) processes of climate institutionalization play out over time is critical to capture political dynamics and their influence on (and constraints for) the transformational capacity of climate institutions.

This article illustrates this point by examining over time efforts to institutionalize the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) global climate initiative. We build on Dubash (2021) to elucidate the interplay between politics and the institutionalization process over time. As Indonesia has yet to achieve a comprehensive climate consensus, integrating the climate agenda within the forestry and land use sector, as we will show, invites

considerable political tension. Understanding the connections and interactions between politics and institutionalization in the forestry sector provides new insight into institutional inefficiencies in addressing climate governance challenges more generally, given that forests account for nearly a third% of the annual CO₂ emissions by terrestrial ecosystems (Lawrence et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, two competing approaches to institutionalizing the climate agenda via REDD+ have been pursued: the establishment of a purpose-built REDD+ taskforce/management agency (2010-2014) and institutional layering (2015-), whereby climate objectives are embedded within existing institutions. Layering is evident in the institutionalization of REDD+ initiatives within the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The high degree of polarization surrounding climate issues precludes the formation of a consensus over a mitigation-centric narrative, and, consequently, posed significant constraints for the establishment and longevity of a purpose-built institution in Indonesia. Although the country's engagement with international processes created domestic political space for climate objectives, there has been bureaucratic reluctance to deviate from entrenched traditions and practices. The incorporation of climate institutions within the existing bureaucracy has arguably enhanced the longevity of the REDD+ agenda but limited its transformative capacity.

In examining the historical development of the REDD+ initiative in Indonesia, we suggest that Indonesia's REDD+ governance has undergone two modes of change. The first mode was through a purpose-built institution during the Yudhoyono presidency. We can call this mode REDD+ governance 1.0. In this era, the REDD+ mandate was operationalized through the REDD+ Task Force – the predecessor of the REDD+ Agency – as an ad-hoc institution that worked independently from the formal bureaucracy. The agency gained a special mandate to deal specifically with the issues of deforestation, degradation, conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (Jong, 2015). Meanwhile, under the presidency of Joko Widodo, the REDD+ mandate was returned to MoEF (under DJPPI), which suggests a second mode of institutional change: institutional layering. In addition, the overall climate architecture, such as the National Council on Climate Change, which performed as an inter-ministerial body of coordination with an exclusive mandate for climate change, was disbanded by Joko Widodo. This mode can be called REDD+ governance 2.0

To substantiate this argument, this article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents a literature review on forest governance and institutional transformation. Section 3 explains the

framework and approach used in this study. Section 4 discusses the study's methodology. Section 5 highlights the political economy context of forest governance in Indonesia. Section 6 examines the establishment of a purpose-built REDD+ institution and the challenges it faced. Section 7 looks at institutional layering of REDD+ governance via the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

2 Literature review

Literature on Indonesia's forest governance has explored the changes and transformations that the country must undergo to mitigate climate change (Brockhaus and Angelsen, 2012; Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). In this context, transformation is generally understood as the reform of governance and policies away from BAU practices, namely deforestation and forest degradation, towards those aimed at climate mitigation, pushed primarily by shifts in discourse, attitudes, power relations, deliberate policy, and protest action (Brockhaus and Angelsen, 2012).

There has been a multitude of forest initiatives and policies mobilized to achieve the meaningful transformation of Indonesia's forest governance, ranging from non-state market-driven governance systems such as forest and palm oil certification (Giessen et al., 2016; Wibowo et al., 2019) to state-led governance mechanisms, such as the Forest Moratorium (Sloan, 2014), One Map Initiative (Astuti and McGregor, 2015; Mulyani and Jepson, 2017), Community Forest Management (Wulandari and Inoue, 2018) and global arrangements such as the REDD+ initiative (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017; Boer, 2020). The case of REDD+, especially, has become the main subject of multiple studies of forest policies and initiatives, as it is hoped that REDD+ will provide abundant opportunities and challenges to reform forest and land-use governance (Indonesian REDD+ Task Force, 2012).

Several studies have expressed high expectations of REDD+'s transformative impact in breaking the path-dependency of maintaining BAU practice within the existing institutions (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017; Maryani et al., 2012; Widiaryanto, 2020). For instance, through a national government program called One Map Initiative (OMI), the REDD+ Agency, established in 2013 and reporting directly to the President, managed to integrate forest spatial knowledge and information and enhance harmonization across multi-level government agencies and forest stakeholders. This technical approach has contributed to more effective implementation of the forest moratorium policy, as well as disciplining government agencies

that profit from retaining data and information, by enhancing transparency in the production, distribution, and storage of spatial knowledge.

However, other studies argue that the existing policies and initiatives remain inefficient in transforming Indonesia's forest governance from BAU practice (Moeliono et al., 2020; Myers et al., 2018). Some studies blame the institutional setting in which forest policies and initiatives are implemented, such as conflicting policies and regulations (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017) and the lack of sectoral coordination and local capacity building (Yoseph-Paulus and Hindmarsh, 2016). Brockhaus & Angelsen (2012) confirm the presence of a weak institutional setting within Indonesia's land allocation and policy process, underpinned by the nation's development paradigm which focuses on large-scale economic development.

Several studies highlight the competitive nature between the state and private sector as the principal factor of institutional inefficiencies (Giessen et al., 2016, 2016; Mulyani and Jepson, 2013a; Sahide et al., 2016). Mulyani and Jepson (2013a) show that REDD+ has been perceived differently by the state and private actors. While private sector actors emphasize widespread corruption in the forestry sector due to the lack of clarity in regulations relating to revenue sharing and "carbon ownership," government officials tend to see REDD+ as a means for rich countries to limit the economic development of developing countries.

Furthermore, Giessen et al. (2016) and Wibowo et al. (2019) find that the rise of transnational private regulatory governance through international certification standards has been resisted by state actors because of a state lack of capacity to monitor the forestry sector. For the state, the regulatory drive to establish mechanisms for international state-driven certification also serves as a way to reclaim authority over the forestry sector. Consequently, such conflicting goals might confuse customer preferences for certified products, and thus further undermine the long-term efficiency of forest certification. Sahide et al. (2016) make a similar observation with regard to attempts by Indonesia's central government to reclaim authority over forest land following two decades of decentralization. Power struggles across different tiers of government bureaucracy have also added more complexities to community forestry schemes.

Two critical points can be drawn from this discussion. First, the notion of "governance without government" is not entirely applicable, especially with regard to forestry issues. Concerns over sovereignty inherently compel the government to engage in and contribute to forest governance's successes and failures (Giessen et al., 2016). Second, the competitive nature of forest stakeholders to pursue their interests has led to significant contestation, becoming a major obstacle to meaningful forest reform (Wibowo et al., 2019).

In response to the limitations of climate policies and initiatives, the state's ability, through its national climate institution, to coordinate, build consensus, and develop a strategic framework becomes crucial. Institutional machinery is often helpful in mediating political interest and guiding climate policy development and implementation. MacNeil (2021), in his analysis of Australia's national climate institution, argues that climate policies are a reflection of the institutions that make them. Thereby, a weak and underdeveloped institution tends to generate weak policy outcomes. Nonetheless, despite the importance of domestic climate institutions in transforming forest governance, the current governance literature puts greater emphasis on the study of climate targets and policies while seemingly paying less attention to how politics shape institutions – and processes of institutionalization - and *vice versa*.

To contribute to the analysis of domestic climate institutions, this article examines the institutionalization process of REDD+ in Indonesia and how the national forest institutions organized themselves internally in response to climate initiatives.

3 Theoretical framework

Having discussed how the current literature has failed to see the significance of domestic institutions and their capacity to transform forest governance, this study mobilizes a historical institutionalist (HI) approach building on Dubash (2021) to understand further the REDD+ institutional evolution in Indonesia as well as the role of politics in shaping this process.

Through historical process-tracing, HI aims to explore how past events and outcomes may influence institutional development over time. Given the power that past decisions and institutional legacies hold, HI has generally conceptualized an institution as one that, once established, is extremely difficult to alter. According to HI, such institutional reluctance is a result of positive feedback loops that tilt the actors or agential preferences into maintaining the institution's status quo (Heinmiller, 2009). These conditions provide limited room for institutional change, to the point where institutions become repetitive ('path') and preferred ('dependent') (Pierson, 2000). Due to such a deterministic view, HI tends to understand institutional change as the by-product of exogenous shocks during a so-called 'critical juncture' period that subsequently triggers institutional reconfiguration (Schmidt, 2010).

Although important, the emphasis on exogenous shocks as the catalyst of institutional change has overlooked the presence of endogenous developments. Institutional change or discontinuity is derived not only from exogenous factors but also internally through incremental changes (Madama, 2013). In the context of REDD+ institutionalization in

Indonesia, for instance, Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2017) have noted some institutional struggles surrounding the REDD+ policy arena, as evidenced in the dissolution of the REDD+ Task Force under the presidency of Joko Widodo (2014-present). This phenomenon suggests the presence of endogenous and incremental dynamics that somewhat influence the REDD+ institutional outcome and, eventually, REDD+'s implementation in Indonesia.

Recent new institutionalist studies have increasingly incorporated endogenous factors of incremental change (Schmidt, 2010), which, in this study, is mapped onto two modes of change. The first is through institutional displacement or purpose-built institutions, whereby an institution is intentionally built to address a particular issue (Dubash, 2021). The second is institutional layering or the institutionalization of new objectives within an existing institution established for other purposes (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010).

In understanding such modes of institutional change, Dubash (2021) suggests as a further factor the interplay between institutional emergence and the domestic politics surrounding the issue. In this regard, an institution is conceived as the outcome of deliberate political strategies and contestation among actors who attempt to pursue their own interests. This ongoing political conflict and contestation are the driving factors of institutional development and change (Mackay et al., 2011).

Two variables impact domestic acceptance. First, in the realm of ideas, we can scrutinize whether the dominant narrative pertaining to a particular issue is centered more towards an embedded narrative or a mitigation-centric narrative. With the dominance of embedded narrative, issues or objectives tend to be submerged into other objectives deemed to be more politically viable. Meanwhile, with the presence of a mitigation-centric narrative, an issue or objective is framed around a policy focus on targets and emissions, which enables more straightforward and strategic mitigating action. Secondly, in the area of interest, the degree of polarization pertaining to the issue is also important to institutional outcomes. Polarization is the extent to which the implementation of a particular issue leads to domestic political contestation. High polarization suggests the absence or lack of political consensus regarding a particular issue or objective, likely rendering its operationalization more susceptible to political contestation. Conversely, low polarization indicates the presence of political consensus, which tends to suppress the development of political contestation.

The configuration of ideas and interests surrounding an issue shape the type of institutional arrangement designed for its institutionalization process (see **Table 1**). When an issue receives domestic political acceptance, a purpose-built institution is more likely to be established. This is made possible mainly due to the low degree of political polarization and support for a

mitigation-centric narrative surrounding the issue. Meanwhile, a layered institution is more likely to emerge when there is insufficient domestic political acceptance, as observed with the high degree of political polarization and support for embedded narratives surrounding the issue. On the issue of REDD+ institutionalization, for instance, the extent of domestic acceptance of climate mitigation conditions the type of REDD+ institutional outcomes. The degree of polarization regarding initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and whether the dominant climate narrative is strategic or embedded, then conditions the type of REDD+ institutional arrangement.

Table 1. State’s domestic political acceptance and the resultant institution

Domestic political acceptance	Institutional emergence
High political polarization, support for embedded narrative	Layered institution
Low political polarization, support for mitigation-centric narrative	Purpose-built institution

Source: Authors’ adaptation from Dubash (2021)

Having explained how the landscape of ideas and interests conditions institutional outcomes, the discussion now turns to understanding the process through which domestic politics shape these outcomes. More specifically, Dubash (2021) suggests three variables that mediate the relationship between politics and institutional emergence: domestic political institutions, bureaucratic routines, and a country’s interactions with international processes. The co-constitutive relationship between each of these variables and the configuration of ideas and interests eventually shape the type of institutional arrangement for a particular issue or objective (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. The process of REDD+ institution's emergence



Source: Authors' adaption from Dubash (2021)

Domestic political institutions matter not only to policy making but also to the resultant institution assigned to govern such policy (Dubash, 2021). Examining the configuration of interests among the political actors within such institutions is essential to better understand the role of institutions themselves. The way politicians arrange their distributive strategies vis-à-vis their constituents influences the institutional outcome. Finnegan (2022) suggests two institutions that affect actors' distributive strategies: electoral rules and interest group intermediation. The most salubrious condition for a long-term institutional outcome, however, depends on the extent to which each of those respective institutions provides electoral safety for politicians and compensation to the cost-bearing group as the institutional losers.

However, the condition is likely to be different in the context of Indonesia. The adoption of a proportional representation (PR) electoral system in Indonesia has contributed to a multi-party government system through coalition politics, as well as closer relationships between the national parliament and voters through direct elections. These conditions should provide more leverage for politicians to mobilize the government's agenda in the institutionalization of REDD+ and to better represent broader public values. However, as we will demonstrate, the prevalence of money politics and lack of domestic saliency of REDD+ prevents the national parliament from taking an active role in strengthening Indonesia's REDD+ institutions. This situation allows the continuance of predatory interests, providing less auspicious conditions for the emergence and longevity of purpose-built REDD+ institutions over the long term.

Secondly, bureaucratic routines, traditions, and practices both complicate and ease the institutionalization process for climate institutions. Two conditions shape the emergence of a robust institution. First is the ability of a state to be sufficiently autonomous to impose a cost on interests, or the so-called 'bureaucratic rationality' (Dubash, 2021). This aspect stresses the need for a state's bureaucracy to be staffed with rule-following bureaucrats who prioritize their duty over predatory interests and personal gain (Chibber, 2002). It also requires that the bureaucracy is able to resist external pressures and maintain a commitment to self-preservation,

rejecting any attempt to undermine or dilute its power from outside forces. Second is the presence of disciplinary coordination across state agencies. The presence of ‘Weberian’ rule-following bureaucrats alone is insufficient for a robust institution, knowing that bureaucratic politics are often dominated by interagency rivalry and conflict. These bureaucratic tensions can manifest as resistance to change, reluctance to cooperate with other agencies, and a drive to protect the interests and authority of individual agencies, all of which can hinder the establishment of a strong and effective climate institution. These two conditions should support the emergence of a robust climate institution.

In the context of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia, the (in-)ability of government ministries, especially the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MOEF), to be autonomous from predatory interests, especially those of forestry industries, affect the REDD+ institutional arrangement (Meehan and Tacconi, 2017). These conditions might also be complicated by a long tradition of state-led development in Indonesia and the legacy of the Suharto regime that tends to perpetuate the commercialization of forests and corrupt practices within it as we discuss in more detail below. Another important aspect is the state’s capacity to coordinate its ministries, for instance, through inter-ministerial coordinating institutions. Given the cross-cutting nature of the REDD+ initiative, sectoral politics has been a critical issue that underpins Indonesia’s forest governance reform. Accordingly, REDD+ and its resultant institution are shaped by the state of Indonesia's bureaucratic politics and traditions.

Thirdly, international drivers play an essential role in the opening up of domestic politics on certain issues, by shaping the domestic configuration of interests as well as the dominant narratives surrounding the issue or objective at hand. In this case, international interaction can trigger domestic institutional development through the diffusion of new ideas, mechanisms, and standards. This influence is plausible knowing that states often aim to deflect international pressure and win legitimacy by meeting international obligations. However, national political constraints determine the degree to which international pressures can be accommodated at the domestic level. From this standpoint, a low domestic political acceptance of an issue or objective may constitute national constraints that impede the mobilization of international pressures. Therefore, seeking consistency and harmony between international arrangements and domestic acceptability becomes an important step for state actors to address and avoid any mismatch between the two levels (Dubash, 2021). Hence, in the context of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia, the institutional arrangement to govern such an initiative would be subject to the two-level game resolution, namely the international pressures and

support for Indonesia to conduct forest governance reform, and the question of societal (especially of forest stakeholders) support for an agenda of transformation.

We should note that although this approach might be useful in illustrating the path-dependent nature of institutional development, it can be criticized for being deterministic and emphasizing the role of historical legacies in shaping institutional outcomes. Although our conceptual analysis has attempted to incorporate the importance of domestic political dynamics and international drivers, the emphasis on path-dependence and institutional legacies might overshadow the role of agency and ongoing negotiations among actors in driving institutional change. Yet, as we will highlight in the empirical discussion below, what makes the case of Indonesia particularly interesting is that the country has experimented with competing modes of REDD+ institutionalization: via purpose-built institution and institutional layering. This has given REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia a highly dynamic character.

Furthermore, the framework does not thoroughly examine the diverse perspectives and interests of various stakeholders beyond political actors and bureaucrats, such as indigenous communities, civil society organizations, or private sector actors. Consequently, the analysis might not capture the full range of factors and motivations that influence the institutionalization of REDD+ in Indonesia. We have therefore sought to add further critical nuance in the discussion section by addressing some of these factors.

4 Research method

This article utilizes a process-tracing method to examine the history of REDD+ institutional development in Indonesia, focusing on the importance of domestic political institutions, bureaucratic traditions, and interactions with the international process. REDD+ is selected as a case study mainly because it has become a prominent object of study among many scholars on the topic of forest governance transformation. Other than its policy significance, REDD+ is a cross-cutting issue in which the implementation brings complex political and governance challenges that demand an effective and engaged state. Thus, it provides an important case for studying institutional formation at the national level within high-politic circumstances.

This research primarily uses secondary data, collected from reports, official documents, journals, and other credible online sources in both English and Indonesian. The data analysis mainly utilizes qualitative and descriptive methods to explore the questions that require a subjective interpretation on less tangible matters. From a methodological standpoint, the

analysis follows the prescription of historical institutionalism to conduct a process-tracing approach to better understand the way in which institutional legacies influence contemporary developments. In doing so, the scope of analysis is framed from the 1960s to the year 2018, given the extensive change in both ideational and material forces pertaining to the climate issue in the forestry and land-use sector that influence REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia. Although we recognize the recent developments showing a more positive trend, this paper concentrates on the competing processes of REDD+ institutionalization and the institutional inefficiencies that emerge from conflicting institutional forms. For this reason, we have established 2018 as our analytical cut-off point.

5 The political economy context of Indonesia's state policy toward forests

To better understand the institutionalization of climate change in Indonesia's forestry sector, it is necessary to examine the state's forest policies since the New Order era (1967-1998). During this period, Indonesia's forestry practices mirrored its colonial past, primarily exploiting forest resources for commercial purposes through a "development" scheme. Commercial logging activities intensified from the 1970s to the 1990s under the authoritarian New Order, significantly reducing the country's forest coverage from 74% to 56% (Tacconi and Muttaqin, 2019). Forests were viewed as economic instruments for development, and legislation facilitated further forest commercialization and exploitation by domestic and international companies (Indrarto et al., 2012).

The extensive destruction of Indonesia's forests was linked to the monopolistic nature of Suharto's political regime and its close relationship with business conglomerates. The centralized political system granted the state full authority over "state forest" resources, with the 1967 Forestry Law appointing the Ministry of Forestry as the sole agency responsible for issuing new forest concessions (Widiaryanto, 2020). The centralized bureaucracy, dominated by powerful business actors with connections to top political elites, resulted in high levels of corruption. Business actors often engaged in money politics to obtain government permits for forest extraction beyond allocated quotas (Widiaryanto, 2020). Consequently, forest governance was primarily an oligarchic system, controlled by a few political elites and business conglomerates, neglecting the ecological and social impacts of forest exploitation.

The political and bureaucratic traditions established during Suharto's 32-year authoritarian rule have significantly influenced the emergence of REDD+ institutions.

Although the Suharto legacy persists, perpetuating a forest governance status quo that impedes REDD+'s success, some positive progress has been made. This includes Indonesia's ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through Law No. 6/1994, reflecting its climate commitment to reduce emissions (Indrarto et al., 2012). The UNFCCC, which requires member states to meet annually at the Conference of Parties (COP) to implement the framework, serves as the foundation for REDD+ in Indonesia.

Following the collapse of Suharto's regime in 1998, Indonesia underwent a significant political reform, transitioning to democracy. Power shifts among domestic political actors shaped forest governance arrangements, especially REDD+. In 2001, Indonesia adopted a decentralized system, devolving forest authority from the central government to provincial and district governments through regional autonomy policies (Luttrell et al., 2014). However, coordination challenges for forest governance emerged due to decentralization, as the central government retained the authority to award concessions.

Significant power shifts were also observed between the legislative and executive branches. The President's power, previously absolute, was diminished by the second amendment to the national constitution, requiring policy approval in the form of parliamentary legislation. The multi-party system in parliament was strengthened, making presidential success dependent on coalition support. This power shift made REDD+ more vulnerable to political dynamics.

Furthermore, the post-reformasi era saw the emergence of environmental justice narratives due to extractivist development policies and unequal distribution of benefits, particularly concerning indigenous land rights. Public dissatisfaction led to significant forest-related resistance and conflicts, influencing the formation of REDD+ institutions in Indonesia (Indrarto et al., 2012). The shift in developmental paradigm between the Suharto era and the democratization era has had a significant impact on the institutional change in Indonesia's forestry sector. The transition from an extractivist approach to a more sustainable and equitable development model has led to changes in forest governance arrangements, the emergence of new institutions and policies, and an increased focus on addressing environmental and social concerns. However, the legacy of the Suharto era and the challenges associated with decentralization and political reform continue to influence the implementation of REDD+ and other climate change initiatives in Indonesia. The following section will discuss two competing modes of REDD+ institutionalization pursued in Indonesia.

6 REDD+ governance 1.0: development of a purpose-built REDD+ institution in Indonesia

REDD+ is one of the global initiatives that emerged in recognition of the importance of the forestry and land-use sector in climate change mitigation. Since 2000, studies have shown that 12-29% of global greenhouse gas emissions are derived from land-use change, such as deforestation and forest degradation. As a result, this phase marked an increasing worldwide awareness and pressure to put good forest management practices at the centre of global climate mitigation, especially in the Global South (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2019). This phenomenon could be witnessed particularly since the COP-11 in 2005, with the formulation of the Reduction Emission from Deforestation (RED) initiative, which served as the embryo for REDD+. Following the Montreal Decision, Indonesia formed the Indonesia Forest Climate Alliance (IFCA), which plays an important role in assessing Indonesia's preparedness for and participation in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (Moeliono et al., 2014). IFCA's study later served as the basis for the institutionalization of the REDD+ framework in Indonesia, as observed since the Bali Action Plan (Maryani et al., 2012).

UNFCCC COP 13, held in Bali in 2007, marked the beginning of a more ambitious effort from Indonesia's climate governance, particularly in the land-use sector. Leading up to the event, the Indonesian government launched a policy document called the National Action Plan Addressing Climate Change, which was to serve as a reference for all sectors in preparing climate-related policies (Indrarto et al., 2012a). A year later, the state established the National Council on Climate Change (*Dewan Nasional Perubahan Iklim*, or DNPI) as an inter-ministerial body tasked with an exclusive climate change mandate under the central leadership of the president through Presidential Regulation no. 46/2008 (Di Gregorio et al., 2017).

These developments in the climate institutional architecture epitomized the entrance of the climate change debate into Indonesia. However, it is important to note that climate mitigation in Indonesia remains to be centered on the forestry and land-use sector (Ordonez et al., 2021). The Indonesian state seems to be more interested in projecting its international leadership on mitigation in this particular sector, which contributes 63% of Indonesia's carbon emissions (Di Gregorio et al., 2017). This is evident in Indonesia's institutionalization of REDD+, one of the world's first global climate initiatives. The following section will discuss Indonesia's REDD+ governance since 2007.

Since 2007's COP 13, RED further evolved into REDD+ as stated within the Bali Action Plan, which contained policy approaches and positive incentives to implement the initiative in low- and middle-income countries. COP 13 placed REDD+ firmly onto the international climate agenda and increased the role of low- and middle-income countries in forest conservation while continuing their development (DJPPI, 2022a; Indrarto et al., 2012a). As the host country for this international event, Indonesia launched a broad REDD+ Roadmap, prepared by the IFCA, as one of its first REDD+-specific policy documents (Indrarto et al., 2012a).

However, the defining phenomena throughout the years following COP 13 was the influx of international support and funding opportunities in Indonesia, alongside the emergence of the domestic REDD+ institutional architecture. Several multilateral initiatives, such as the United Nations REDD (UN-REDD) Programme, the World Bank-led Forest Carbon Partnership (FCPF), and the Forest Investment Program (FIP), began to emerge from 2008 to support REDD+ implementation, primarily through the provision of funding. Some countries, such as Norway, Australia, and the United Kingdom, also supported REDD+ through bilateral arrangements. In this instance, Indonesia has shown considerable interest in obtaining international support.

The government of Indonesia also began to indicate increased climate commitment. This was illustrated during the 2009 G20 event in Pittsburgh, USA. Then-Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono pledged a 26% reduction in the country's emissions from the BAU baseline by 2020, adding that up to 41% could be achieved with international support (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). Several climate bodies at the ministerial level were also established around this time, including a working group and expert panel on climate change under the Ministry of Forestry (Maryani et al., 2012).

Along with the maturation of the climate architecture, the discussion regarding REDD+ continued. The first draft of the REDD+ National Strategy containing a forest-related analysis and exploration of pathways to implement REDD+ was published in September 2010 (Maryani et al., 2012). The draft formulation was coordinated by The Ministry of Development and Planning (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional*, or BAPPENAS) with the support of the Ministry of Forestry to strengthen REDD+ institutional development in Indonesia.

BAPPENAS, the central government agency responsible for formulating national development planning and policies, played a vital role in incorporating REDD+ objectives into Indonesia's development framework. By integrating REDD+ programs into broader sustainable development initiatives, BAPPENAS ensured that the country's climate change and

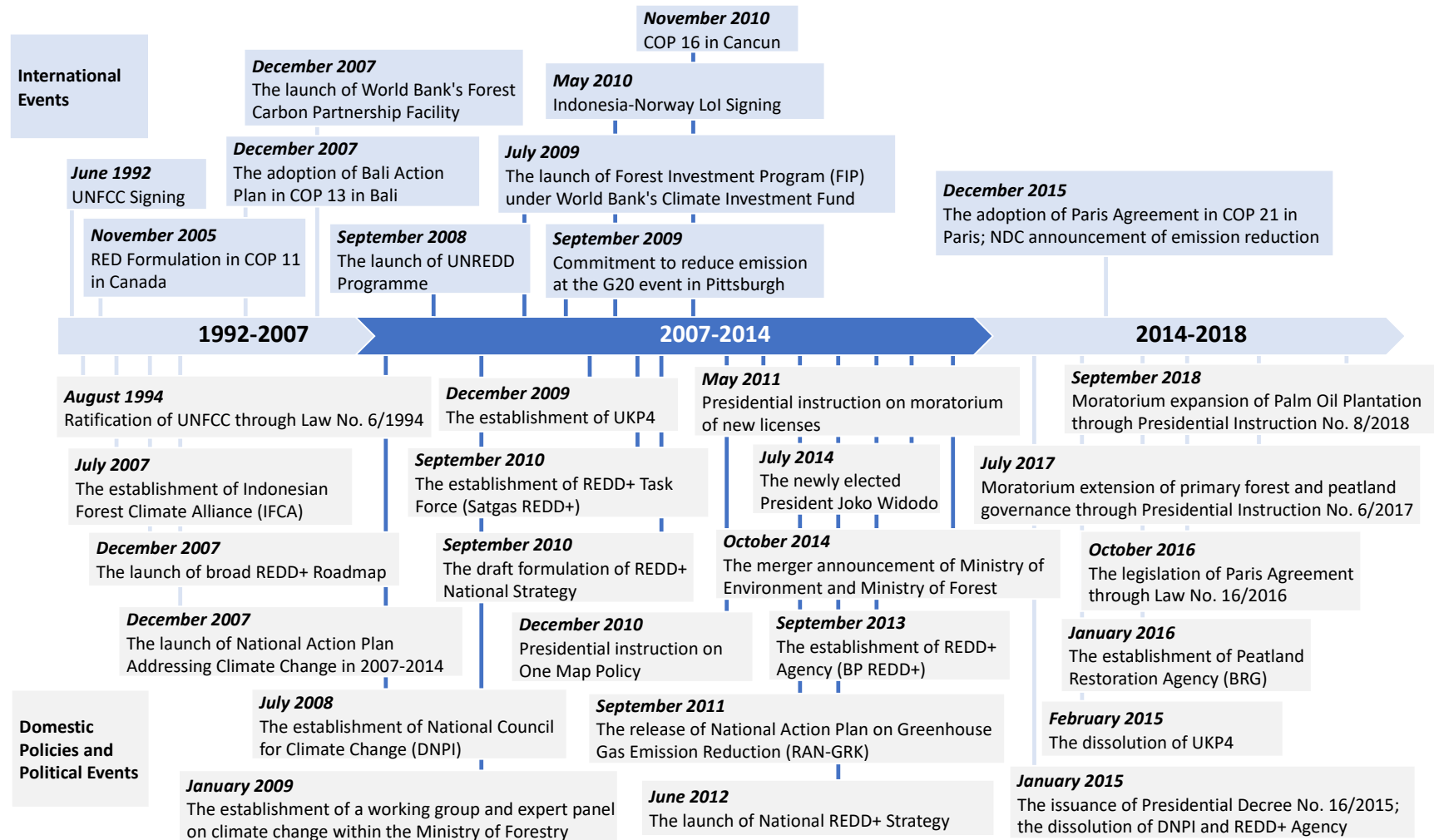
deforestation mitigation efforts became aligned with its economic growth and social development goals. Moreover, BAPPENAS played an important role coordinating the various ministries and institutions involved in REDD+ implementation, fostering cross-sectoral collaboration and communication (Indrarto et al., 2012b).

Since 2009, the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), a strategic policy document developed by BAPPENAS, locks REDD+ objectives into Indonesia's development priorities and targets for a five-year period (Indrarto et al., 2012b). The inclusion of REDD+ goals and strategies within the RPJMN ensures their integration into the country's overarching development plans, securing political commitment and allocating necessary resources for the implementation of REDD+ initiatives (Ekawati et al., 2019). Consequently, BAPPENAS creates a more coherent and integrated approach to incorporating REDD+ into Indonesia's broader development strategy.

In 2010, following a letter of intent with Norway, President Yudhoyono initiated the establishment of the REDD+ Task Force (Satgas REDD+) through Presidential Decree 19/2010. The Task Force, mandated to develop the National REDD+ Strategy, operated under the President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight (UKP4) and reported cabinet performance directly to the President. Comprising ten working groups, the Task Force coordinated various government departments and civil society groups, serving as an instrument for UKP4 to oversee Ministries' performance on climate change mitigation for REDD+ (Di Gregorio et al., 2017). With the expiration of the Task Force's mandate, it was upgraded to the ministerial-level REDD+ Management Agency (BP REDD+) in 2013 through Presidential Decree no. 62/2013 to continue its work.

The Task Force's inception was closely connected to the 2010 Letter of Intent (LoI) signed between the Governments of Indonesia and Norway, which aimed to coordinate REDD+ implementation efforts. In so doing, the establishment of the REDD+ Task Force was inextricably linked to the role of donors in shaping the institutionalization of the climate change agenda within Indonesia's forestry sector. Donor funding was instrumental in providing financial resources, influencing policy priorities, facilitating capacity building, and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders (Rahman et al., 2021). Actively involving non-state actors in national decision-making processes, the REDD+ Task Force in Indonesia also encouraged innovation in adjacent policy areas (Moeliono et al., 2020).

Figure 2. Key historical events in REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia



Source: Compiled by authors from multiple sources

In addition to the institutional development of the climate architecture, several policies were also enacted to support Indonesia's REDD+ implementation during this phase (see Figure 2). These include the forest moratorium policy on granting new licenses and improvement of natural primary forest and peatland governance through Presidential Instruction 10/2011, as well as the One Map Policy concerning participatory map standardization to support the moratorium process (Indrarto et al., 2012a; Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). In 2012, the REDD+ National Strategy was officially launched, followed by provincial strategies and action plans to further institutionalize REDD+ at the sub-national level (Indonesian REDD+ Task Force, 2012). The government also released the National Action Plan on Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction through Presidential Decree no. 61/2011 as a follow up to the president's Pittsburgh G20 statement (DJPPPI, 2022b). The National Action Plan is comprised of climate mitigation activities in five sectors: agriculture, forestry and peatlands, energy and transportation, industry, and waste management. However, it is important to note that the plan focuses predominantly on forests and peatlands, with REDD+ mentioned as one of the strategies to achieve climate mitigation targets within the sector (Dwisatrio et al., 2021). Nevertheless, in the context of the Indonesian political economy, the existence of a purpose-built REDD+ institution ultimately proved unstable.

7 REDD+ governance 2.0: institutional layering by embedding REDD+ within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry

After the 2014 presidential election, Indonesia's climate architecture was re-arranged under President Joko Widodo to streamline the government and reduce overlapping tasks across the ministries. The previous two prominent climate institutions – the National Council on Climate Change and the REDD+ Agency – were dissolved, and the climate mandate was submerged under the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) through Presidential Regulation no. 16/2015. Subsequently, the mandate for REDD+ was transferred into a sub-directorate under the Directorate General for Climate Change Control (DJPPPI), which also served as the UNFCCC national focal point. DJPPPI itself was established as a new department under MoEF following Widodo's massive ministerial restructuring effort, which included merging the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forestry (Dwisatrio et al., 2021).

As a result, the Widodo period has witnessed new approaches in REDD+ governance, shifting from initially operating outside the formal bureaucracy to operating within it. Despite

this significant change in REDD+ institutional formation, Indonesia continues its participation in the global climate initiative. This is illustrated in the ratification of the Paris Agreement by the Indonesian parliament through Law no. 16/2016 and the announcement of the country's NDC. Widodo also established the Peat Restoration Agency in 2016 to accelerate the recovery of peatlands damaged due massive forest fires (Presidential Spokesperson, 2016), and extended the forestry moratorium policy in 2017 and 2018 (Thuy, 2019). This suggests that Indonesia's continuous commitment to climate change does not ensure consistency in the way REDD+ is orchestrated at the domestic level. Both Yudhoyono and Widodo have shown similar levels of support and responsibility for climate issues and REDD+, but the difference in the REDD+ institutional arrangement indicates the presence of several different political challenges..

Some REDD+ proponents have expressed concerns about the elimination of the REDD+ Task Force. Not only because it has violated the Letter of Intent signed by Indonesia and Norway that required the establishment of an independent agency, but also because coordinating bodies are deemed necessary to solve fragmented institutional settings, including in Indonesia (Dwisatrio et al., 2021).

Hence, to understand REDD+'s institutional evolution, it is important to examine the narrative surrounding the issue of climate change mitigation, especially in the forestry and land-use sector. In Indonesia, long-standing developmental priorities dating back to the New Order era have somewhat undermined the country's efforts to mitigate climate change. This is clearly illustrated in the forestry and land-use sector, which has been subject to commercialization for a long time. For Indonesia, the benefit of plantation development is seen to outweigh the benefit of forest conservation. There are many socio-economic as well as political benefits that come with the issuance of plantation permits, such as job employment from concessions, improved infrastructure, and income tax, which renders Indonesia's development strategy highly reliant on the sector. The Ministry of Forestry's secretary-general has expressed pragmatic concerns over who will pay for the socio-economic impact associated with the implementation of climate-related initiatives, especially in the forestry sector (Eilenberg, 2015). Even today, demands for international assistance are persistent among Indonesia's state apparatus. The Minister of Finance, for instance, has voiced disappointment over the failure of the rich countries to fulfil their promise to support Indonesia's climate funding (Masitoh, 2021).

The climate narrative has significantly influenced the framing of REDD+ during both Yudhoyono and Widodo's presidencies. In these discussions, the challenges of land conversion and rights issues have taken precedence over the importance of climate mitigation. For example,

the global "No Rights No REDD+" campaign has prompted civil society actors and indigenous communities to express concerns about REDD+. They perceive it as a forest conversion program that potentially reinforces BAU practices and undermines indigenous rights and control over forests where REDD+ activities are implemented (Fay and Denduangrudee, 2018).

As Cronin & Santoso (2010) note, REDD+'s forest conversion and climate mitigation activities have attracted less interest compared to land-use rights issues, particularly among civil society. This is evident in the objections raised by Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN, or the Indonesian National Indigenous Peoples' Organization) to the 1999 Forest Law, which perpetuates the state's exclusive authority to grant forestry permits to companies for mining and palm oil production at the expense of indigenous land rights. AMAN's advocacy led to the Indonesian Constitutional Court's decision to return customary forests to indigenous landholders (Butler, 2013). This focus on indigenous land rights demonstrates the prevailing domestic narrative that shapes the operationalization of REDD+ in Indonesia.

The focus of the domestic constituents on the socio-economic dimension, as opposed to the environmental and ecological dimension, signifies that the domestic narrative surrounding climate change remains embedded in sectoral politics instead of being strategically framed around emissions reduction. There is a lack of domestic saliency that would enable REDD+ to be framed in the context of climate mitigation. REDD+ debates in Indonesia, thus, are often discussed in safeguard or co-benefits programs to better account for public concerns over REDD+'s socio-economic impact (Mulyani and Jepson, 2013b). This framing has been instrumental for the Indonesian government, assisting it in resolving the conflict between international pressure to act on climate change and domestic socio-economic concerns.

Another powerful explanation of REDD+ institutional development in Indonesia is the country's interactions with international climate change initiatives and processes. A significant effort was Indonesia's US\$1 billion agreement with Norway, which led to the establishment of the REDD+ Task Force during Yudhoyono's presidency. The agreement not only mandated the creation of an independent rule-making institution for REDD+, but also incentivized the government to adopt critical policy approaches, such as a moratorium on new forestry concessions (Di Gregorio et al., 2017; Enrici and Hubacek, 2018). International funding and developmental aid expanded the political space for Indonesia to accommodate REDD+ 1.0 by attaching conditionalities and mitigating socio-economic risks associated with its implementation (Brockhaus and Di Gregorio, 2014).

However, the REDD+ 1.0 institutional arrangement was short-lived. Dubash (2021) contends that the configuration of ideas and interests influences institutional formation. In this case, REDD+ 1.0 not only lacked legitimacy among the Indonesian public, but also led to political polarization and contestation, creating an unfavorable environment for an independent agency to prosper. Although presidential support significantly influenced REDD+ 1.0 development, it alone is insufficient for REDD+ to have a transformative impact on Indonesia's forest governance in the long term. According to Nofyanza et al. (2020), REDD+ implementation in Indonesia remains mired in "projectification," focusing on technical issues without addressing the underlying socio-economic and political drivers of deforestation. To ensure its longevity, it is crucial to integrate REDD+ within the formal institutional structure, including laws and regulations.

For a robust REDD+ institution, broader political support from domestic constituents – not only the president but also parliament, the private sector, bureaucrats, civil society, and the broader public – would be critical (Nofyanza et al., 2020). Yet in Indonesia, there is insufficient domestic support, resulting in a less-than-conducive political atmosphere. Parliament, for instance, has arguably been reluctant to support the president's effort to enact REDD+ reform. This is a challenge because, through *reformasi*, the role of the parliament became increasingly important, with the constitution conferring more legislative and budgetary power to the parliament and greatly weakening the president's personal legislative power (Luttrell et al., 2014). The presence of coalition politics as a result of shifts towards a multi-party political system has also undermined the president's power, as the success of the latter is increasingly dependent on the amount of support from the coalition party within the parliament's institutions (Hamudy and Rifki, 2019; Luttrell et al., 2014). In this context of shifting power, parliament could strengthen REDD+ institutional development, mainly by providing a legal mandate.

It is challenging to anticipate parliamentary support for REDD+, considering the close ties between politicians and business actors, including those opposed to forest conservation (Luttrell et al., 2014). Business-government relationships have long led to rent-seeking in Indonesia, a tradition that persists. Political elections are primarily funded by natural resource revenues, including forestry products, giving business actors significant informal influence over political dynamics and natural resource governance (Dwisatrio et al., 2021). These patron-client relationships undermine the 'democratic contract' of good governance, as parliamentary dynamics are increasingly driven by business elites rather than representing the broader public. The lack of domestic saliency for REDD+ provides little incentive for parliamentarians to support it. This reluctance is evident in the fact that most REDD+-related policies are enacted

by the president rather than by parliament. For example, the REDD+ Task Force was established through a presidential decree, bypassing the need for parliament's endorsement. As a result, the task force gained domestic traction but faced legal mandate ambiguity and vulnerability to domestic political dynamics (Luttrell et al., 2014), ultimately being disbanded after a government change.

Similarly, Indonesia's bureaucracy tends to see REDD+ institutionalization as a threat to its authority. MoEF, one of the most powerful forest agencies, has historically controlled as much as 70% of Indonesia's landmass under its legal mandate (Moeliono et al., 2014). Thus perhaps not surprisingly, given the massive revenue from forest resources, MoEF acquired the lowest rank on the integrity survey compared to other Indonesia government ministries due to a large number of corruption cases and its strong ties with business lobbyists (Brockhaus and Di Gregorio, 2014; Enrici and Hubacek, 2016). With such a portfolio, MoEF has a deeply vested interest to remain in power over forest control, making it resistant to cede any exclusive authority to other agencies or institutions (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017).

In that context, the presence of REDD+ as a performance-based fund provided a new venue for inter-agential power competition for formal mandates and budgets (Wibowo and Giessen, 2015). From MoEF's standpoint, the emergence of the REDD+ institutions to operationalize the REDD+ mandate was conceived as a threat that undermines their reputational power and sovereignty. This tension was evident in the delayed process of releasing Presidential Decree no. 10/2011 regarding the suspension of forest licenses and the publication of an indicative moratorium map as part of the Indonesia-Norway partnership agreement (Mulyani and Jepson, 2013b). This included an attempt from MoEF to narrowly define the scope for protected forests; MoEF tried to ensure that only primary forests were covered by the moratorium, while leaving a chunk of other forest types remaining unprotected and available for investment. Such contestation was conceivably the result of rent-seeking practices and/or strong lobbying from forestry and tree crop plantation industries who fear losing access to forest lands (Butler, 2011; Maryani et al., 2012). Again, this demonstrates how Suharto's legacy has shaped the configuration of interests across the country's bureaucrats as well as the way in which REDD+ is governed.

One of the underlying reasons behind the re-bureaucratization of REDD+ under President Joko Widodo is the prevailing self-serving sectoral attitudes that impede the longevity of a bureaucratically disconnected agency. As Mulyani & Jepson (2013) argue, establishing an independent ad-hoc agency agenda has become part of the political culture in Indonesia to avoid failing ministries and serves as a quick solution for any emerging issue. As evident in

the disbandment of the REDD+ Task Force (Mode 1.0), however, such a purpose-built institution is often unsustainable and prone to changes in political dynamics.

8 Discussion

Having discussed REDD+ institutional development in Indonesia, the question, then, is what is the strategic implication of the institutionalization process for the REDD+ transformative capacity in tackling governance challenges? Given Indonesia's political climate, layering REDD+ under MoEF (REDD+ 2.0) is more likely to be sustainable over the long term. However, we argue that the REDD+ 2.0 mode of institutionalization has strategic implications for its capacity to induce forest governance transformation. The layering process leads to incremental as opposed to transformative changes, leaving BAU practices intact within the existing bureaucratic system (Moeliono et al., 2020; Nofyanza et al., 2020). It is important to note that REDD+ implementation is a cross-cutting policy that entails enormous coordination challenges, especially since decentralization. Both horizontal coordination among state bureaucrats and vertical coordination with sub-national governments are thus necessary to effectively institutionalize REDD+ (Luttrell et al., 2014).

In that regard, there are several reasons why institutional layering differs from a purpose-built institution from the lens of institutional capacity in tackling governance challenges. As discussed earlier, a purpose-built institution is independent of the traditional government structure, as demonstrated by the REDD+ Task Force and the DNPI under the central leadership of the President. Therefore, international organisations and donors such as Norway, Germany, and the UK prefer such an institutional arrangement as it promotes less bureaucracy, more internationalization of REDD+, and, accordingly, more transformational impact (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). Given their independent position, the Task Force and the DNPI were expected to be more agile in promoting coordination. As mentioned previously, assisting the UKP4 in supervising the work of ministries and connecting different government department groups with the civil society through the working groups have demonstrated the Task Force's role in promoting horizontal and vertical integration (Di Gregorio et al., 2017).

Moreover, the independent position enabled the agency to mediate political interest and strategy setting. This is illustrated in how the agency, backed by the UKP4, managed to problematize Indonesia's map-making practice, which often results in overlapping forest concession and land-tenure conflicts. There is a considerable interest from the bureaucrats, especially within the Ministry of Forestry, and local authorities to profit from the ambiguity of

forest spatial information. In this context, the agency sought to promote greater transparency and integration of forest spatial data information through the OMI. Hence, the Task Force supervised the implementation of the Indicative Moratorium Map (IMM) updating process involving several related ministries and agencies tasked with the objective (Astuti and McGregor, 2015).

Accordingly, one of the advantages of having an institution operating outside the formal bureaucracy is the ability to pinpoint and problematize an overlooked issue within the existing bureaucracy. An independent agency could perform as a monitoring agent to the existing bureaucracy and hold them more accountable. This evidence illustrates the capacity of a purpose-built institution in the domain of coordination, mediating interest, and strategy-setting, which could otherwise be different had the mandate been layered. Perhaps, one of the downsides of the Task Force was a rather narrowly circumscribed mandate and time limit. This is the area where the national Parliament could play an important role in providing a legislative mandate for the REDD+ implementation. However, given the lack of such support, the Task Force suffered from lack of authority and legitimacy among various stakeholders, particularly the sectoral departments, in implementing the REDD+ (Di Gregorio et al., 2017; Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017).

On the other hand, having REDD+ layered within the MoEF, more precisely under the DJPPI, signifies rather inward-oriented national concerns whereby the bureaucracy gains more control and power over REDD+. Given the greater resources and authority possessed by MoEF compared to the Task Force, a layered institution for REDD+ would, arguably, strengthen national ownership and eventually lead to more effective coordination. However, due to the absence of a law-empowered coordinating institution, DJPPI's capacity to coordinate with other stakeholders, particularly other ministries, is being questioned (Korhonen Kurki et al., 2017). Gallemore et al. (2015) report the loose network of information sharing between the national and sub-national entities due to the transactions cost, which impedes the development of participatory multi-level governance. Meanwhile, as Nofyanza et al. (2020) argue, a collaborative policymaking approach to REDD+ through network governance and stakeholder consultation was more evident under the Task Force than under MoEF.

More importantly, not only might REDD+ be losing its visibility under such arrangement, connecting REDD+ with the bureaucratic institution could potentially lead to a return towards BAU within forest management practices, given the prevalence of corruption and rent-seeking within MoEF. This condition is aggravated by Indonesia's weak forest law enforcement in tackling such institutional malaise, which sustains predatory interests and undermines the

MoEF's capacity to mediate political interests and set a strategic approach (Tacconi and Muttaqin, 2019). As illustrated in the case of the delayed process of moratorium mapping, it is clear that business actors can shape the policy stringency of REDD+ through informal channels. As a non-climate consensus country, Indonesia demonstrates a case whereby politics holds more control in steering institutional directions instead of institutions steering politics.

9 Conclusion

This article examined the institutionalization process of the REDD+ program in Indonesia and its impact on forest governance transformation. We highlighted two modes of REDD+ institutionalization in Indonesia: the development of a purpose-built institution as identified by the emergence of REDD+ Task Force and Agency, and the use of layering within institutions that occurred with the re-bureaucratization of REDD+ under MoEF. Our study finds that the short-lived nature of the REDD+ Task Force could be explained by the overall political landscape in Indonesia, which provides unstable conditions for the sustainability of an independent agency operating outside the formal bureaucracy. In this case, the climate narrative in Indonesia has not obtained strategic support and remains embedded in sectoral politics due to the state's developmental priorities and a lack of interest from the broader public. This condition is coupled with a high degree of polarization surrounding REDD+. Altogether, this has resulted in intra-agential conflict over the REDD+ mandate.

The study has identified a bureaucratic resistance toward forest reform. This constitutes a major national constraint for strategically operationalizing the REDD+ program. Indonesian government interactions with international processes and presidential support have indeed triggered the domestic institutionalization of REDD+. However, REDD+'s long-term institutional impact has been severely constrained due to the lack of political support from domestic constituents. This is illustrated by the reluctance of the Indonesian parliament – as the country's primary domestic political institution – to support REDD+ institutional development. Other important factors are entrenched rent-seeking practices and the close ties between the government and business actors dating back to the Suharto era, which have path-dependently informed the institutional preferences to sustain the status quo and subsequently limit the political room for REDD+.

The analysis of the REDD+ institutionalization process in Indonesia thus far suggests two important insights. First, the short-lived nature of the REDD+ Task Force as an independent agency suggests that a non-climate consensus country tends to experience a

situation whereby politics structures its institutional development instead of *vice versa*. Despite being designed as a path-breaking institution capable of mediating political interests in forest governance, the case of Indonesia shows the opposite interaction, with a purpose-built institution highly susceptible to domestic political dynamics. A similar pattern is also found, for example, in the absence of a new climate institute in the United States, with climate change seeing a similarly high degree of polarization domestically (Mildenberger, 2021).

Second, the re-bureaucratization of REDD+ shows that a lack of domestic political support, especially from bureaucrats, favors incremental rather than transformative institutional change. The finding of this study confirms that the absence of significant structural change for REDD+ is mainly due to Indonesian bureaucratic resistance. The government tends to prefer policy approaches or initiatives that do not cause profound disruption to the existing bureaucratic system. This preference has been demonstrated by President Joko Widodo's preference to layer the mandates for climate mitigation and REDD+ within the existing bureaucracy through policy documents, such as the National Action Plan for Climate Change and the extension of moratorium policies. Compared to the establishment of the REDD+ Task Force under his predecessor, Yudhoyono, Widodo's layering strategy is more politically acceptable as it does not dismantle the existing system. By doing so, Widodo managed to resolve the two-level game by accommodating the international pressures to reduce emissions from deforestation while overcoming national political constraints.

The assimilation of climate institutions within the existing bureaucracy, however, has arguably limited its transformative capacity. With such an arrangement in place, it becomes more challenging for climate institutions to employ strategic intent as they now must face a greater degree of sectoral interests and be subject to the nation's bureaucratic traditions themselves. However, despite the downsides, institutional layering is proving to be more resilient for long-term climate investment in a non-climate consensus country like Indonesia. This is because layering does not cause massive disruption to the existing bureaucratic system. As a result, over time, the country had witnessed several periods of forest governance capacity building through the layering process within the existing bureaucracy. Nevertheless, what our analysis of competing processes of REDD+ institutionalization has also shown is that they are far from static. In this context, more recent developments that fall outside the analytical timeframe of this article, such as the launch of the Indonesian REDD+ national strategy in 2022 and the renewal of the Indonesia-Norway partnership last year may hint towards more transformational change in the future.

Overall, this study has contributed to the literature on forest governance transformation by showing the significance of studying domestic climate institutions, and specifically the process of institutionalization, for the state's capacity to tackle governance challenges. Our study suggests the need to look beyond policies in understanding such governance transformation. However, this article remains concentrated at the national level and does not examine the effect of sub-national political dynamics on institutional formation. Further studies on the interaction across multi-level government during the institutionalization process of particular issues or agenda are necessary to conceptualize the institutional emergence at the national level. Ultimately, tackling climate change is too important to reduce it to specific institutional arrangements than those underpinning REDD+ in Indonesia, or leave it to a select group of ministries and other implementing agencies; it requires the sustained and widespread effort of both government bureaucracy and citizens.

10 References

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