

UGM and New Zealand

Thursday, 30 January 2014 WIB, By: Marwati



YOGYAKARTA - Universitas Gadjah Mada in collaboration with New Zealand is doing research in empowering local economic resources of small islands located at East Indonesia. The cooperation runs for five years, prioritising on the development of renewable energy, disaster risk management, creative economy and conflict resolution.

Rector of UGM, Prof. Dr. Pratikno, M.Soc., Sc., said the choice of the East Indonesia's small islands was to implement the mandate of UGM as a national university, among others distributing knowledge to support society building in the most outlying, the most isolated and the most underdeveloped areas. "We would focus on economic and social condition of society so these can minimise the poverty rate there," Pratikno told journalists on Wednesday (29/1) in the multimedia room of UGM Main Office.

Currently, four out of 22 research proposals have been selected with the funding worth Rp11 billion. The theme of the researchs are economic development of the local people of Morotai (North Maluku); exploration and development of seaweed in East Nusa Tenggara;

development of geothermal energy in North Sulawesi; and society capacity building in disaster risk management in isolated islands.

According to Pratikno, the research could give benefits to society. "In addition to research, we expect experience and knowledge sharing with the New Zealand team of experts. New Zealand has expertise in geothermal technology," he said.

New Zealand ambassador, David Taylor, said the cooperation in research funding is the first to be done by his government with foreign university. "The cooperation with UGM is built through partnership research, particularly for East Indonesia," he said.

The ambassador added the cooperation would directly impact the local people. New Zealand will send an expert team. "We have 30 years of experience," he said.

Prof. Ir. Dwikorita Karnawati, M.Sc., Ph.D, Vice Rector for Cooperation and Alumni, said the cooperation with New Zealand was pioneered during the visit of Prime Minister Helen Clark to UGM in 2008 lalu. The program by the name of UGM Community Resilience and Economic Programme (caRED) is expected to impact the welfare of people in East Indonesia.

An UGM researcher that receives the research grant, Ir. Adam Pamudji Rahardjo, M.Sc., Ph.D., said with a team he would do a research on people resilience building in isolated islands. The local people of Raja Ampat, Ende, Morotai, some islets in Ternate and Ambon according to Adam, are prone to disasters. "In these islets there are risks of earthquake, tsunami, landslide and flooding while the infrastructure facilities, such as communications, transportation, and health service facilities are very minimal," he said.

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