What is the Heart of Borneo Initiative?

Heart of Borneo (HoB) is an initiative of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia to preserve one of Borneo’s best remaining rainforests and water catchments in the interior of the island for the welfare of present and future generations.

Three Countries’ Initiative and Co-operation. In Bali, on February 12, 2007, the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia declared a commitment to preserve and sustainably manage the HoB area.

What is the area of the Heart of Borneo? The HoB area covers approximately 23 million hectares of ecologically connected forest across three countries. A large portion of this land — of which 71% is dominated by tropical rain forests — is located in Indonesia.

Why is the HoB important?

The HoB plays a critical role in securing water services and carbon stock, preserving biodiversity, ecosystem connectivity and building resilience to climate change for the sustainable development of the whole island of Borneo and wellbeing of its people. This area also plays a vital function as a water catchment for the island. Most of the main rivers (14 of the 20) such as the Kapuas, Barito and Mahakam Rivers – have their headwaters in the HoB.

The HoB area boasts unsurpassed biological richness with about 40 to 50% of the world’s flora and fauna found in Borneo. What is more, approximately 500 new species of flora and fauna have been discovered in the region in the last 10 years.

The natural assets of the HoB are invaluable, and so are the social and cultural assets of its population, especially the 1 million indigenous people who directly depend on forests for their livelihoods, food, income, water and culture, and have contributed to maintaining the forests and preserving the rich and extraordinary biodiversity of the Heart of Borneo based on their customary regulations and conservation values.

In the last decade, at least 1.2 million ha of Indonesia’s forests have been lost to large scale logging activities and forest conversion to industrial plantations. Some of this occurred in the HoB area, from 2010 to 2015 there were around 600,000 ha of forests have been converted.

Currently, only 55% of Borneo’s original forest remains. If irresponsible practices continue, the function of the forests will decline, biodiversity loss will worsen and the incidence of natural disasters will rise.

A wise management of the HoB area, therefore, will help build sustainability of one Borneo’s best remaining rainforests for the welfare of present and future generations.

Why should three countries cooperate on the HoB Initiative?

The HoB area is comprised of three countries that share a common landscape and depend on key ecosystem services of the area for their prosperity and sustainability. Socio-culturally, the communities at the border between Indonesia and Malaysia have very close relationships. This makes for a common basis to cooperate and strengthen sustainable natural resource management and economic prosperity in the border area while respecting each country’s sovereignty and regulations.

Conservation and sustainable development in HoB

Conservation in the HoB area means improving the management and governance of protected areas such as national parks, wildlife and nature reserves.

Promoting conservation also means to adopt a landscape and ecosystem approach as the basis for government land use planning especially in the priority landscapes and sub-landscapes in the HoB, and adjacent areas that are very important for ecological connectivity, species and genetic flow.

Together, the three countries are working to make the HoB a model for ‘inclusive green development’ by mainstreaming biodiversity and the value of ecosystem services in productive activities and business models in agriculture, forestry, ecotourism, energy, and other sectors. These activities promote sustainability as long as they also ensure the access of local and indigenous communities to natural resources and support their livelihoods, integrate strong social values and are rooted in traditional knowledge, and the cultural heritage of indigenous and local communities in the HoB.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Width (hectare)</th>
<th>(Hectare) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>403,651.06</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah</td>
<td>264,205.36</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temburong</td>
<td>64,784.80</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuing</td>
<td>51,070.91</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Indonesia</td>
<td>16,890,809.32</td>
<td>71.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kalimantan</td>
<td>4,916,316.41</td>
<td>20.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Kalimantan</td>
<td>3,068,377.28</td>
<td>12.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kalimantan</td>
<td>3,756,672.88</td>
<td>16.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kalimantan</td>
<td>5,209,443.35</td>
<td>22.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Malaysia</td>
<td>6,130,943.50</td>
<td>26.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarawak</td>
<td>2,187,949.99</td>
<td>9.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah</td>
<td>3,942,993.50</td>
<td>16.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total HoB</td>
<td>23,431,614.49</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Heart of Borneo, not Heart of Kalimantan?

The name Borneo refers to the whole island, which has already been recognized internationally. Kalimantan refers only to the Indonesian part of the island. The choice of the Heart of Borneo demonstrates that the Heart of Borneo initiative is owned by the three countries that cooperate for that purpose. Heart of Borneo in Indonesia is known as Jantung Kalimantan.

Where is HoB area in Indonesia?

In the declaration of 2007, the HoB area covers 63 districts in three provinces: West Kalimantan (Sintang, Melawi and Kapuas Hulu), Central Kalimantan (Katingan, Gunung Mas, Barito Utara and Murung Raya) and East Kalimantan (Mallin, Nunukan and Kutai Barat).

In March 2008, the Indonesian Government issued Government Regulation No. 49 of 2008 which declared the HoB area as one of the National Strategic Areas (Kawasan Strategis Nasional/KSN) in Indonesia. In this KSN, six additional districts were added to the HoB, namely in Central Kalimantan (Kapuas and Seruyan) and in East Kalimantan (Kutai Timur, Kutai Kartanegara, Berun and Bungkal).

Who will manage the Heart of Borneo Initiative?

The HoB is a government initiative. Its programs and activities are initiated by the government, in collaboration with partners.

In Indonesia, HoB activities are coordinated by HoB National Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Nasional/Pokja HoB) and working groups at provincial and district levels. Pokja members are representatives of relevant ministries such as Ministry of Environment & Forestry, Ministry of Agrarian & Spatial Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, National Development Planning Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, and Geospatial Information Board. The HoB National Working Group is established by Derrce under the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs. Likewise for the working groups at provincial and district levels, members are from relevant agencies and institutions and are mandated by the Governor and the Head of District.

The HoB partners are institutions, community organizations and traditional associations, academic institutes and research centers. These partners have an important role in helping the government to carry out the activities of HoB programmatic strategy, individually or in collaboration.

The HoB Initiative is increasingly evolving into an inclusive platform enabling collaborations and exchange among partners, agencies, and community organizations whereby stakeholders take responsibilities to work together to improve the sustainability of productive sectors and the governance of natural resources and biodiversity. This is a critical value for which the HoB Initiative has been a leading example. Collaborations also represent essential enabling conditions for green and inclusive development in the HoB and the entire island, based on the resilience of ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity.

What kind of economy for the HoB?

Different vision of growth, one that is sustainable, inclusive and within planetary boundaries is critical. It requires innovative technologies and sustainable natural resource management to meet the energy, food and water needs, especially of the indigenous and local communities in the HoB. It also requires using land and other resources more efficiently, reducing waste, reclaiming degraded lands, and shifting away from resource-intensive consumption and production patterns. Secure tenure and access to natural resources are imperative to sustain the livelihoods of rural communities.

The HoB promotes oil palm plantations that fulfill the requirements and criteria of the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) and Roundtable Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). The HoB also works together with timber concessions to ensure best management practices and certification such as The Indonesian Timber Legality Assurance System (Sylves) and FSC. The mining sector is also encouraged to apply best mining practices that minimize environmental and social costs.

The HoB represents a unique place to develop Green Ecotourism and support a world-class, innovative, trans-border, green destination for ecotourism in South East Asia with integrated packages linking Brunei, Kalimantan, Sabah and Sarawak. Ecotourism is one example where cooperation across the three countries can have a strong, positive effect on the entire island, based on the resilience of ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity.

What are the rights and role of local and indigenous communities in the Heart of Borneo?

Much of the HoB is regarded by Dayak ethnic groups as their homeland. The sense of belonging and closeness with the environment is the main reason indigenous and local peoples have traditionally lived after their ancestral land, protected the forest and rivers, and regulated the use of natural resources, based on their traditional knowledge and experience. Over generations, indigenous and local peoples have developed practices to grow crops, experiment with new cultivars, used and processed natural resources into high-value products.

Local support is crucial to the success of any initiative, including the HoB. The big scale and scope of a conservation intervention like the HoB remains contingent on broader support at local and national levels. Some local community initiatives in HoB like Forum Iban and FORMADAT (recipient of the Equator Prize award in 2015) have been established and engaged by the HoB Initiative.

Heart of Borneo programmatic strategy

In the 4th HoB Trilateral Meeting in 2008, the three countries agreed on five main programs, namely:

The programs in the HoB National Strategic Plan and Action (NSPA) for 2015-2020 are:

- **Capacity building**
  - Encourage ecotourism development
  - Support capacity building

- **Ecotourism development**
  - Support trans-border sustainable economic development

- **Sustainable natural resources management**
  - Promote protected areas management practices
  - Promote sustainable development of natural resources

- **Transboundary management**
  - Establish enabling condition for the HoB implementation and program acceleration

- **Protected areas management**
  - Encourage local communities to reclaim degraded lands
  - Encourage local communities to reclaim degraded lands

- **Support community-based initiatives**
  - Promote local communities to develop ecotourism
  - Promote local communities to develop ecotourism

What is the status of the Heart of Borneo’s national spatial plan?

Since 2008, the HoB area in Indonesia has been designated as National Strategic Area (KSN) by the Government of Indonesia, as Land Border Regions of the Republic of Indonesia and Jantung Kalimantan (Heart of Borneo) in the Province of West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan and East Kalimantan. An important indicator of this designation means an area that is essential to national security, economic growth, socio-cultural preservation, natural resource utilization and functionality, and carrying capacity of the environment.

The HoB area is very important to biodiversity protection, watershed protection and sustainable development. The HoB programs in Indonesia always align with the regional spatial planning and development plans.

Moreover, in 2014, community leaders from the HoB agreed to form a forum to build communication and engagement with the HoB Trilateral Initiative. Local constituencies are crucial to generate the sense of ownership and accountability at local level necessary for the success of a broad, multi-landscape, and multi-country initiative like the HoB.

Further information on Heart of Borneo Indonesia, please contact:

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