



PROFILE

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Initiating forest climate demonstration activities

Forest & Climate Initiative

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Maintaining the Heart of Borneo's forests for people and the planet

Kutai Barat, Indonesia

The Heart of Borneo's tropical rainforests are among the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world, with some species found nowhere else but on this island. The island of Borneo is one of only two places on Earth where elephants, orangutans and rhinoceros share the same habitat. And scientists suspect that the island still holds many species that have yet to be discovered. The highlands of the Heart of Borneo are also an essential water catchment that contains 14 of the 20 watersheds for the island's major river systems.

In recognition of the significance these tropical rainforests have to both the people who live there and to the world, the three Bornean governments – Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei – jointly declared their commitment to preserving and sustainably managing the Heart of Borneo's forests. WWF is supporting the governments' effort to conserve 22 million hectares of rainforest – almost a third of the island – through a network of protected areas and sustainably managed forests.



Forests under pressure

Indonesia is losing 1.17 million hectares of forest per year¹, which puts it among the countries with the highest rates of deforestation and forest degradation in the world. Forces driving forest loss include unsustainable logging practices, both legal and illegal, fires and clearing for palm oil, mining and small-scale community plantations.

Despite this, Kutai Barat district, in the western part of East Kalimantan, still contains 2.4 million hectares of contiguous tropical forest. Yet, a proposal to develop oil palm plantations over some 200,000 hectares presents an imminent threat to these forests. Innovative and quick action is needed to ensure development in the region is sustainable.

¹Rate of deforestation for period 2003 – 2006. Pusat Inventarisasi dan Perpetaan Hutan, Departemen Kehutanan. 2008. Perhitungan Deforestasi Indonesia Tahun 2008. Pusat Inventarisasi dan Perpetaan Hutan, Departemen Kehutanan. 2008: Rekalkulasi Penutupan Lahan Indonesia Tahun 2008. Available at <http://www.dephut.go.id/>

REDD+ - A promising solution?

If forest loss can be halted in Indonesia, not only will a vital part of the Heart of Borneo's rainforests be conserved, but the carbon held in the plants and soil of these forests will remain sequestered – which is key to fighting climate change.

Efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and to conserve, sustainably manage and enhance forest carbon stocks (referred to as REDD+) are underway in Indonesia. REDD+ is a scheme to compensate developing countries for

maintaining and sustainably managing their forests.

WWF is working in Kutai Barat to establish a sub-national model that demonstrates effective involvement of local and indigenous communities in decision making and equitable benefit sharing. WWF is also engaging with a variety of stakeholders, including government, the private sector and civil society, on the development of national REDD+ strategies and methodologies.

Our work in Kutai Barat

For the financial incentives from REDD+ to succeed in keeping forests standing in Indonesia, they must be able to compete with other highly profitable land uses in the region including palm oil plantations, mining, timber and other extractive industries. If these forests are considered valuable – economically, biologically and socially – they stand a much better chance of being maintained and sustainably managed.

WWF is supporting a community forestry concession test case in Kutai Barat. 'Hutan Desa' is a type of forest management recognized in Indonesia's legal forest framework whereby community groups manage and use resources within the forests. In May 2011, the District Forestry Agency accepted WWF's proposal to support the designation of forests under Hutan Desa in 52,000 hectares in the region. Hutan Desa will allow communities to manage these forests. In addition to strengthening land tenure and protecting rights, this program provides opportunities for increased income for the people of Kutai Barat.

Free, prior and informed consent of communities affected by future REDD+ activities in Kutai Barat

must be in place. WWF organized the first-ever workshop on the topic in the village of Linggang Melapeh in May 2011. As a result, the community agreed to allow carbon accounting activities in their forest and to be involved in the process.

WWF is also engaging with timber companies in Kutai Barat to reduce the impact of their logging operations on the region's forests. Through an agreement with the PT Ratah Timber concession, WWF is developing permanent sampling plots to enable carbon accounting.

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, WWF has negotiated a US\$28.5 million debt-for-nature swap between the governments of the United States and Indonesia. The swap is supporting "green" economic growth and community development in three critical districts, including Kutai Barat. Plans include investing in sustainable land-use planning so that palm oil plantations are developed on degraded lands rather than on forested lands, and improved management of protected areas.

Making REDD+ work for people and nature

If we get it right, REDD+ could reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting biodiversity and supporting sustainable development that benefits forest-dwelling communities.

WWF's Forest & Climate Initiative is initiating REDD+ demonstration activities in the world's key forest landscapes, including the Amazon, Borneo and Congo

Basin, by working at scale with communities and governments to test approaches for getting REDD+ right.

We are working to ensure that REDD+ delivers on its promise of maintaining forests for the benefit of people and nature.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/forestclimate

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