

Improving Forest and Land Governance to Protect Forests and Communities in Indonesia



Mining Site in Morowali, Central Sulawesi | (Source: KOMIU)

The Asia Foundation's environmental governance program SETAPAK is working to improve forest and land governance in Indonesia. The program promotes good forest and land governance as fundamental to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring that the benefits of natural resources are distributed sustainably and equitably. The program's first phase ran from 2012 to July 2015, and now continues in its second phase running to March 2020. SETAPAK is funded by the UK Climate Change Unit and is coordinated by the Asia Foundation in Indonesia. Recognizing that good governance is vital for sustainable forest and land management, the SETAPAK program

is working to strengthen government transparency, accountability and law enforcement, and by building civil society capacity and networks. The program takes a collaborative approach to identifying the right individuals, groups and organizations with which to build coalitions, develop partners' capacities for targeted advocacy, and provide targeted support through capacity building and technical assistance. SETAPAK works closely with national and subnational governments, civil society organizations, research institutions, media providers and communities that are concerned about transparent, accountable and participatory governance.



Forest Cover in East Kalimantan

Strengthening Transparency by Accessing Land Permitting and Budget Data

Indonesia's 2008 Freedom of Information Act provides the Indonesian public with the right to unprecedented access to information from government agencies. SETAPAK is assisting local governments with making information on land use and forestry policies available to the public. The program is also helping civil society partners and local community groups obtain information about spatial planning, permitting processes, revenue collection, and expenditures. Partners are supported

Work in Papua and West Papua

The SETAPAK program has begun work in Papua and West Papua where it is partnering with civil society organizations, government, and local and indigenous communities to focus on enhancing transparency and accountability in budget decisions and strengthening policy making and rule of law. Through strategic partnerships, the program is strengthening and consolidating local initiatives that will ensure protection of the region's forests and natural resources and the communities who rely on these sources for their livelihoods.

in the analysis and presentation of data that greatly strengthens advocacy and enables informed public participation in policy debates

Enhancing Rule of Law

Effective rule of law means that land use and forest governance laws are enforced impartially and that sanctions are applied in response to any violations. In order to support enhanced rule of law over forest and land governance, SETAPAK is strengthening civil society capacity to conduct research and investigate legal violations, including cases of corruption, forest fires and the issuance of permits that do not follow relevant procedures and laws. Civil society actors are trained in accessing information and in establishing, strengthening and utilizing mechanisms to report violations where they occur. Training has been provided to the justice sector to enhance impartiality on land use and forestry cases, and to law enforcement bodies to prevent land use and forestry infractions. The program has also supported civil society organizations and local communities in bringing cases to court, and in facilitating formal and informal conflict mediation to protect local and indigenous communities' rights.

Building Civil Society Networks and Capacity

Civil society networks play an important role in building demand for, and instituting, good forest and land governance. The SETAPAK program is fostering collaborations between motivated individuals, groups, organizations and communities – many of which have not previously engaged with forest and land related issues, but who share goals of sustainable development, gender equity and the protection of local and indigenous communities' rights. By bringing together the right people the program has developed coalitions that successfully drive governance reforms in Indonesia. SETAPAK also provides capacity building and ongoing technical assistance to partner organizations to help improve internal management and programmatic work. By strengthening the capacity for civil society to monitor land use and forestry decision making and participate in policy dialogue, SETAPAK is contributing to a vibrant

and sustainable civil society that strives for lasting reform.

Restoring 80,000 ha of forest in Riau

In May 2015, a thick choking smog enveloped Indonesia and neighbouring countries, caused by haze-belching forest fires. At the epicentre of the fires was Riau, a province on the island of Sumatra, where large areas of forests and carbon rich peatlands had been cleared using burning techniques for timber and palm oil plantations. Following their preliminary investigations, SETAPAK local partners Walhi Riau and Jikalahari lobbied the government to work together with them to successfully identify the perpetrators of the forest fires. The government agreed and brought together staff from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the military and national police, Walhi Riau and Jikalahari to form an investigation team. Their investigations have so far confirmed that two timber plantation companies on a total of 84,500 ha of land to the north and west side of the Tesso Nilo National Park have violated forest management laws by using burning practices. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry revoked the timber plantation companies' permits in May 2016, and following lobbying efforts by SETAPAK partners, gave co-management rights over the concession areas to local communities. A dedicated

working group, involving central and sub-national government agencies and SETAPAK partners YMI, Walhi Riau and Jikalahari are working to resolve any further issues regarding illegal land use and to support communities to conduct reforestation and revitalizing ecosystems.

Accessing Permit Information to Monitor Indonesia's Forests

A major issue underlying Indonesia's poor forest governance is a lack of clear, accurate and consistent maps that outline forest cover, land type, and tenure boundaries including local and indigenous communities' tenure claims. Different government agencies issue permits for forestry, plantation, and mining concessions based on conflicting maps. This results in overlapping permits the approval of concessions in forested areas that contravene environmental laws. SETAPAK partner Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI) have used Indonesia's freedom of information laws to request that the national government release data about logging permits, commercial logging plans, and palm oil plantation concessions across Kalimantan. After initial requests for information were not fulfilled, Forest Watch Indonesia pursued information grievances through the Indonesian central information commission, requesting that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and

SETAPAK program achievements

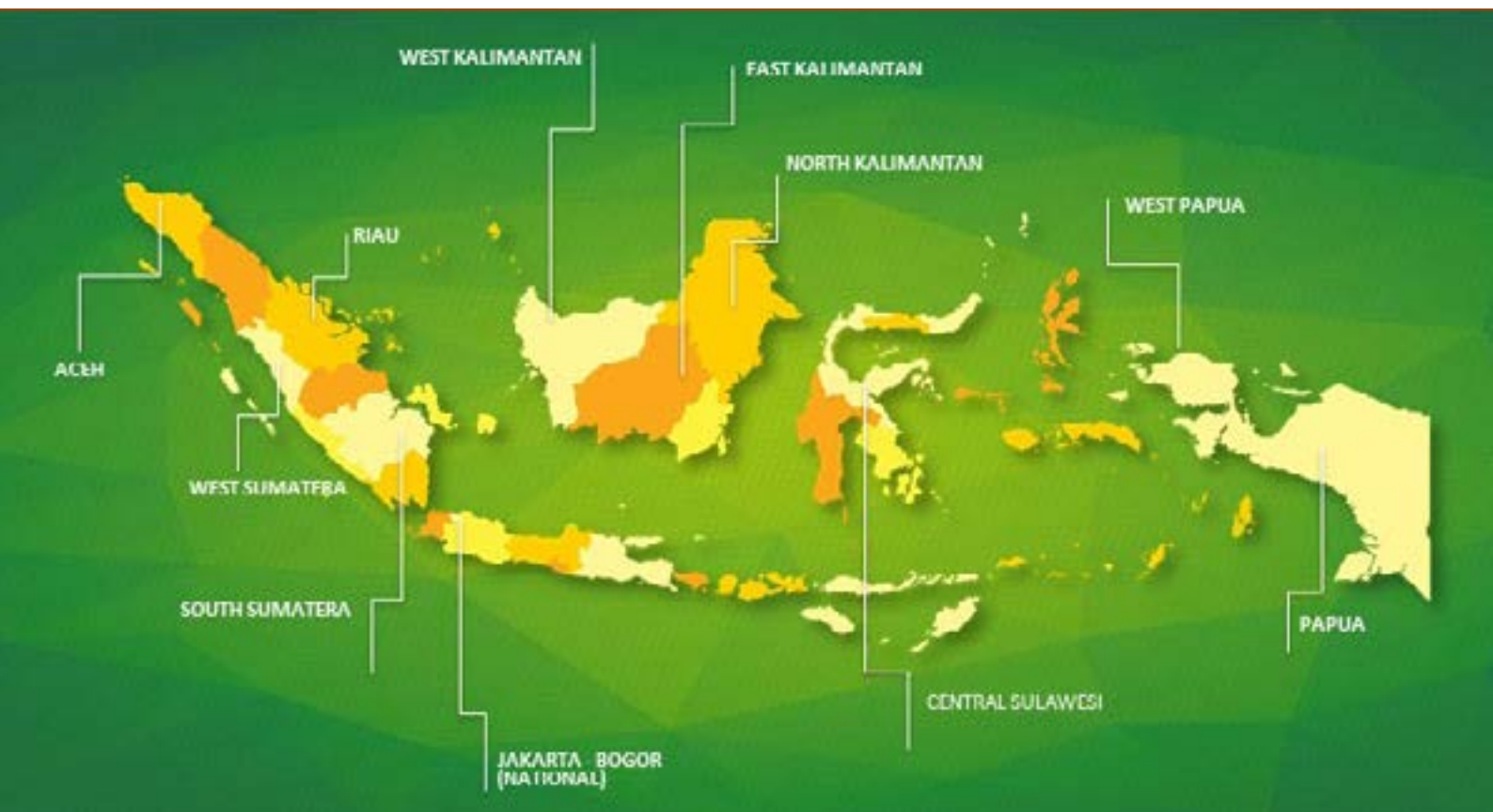
The SETAPAK program has made a significant contribution to improving forest and land governance in Indonesia. The program's work has resulted in the protection of over 4.2 million ha of forest land. Through its partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the program boasts some impressive achievements, including:

- 56 policies relating to sustainable forest and land management have been instituted, including a moratorium on the issuance of new mining permits in the province of Aceh, and the districts of North Aceh and the Mentawai islands, potentially protecting over 3.6 million ha of biodiverse-rich forests.
- The formal recognition of 57 community-managed forests, encompassing a total of 245,848 ha of forests.
- Collaborative monitoring of the mining and plantation sectors, resulting in 547 non-compliant mining permits being revoked or not being extended.

the Ministry of Land and Spatial Planning release the public information. After a lengthy process, in May 2015, the commission ruled that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry was obligated to release the request information, and in July 2016, the commission ruled that the Ministry of Land and Spatial Planning release detailed maps of palm oil concessions for all of

Kalimantan. These rulings set an important precedent for access to public information regarding land use and forestry permitting in Indonesia. The data obtained will enable FWI and other SETAPAK partners to monitor the timber and palm oil sector's compliance with permitting documents, environmental laws and community land boundaries.

SETAPAK 2 Program Locations



The SETAPAK program currently partners with 79 NGO partners across 10 provinces.

The Asia Foundation's SETAPAK program, funded by the UK Climate Change Unit, is focused on improving forest and land governance in Indonesia. As well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate global climate change, the program helps Indonesia's decentralized governance ensure transparency and accountability in the management, protection and distribution of benefits from natural resources with the intention of achieving sustainable economic growth.



The Asia Foundation

