MAINTAINING THE HEART OF BORNEO’S FORESTS FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET
EAST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

The island of Borneo is home to one of the most biodiverse landscapes in the world.

In the Heart of Borneo—a wild, remote region at the island’s core that reaches into the nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei—ancient tropical rainforests support wildlife seen nowhere else on Earth.

Indonesia’s East Kalimantan province is home to about 5.6 million hectares of these vital forests, along with most of the watersheds for the island’s major river systems. They are also home to millions of human inhabitants, including the forest-dwelling Indigenous people known as the Dayak, who depend on the forest’s resources for their lives and livelihoods. But those resources and the unique landscape that holds them are vanishing.

FORESTS UNDER PRESSURE

Indonesia loses thousands of hectares of forest every year, and the region of East Kalimantan is under constant ecological threat.

Nearly half of the region’s forested land has been allocated for development. The specter of deforestation looms as palm oil plantations and unsustainable logging and mining continue to chew away at the island’s natural resources. The impacts of climate change, urban encroachment, fires, and aquaculture also contribute to loss of habitat.

In the face of these devastating forces, Indonesia has worked with WWF and other partners to arrest forest loss by creating incentives for conservation and alternatives to lucrative but destructive practices. In 2009, Indonesia developed a National Action Plan to Address Climate Change, engaging the nation in REDD+ and establishing the Heart of Borneo—and, with it, East Kalimantan—
as a national strategic area. In 2020, Indonesia and the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility signed the Emission Reductions Payment Agreement (ERPA) unlocking more than US$100 million for the nation’s efforts to lower carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.¹

OUR RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN EAST KALIMANTAN

Over more than a decade, WWF has worked with district governments, the private sector, and local and Indigenous communities in East Kalimantan to develop and implement strategies that protect forests while strengthening rights and income opportunities. These have included partnering with timber companies to reduce the impact of their operations, gaining recognition for community forests and forestry, and empowering local communities to define their own vision for green development and support sustainable enterprises that align with that vision.

In our most recent work in East Kalimantan, WWF has focused on building capacities and tools for carbon monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV); supporting green development; and fostering equity.

This work has:

• Created a web-based platform for carbon measurement, monitoring, and reporting (MMR) to support participatory MRV. The goal of this platform was to facilitate integration of community-level, subnational, and national MRV, as well as communication and knowledge exchange among stakeholders across these levels. This work was handed over to the provincial government in March 2021 to continue improving the integration of subnational MMR into national MRV and the national registry system (SRN).

• Contributed and built essential capacities for advancing green development strategies at the local, subnational, and national levels. WWF provided extensive support for the completion and approval of Indonesia’s Emission Reduction Program Document (ERPD) and the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA).² This support came in the form of data and high conservation value (HCV) assessment in consultation with companies and district governments.

WWF also contributed to the development of provincial regulations supporting sustainable palm oil cultivation, requiring companies to perform HCV assessments and keep HCV areas intact.

In addition, WWF helped draft and launch national guidelines for scaling up a pilot program that enabled small, predominantly Dayak communities to select, fund, and oversee conservation and sustainable production activities—essentially defining and actualizing their own visions for green development. The five communities that completed the pilot were empowered to plan, budget for, implement, and evaluate initiatives as diverse as developing a cacao nursery,
improving local infrastructure to better monitor conservation areas, and establishing a sheepfold to use goat excrement as a fertilizer for crops. Now up to 150 villages throughout East Kalimantan stand to engage in the same process as plans to scale up the pilot to the national level were incorporated into the ERPD and ERPA.

- Empowered women to bring their voices and perspectives into the participatory work of green village development. Working with communities in a participatory and inclusive way, WWF helped design a multifaceted training programme to create the opportunities, capacities, and confidence for women to play a more active role in environmental conservation and sustainable development in their villages. Through this programme, approximately 165 women took part in workshops about green village development and benefit-sharing mechanisms, sustainable entrepreneurship, and photography and videography.

The photography/videography workshop series, in particular, equipped the women to not only document their own communities, perspectives, and experiences, but also to acquire the digital literacy skills—such as using cameras and mobile phones—that can expand women’s access to opportunities and information in transformative ways. The process culminated in a photo exhibition held in March 2019, as well as the publication and circulation of a book featuring 300 of the more than 10,000 images the women captured.

Endnotes

3 REDD+ stands for “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation” and seeks to help countries shift to low-emissions development pathways by increasing the value of healthy forests relative to other land uses.
5 Indonesia had proposed an Emission Reductions Program Ideas Note (ER-PIN) for additional support in its forest conservation and green development efforts. An ER-PIN is a proposal to implement a large-scale REDD+ programme with the support of the World Bank-managed Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Once an ER-PIN is approved, the process moves into development of the Emission Reduction Program Document (ERPD) and the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA), both of which also require review, approval and signature before funds are unlocked.