



WWF

FACTSHEET

HoB

2012

# Forest Conversion Mitigation Programme in West Kalimantan



FACTSHEET 13

© West Kalimantan Programme/WWF-Indonesia

Forests provide a wide range of products and benefits for humans and nature and are amongst the world's most diverse and valuable ecosystems. An estimated 1.6 billion people worldwide rely on forests for their livelihoods - 60 million of which are indigenous people depending on forests for their subsistence. Forests also play a critical role in mitigating climate change. Deforestation is the third largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is responsible for around one fifth of overall human induced global carbon emissions. Forest conversion is a large contributor to climate change with high carbon emissions associated with disturbances of carbon-rich soil and burning of biomass from converted land.

Forest conversion involves the replacement of natural forests with other forms of land use. During the last twenty years, nearly one fifth, or 300 million hectares, of tropical forests were converted to non-forest land uses worldwide. The driving forces behind forest conversion are varied and interrelated including non-existent or ineffective land-use planning procedures, poor governance, corruption and weak systems for upholding traditional tenure rights. One key underlying cause of forest conversion is the increasing global demand for agricultural commodities leading to the expansion of the agricultural frontier into forests.

The conversion of forests can result in severe environmental and social costs including loss of biodiversity from destruction and fragmentation of natural habitats, water shortages, loss of natural vegetation, and disregard for the rights and interests of local or indigenous communities. In Indonesia, forest conversion to oil palm plantations has come at a cost. However, palm oil remains critical to both the Indonesian and global economy. According to the Indonesian government, Indonesia produced approximately 19 million tonnes of palm oil in 2008, primarily for export.

## Reversing the trend in deforestation

Significant changes in policy and practice are still needed to protect forests, endangered species and forest dependent people as forest conversion continues to pose a major threat to forests and freshwater ecosystems. Without reversing the current deforestation trend, the lives of endangered species, such as elephants, rhinos, tigers and great apes are threatened. Livelihoods of forest dependent peoples are at risk and global efforts of climate change mitigation are in jeopardy.



© West Kalimantan Programme/WWF-Indonesia

## Eliminating unplanned and damaging conversion of forests

WWF works together with governments, public and private institutions and other partners towards the elimination of unplanned and damaging forms of conversion to safeguard biodiversity and social values. WWF has supported the palm oil industry in adopting and implementing Better Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that conservation and socio-economic benefits are balanced with planned forest conversion. BMPs exclude converting land with high conservation value and critical carbon storage. BMPs encourage respecting indigenous rights of local communities, conducting independent environmental and social impact assessments, and multi-stakeholder agreements of the areas that are to be excluded from conversion and maintained as a permanent forest estate.

Globally, WWF works to promote sustainable palm oil through the Forest Conversion Programme (FCP) to ensure forests with high conservation value (HCV) are not threatened by the expansion of palm oil. WWF opposes the indiscriminate conversion of natural ecosystems with high conservation values and critical carbon storage functions to plantations, croplands, pastures, urban settlements and other land-uses.

Through the FCP programme, WWF works with governments, companies, financial institutions and civil society organizations to:

- Develop and promote adoption of policies and practices consistent with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO);
- Engage with financial institutions and market actors in forest conservation to lobby for the elimination of policy incentives that contribute to forest conversion and destruction;
- Facilitate transparent planning processes to achieve optimal distribution of natural forests, plantations, agricultural areas, urban areas and other land-uses in a given landscape. This process requires well-informed negotiations among a wide range of stakeholders to balance ecological, social and economic dimensions of natural resource use across the landscape; and
- Enforce adequate safeguards that recognize and guarantee the legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples and rural populations to own, use and manage their lands and resources.



© West Kalimantan Programme/WWF-Indonesia

### Key achievements so far

- WWF supports the growth of sustainable palm oil (SPO) within the RSPO standard; and
- Development of the Green Business Network to engage companies in the Heart of Borneo region toward sustainable palm oil practices.

### Future plans:

WWF-Indonesia has a national target to save 100,000 ha of HCV forest from conversion to palm oil by 2013. This target will be achieved as RSPO standards are mainstreamed by the palm oil industry in Indonesia.

	<p><b>Why we are here</b> To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. <a href="http://www.panda.org">http://www.panda.org</a></p>
--	--

#### For more information, please contact

Chris Greenwood  
International Communications Manager  
Heart of Borneo Initiative  
Email: [cgreenwood@wwf.org.my](mailto:cgreenwood@wwf.org.my)

M. Hermayani Putera  
WWF-Indonesia  
West Kalimantan Programme  
E-mail: [hputera@wwf.or.id](mailto:hputera@wwf.or.id)

## Towards a Greener HoB

The Forest Conversion Programme is critical to the Heart of Borneo. With more oil palm in West Kalimantan than any other province within the Heart of Borneo, implementing Better Management Practices in forest conversion and applying RSPO standards ensures a balance between socio-economic benefits and conservation.