

Realising community-based forest monitoring in support of community livelihoods, forest sector reforms and effective implementation of legal and voluntary standards (2014-2016)

Report from the Project's Global Monitoring & Evaluation Meeting

9-11 February 2017 in Pekanbaru, Indonesia



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1. Introduction

Project title

Community-based Forest Monitoring in Support of Community Livelihoods, Forest Sector Reforms and Effective Implementation of Legal and Voluntary Standards on Human Rights and Sustainable Commodity Production

Project duration

Start: 17/02/2014 **End:** 31/03/2018

Funding amount

£ 3,679,103

Countries/ Arenas

Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Guyana, Indonesia, Global/International policy spaces on forests, climate change, tenure governance and human rights

Main grant holder

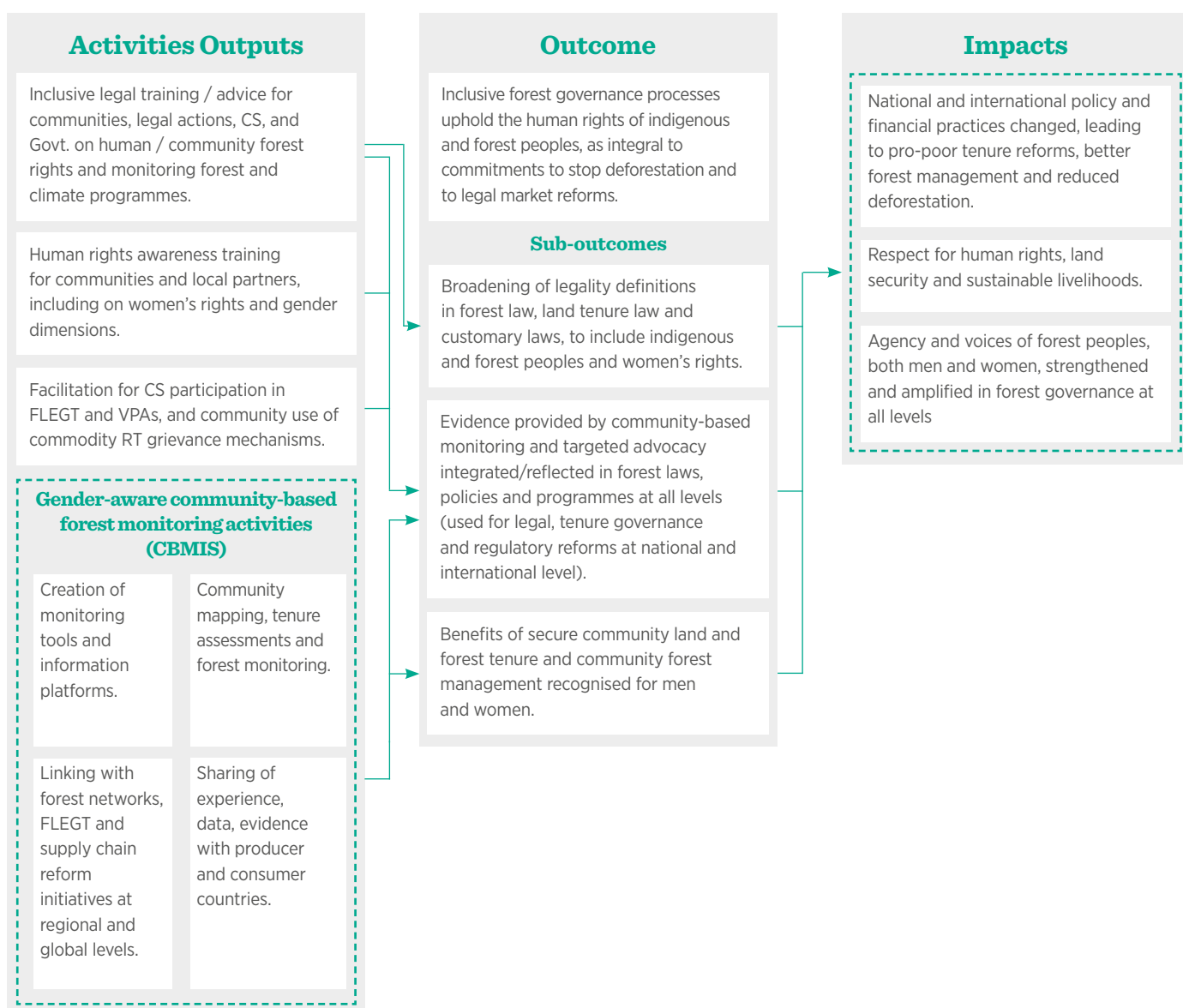
Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)

Project Partners

Okani, (Cameroon)
DGPA, RRN (DRC)
APA, SCPDA (Guyana)
HaRI, Pusaka, ScaleUp, Link-Ar Borneo (Indonesia)

The Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (FGMC) programme is DFID's flagship global programme on forests, with an approved budget for the 10-year period 2011-21, of up to £250 million funded from the UK's International Climate Fund (ICF). The programme aims to promote momentum for positive change and reform in the forest sector and commodity supply chains in favour of greater recognition and respect of forest peoples' rights and more effective local and global actions to tackle weak forest governance and deforestation.

In support of this goal, the FGMC programme provided funding to FPP and partners to implement the project Community-based Forest Monitoring in Support of Community Livelihoods, Forest Sector Reforms and Effective Implementation of Legal and Voluntary Standards on Human Rights and Sustainable Commodity Production (see project details in box above and the project's theory of change on the next page).



Implementation assumptions:

- Gender-aware community-based monitoring leads to more accurate analysis of causes, scale and livelihood impacts of deforestation on collective and individual rights of men and women
- Raised awareness of collective and individual human rights and community forest rights allows communities, both men and women to contribute to deliverable processes
- Evidence-based testimony results in government and international actors giving more weight to the need to secure community tenure and increase forest peoples' role in forest management, including women.

Development hypothesis:

- Cumulative effects of sustained advocacy will lead to behavioral change and policy change in international financial institutions
- Better engagement between governments and community organisations will lead to better adherence to human rights treaties and conventions



Participants of the Guyanese in-country evaluation workshop in preparation for the global meeting (© Tom Griffiths)

Following several in-country monitoring and evaluation activities, FPP organised a three-day global Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) meeting in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, from 9 to 11 February 2017. This meeting brought together representatives of in-country partners and FPP staff, (25 people in total: 16 men, 8 women) with the aims of:

- Assessing project progress to date;
- Identifying and learning from successes, gaps and failures;
- Reviewing targets and plans to be met by the project end (March 2018);
- Feeding into the development of medium-term and long-term strategies post 2018;
- Improving effectiveness and efficiency in promoting high level project goals and achieving specific project outputs and outcomes in each country and globally.
- Refine project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches and frameworks used in this and other projects

In preparation of the global M&E meeting, the respective country teams (FPP staff and partners) carried out country-level M&E processes, drawing directly on the project's logical framework for 2014-16 for each country and for the overall project, enabling a detailed analysis of the country-level targets, milestones and project progress and updating of the country specific monitoring frameworks.

The first two days of the global M&E meeting focused on sharing and discussing country progress assessments (see Section 2), international-level work (see Section 3) and progress on tools for community-based forest monitoring (Section 4). On the third day, the meeting participants travelled to communities impacted by industrial tree and palm oil plantations to investigate the situation, and released the Pekanbaru resolution (see Section 5 and Annex 1). Concrete proposals were put forward for how monitoring and evaluation could further be improved (see Section 6). During these three days of fruitful discussions important lessons learnt were identified, which fed into key considerations for the next project phase (see Section 7).



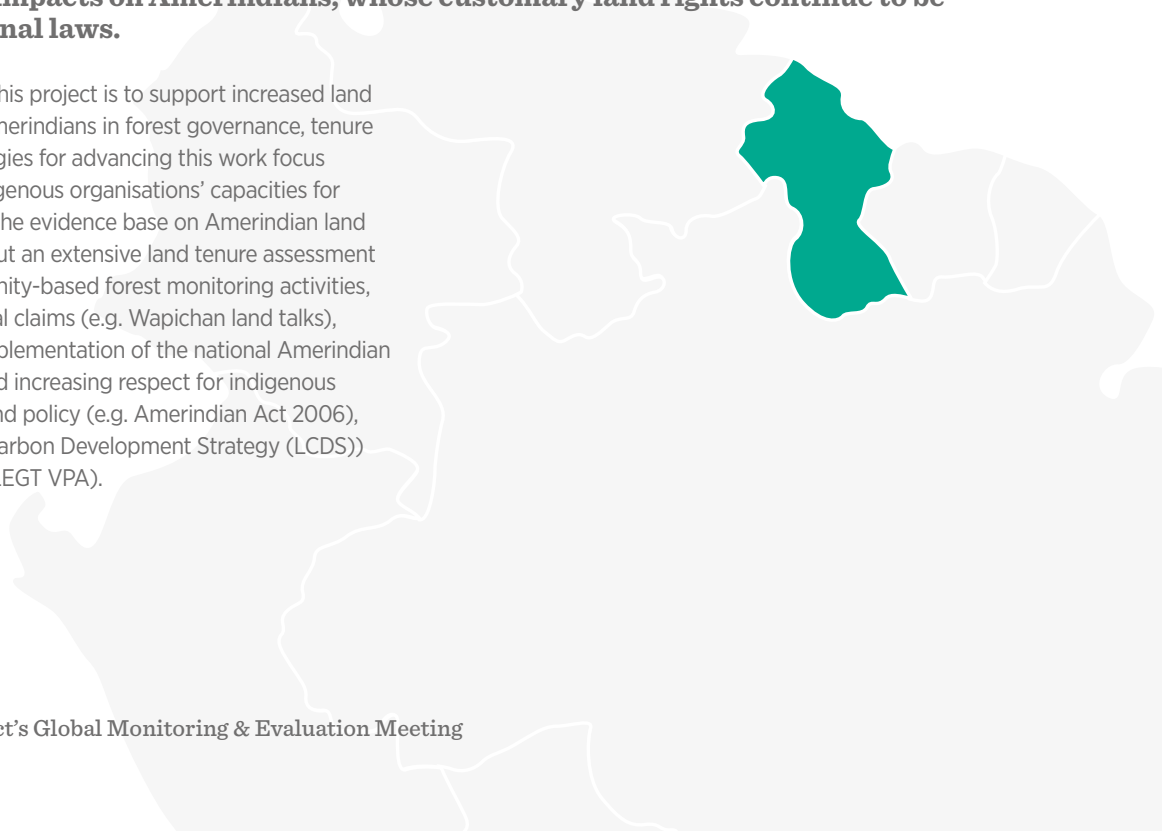
Residents of Yarashima, Guyana (© Tom Griffiths)

2. Evaluation of country-level work

Guyana

In Guyana, tropical forests cover around 85% of the country and are home to several indigenous groups numbering over 70,000 people, called Amerindians. While deforestation is currently comparatively low, the trends are increasing, driven mainly by the logging and mining sectors. This has significant impacts on Amerindians, whose customary land rights continue to be disregarded by national laws.

The overarching goal under this project is to support increased land and livelihood security for Amerindians in forest governance, tenure and legal reforms. Key strategies for advancing this work focus on building villages' and indigenous organisations' capacities for effective advocacy, building the evidence base on Amerindian land tenure security by carrying out an extensive land tenure assessment (LTA), strengthening community-based forest monitoring activities, supporting concrete territorial claims (e.g. Wapichan land talks), improving the design and implementation of the national Amerindian Land titling project (ALT), and increasing respect for indigenous rights in national laws and land policy (e.g. Amerindian Act 2006), policies (e.g. Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)) and trade regulations (e.g. FLEGT VPA).



Key project achievements April 2014 - December 2016

- Land tenure action research in Regions 1, 2 and 8, field workshops and innovative video and training materials have raised awareness and understanding at the village level of indigenous peoples' rights, the FLEGT process and other relevant national initiatives, leading to increased village mobilisation and renewed assertion of customary rights.
- The Wapichan people in Guyana are successfully carrying out community-based forest monitoring with the help of smartphones and drones, enabling them to challenge illegal activities and external threats to their lands.
- Major innovative work has been completed with Wapichan local monitors and project partners Digital Democracy and Soltertium since 2014 in developing an off-line mapping platform to host community monitoring data (Map Filter I and Map Filter II) alongside an accessible off-line web platform tool called Community Lands (see <http://www.communitylands.org/>) and a monitoring information database (Tizi Tizi).
- In 2016, the new monitoring set up has allowed the Wapichan organisation to print off monitoring reports locally using their own self-contained monitoring unit (phones with Geo ODK bespoke forms, lap tops, database (Tizi Tizi) and reporting form templates, printer).
- These innovations have now been successfully scaled up and transferred to FPP and partner work in Cameroon (see p.12) and are also generating much interest for further take up by indigenous peoples in other regions in Guyana.
- Government organisations have started to act on reports coming out of the monitoring trips and the police and army are now seeking information from the District Council in order to assist in monitoring the border and Wapichan lands and forests.
- In recognition of the Wapichan community organisations outstanding achievements, they won the UNDP's prestigious Equator Prize, which they received at the UNFCCC Summit in Paris in December 2015.
- In April 2016 the government signed a formal terms of reference for bilateral talks with the South Rupununi District Council to finally and fairly deal with the Wapichan outstanding land claim (these formal land talks are the first of their kind in Guyana).
- The ALT Project was finally reviewed in 2015 to address serious safeguard gaps highlighted through joint advocacy under this project, and a detailed project implementation guideline was adopted by the project to ensure fair and transparent titling procedures and respect for free, prior and informed consent (in April 2017).
- Some large-scale timber concessions and destructive logging operations have been suspended and annulled by the Guyana Forestry Commission in 2016 (e.g. Bai Shan Lin) due to irregularities in concession contracts and legal infractions. Other large concessions have not been renewed by timber companies (e.g. Barama). These positive changes are a result of joint advocacy by the APA, FPP and other international allies.
- Multiple public commitments have been made by the President and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MIPA) to amend the 2006 Amerindian Act through a consultative process, but follow-up engagement will be crucial to concretise next steps (still pending in 2017).
- The need to address land tenure in national climate policies including the LCDS has been recognised by the government of Guyana and Norway (funder of the LCDS) and also in the recently adopted 2017 "Framework of the Guyana Green State Development Strategy and Financing Mechanisms" developed by the government and UNEP.
- Government discourse and individualistic land titling framework on state land is being increasingly questioned by the villages that have taken part in the LTA. The action research has empowered indigenous peoples who are now reinvigorating collective organisation and seeking joint collective titles over their forests and territory (e.g. in Regions 9, 8 and 7).
- The LTA research has generated extensive evidence to assist the government, UNDP and Villages in compiling land tenure investigations prior to land titling as required by the law and the new ALT guidelines.

What has worked well

Close project engagement with Amerindian villagers (often using local languages), participatory action research and supporting collective land discussions and collective decision-making have been highly effective in mobilising grassroots momentum calling for tenure reform, communal territorial rights, while at the same time contributing to the revival of District Councils. This has strengthened villages' ability to speak with a common voice to demand respect for their rights, including land rights and FPIC.

Sustained and joint advocacy in coordination with communities and international allies has also worked very well and delivered significant gains such as impeding the renewal of highly problematic forestry concessions and contributed to breaking government deadlocks that have existed for decades.

Community-based monitoring and mapping work has worked well to give momentum to land claims. The Wapichan Land Talks supported by this project and receiving legal guidance can become a model for dealing with collective land claims in Guyana.

Challenges

Ongoing and constant political interferences and manipulations aiming to divide villages and indigenous organisations remain a challenge. In particular, the partially co-opted National Toshias' Council has represented a major blockage to urgently needed reforms. Also the government of Guyana and key international organisations have appeared unwilling to defend and promote indigenous positions on their human rights and right to FPIC, as their primary interests seem to be the promotion of business and trade. For example, European Union representatives keep to the highly problematic position that 'tenure rights' cannot be directly addressed in vpas, despite numerous APA submissions to the FLEGT process. At the end of 2016, the draft legality definition for the VPAs still lacked effective protections for indigenous peoples' customary land rights outside their existing (restricted) land title boundaries leaving community forests open to allocation to third parties as timber concessions.

Poor information disclosure by government agencies, including the refusal to hand over land title maps, and incomplete or inaccurate information on the government's official land administration digital database (e.g. Missing concession and land title data) are also major obstacles.

Concerning independent community-based land use and forest monitoring, communities need to work on clarifying rules and agreements on decision-making and actions on monitoring reports, including publishing monitoring evidence. Limited resources for regular outreach and follow-up activities in the communities have also been a challenge for consolidating the gains made in the project to date. In short, local organisations and collective bodies often lack administrative and project support staff to follow through on agreements with government and between villages. At the same time, local partners note that technical support for the monitoring work is also dependent on infrequent visits by international allies (once or twice a year), meaning technical obstacles can take a significant amount of time to resolve.

Lessons learnt and looking ahead

One of the main lessons learnt in Guyana is that strategic follow-up actions will be crucial to consolidate the gains made through this project to date. Further strengthening community-based monitoring and action research will be essential to continue challenging land tenure insecurity, illegal activities and concessions imposed on Amerindian's customary lands, while generating extensive bottom-up evidence highlighting the need for legal reforms. The Guyana in-country evaluation preceding the global meeting was very useful and there is an interest to improve monitoring and evaluation of the project activities to make it more systematic and organised.

Several strategic opportunities arose in 2017 and beyond to push for major outcomes, such as the government of Guyana's commitments to legal reform, and the official reform of the concession system currently underway. Targeted actions are also needed to focus on securing proper protections for FPIC over customary lands, which still have not been secured in Guyana's laws and are still missing in the draft VPA (see above). If indigenous peoples' demands continue to be disregarded, local partners and community leaders consider that taking global actions will be necessary to target the FLEGT-VPA process, such as high-level EU/UK visits by and indigenous delegation and/or via formal complaints against the EU.

Wapichan forest monitors in Guyana use smartphones and other data collection tools to monitor ecosystem health, land use change and external threats with the aim of ensuring sustainable use and management of their forests (© Tom Griffiths)





Meeting participants travelled to communities impacted by industrial tree and palm oil plantations to investigate the situation (© Jake Willis)

Indonesia

In Indonesia, FPP works with 30 partners in 10 provinces, with the aim of increasing land and livelihood security for Indonesia's 80 million forest peoples. Illegal and below standard expansion of the pulpwood and oil palm sectors continues to drive deforestation, land use emissions, rights violations and impoverishment.

While the government has frozen the hand out of more concessions for palm, only about 22% of operators are currently compliant with the national 'Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil' (ISPO) standard, which in itself only offers weak protection of community land rights.

Project activities focus on increasing Indonesian forest peoples' participation in key national and international meetings, supporting the implementation of effective community-based monitoring systems, pushing for land rights recognition in statutory laws, strengthening procedures for recognising customary territories as well as challenging illegal logging and human rights violations linked to plantations through filing of complaints, and strengthening of the FSC, RSPO and ISPO complaints systems.

Key project achievements April 2014 - December 2016

- Community monitoring of palm oil operators with NGO assistance is being actively undertaken in West Kalimantan, Papua and West Papua. In Riau and Jambi, community and NGO monitoring of pulpwood operators has been successful.
- Participatory mapping activities have led to immediate application in community land use plans and engagement with local governments. Community-Based Monitoring and Information Systems (CBMIS) and Community Land Use Planning tools have been piloted in West Kalimantan and are now being further piloted in South Sumatra.
- The findings from field reviews and community monitoring are affecting national debates about sustainable commodity production and have influenced national debates about deforestation but are not (yet) being taken into account in official Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV).

- Legality assessments have been carried out in West Kalimantan and West Sumatra concerning the extent to which the legality definition and SVLK (Indonesia's timber legality assurance system) protect customary rights.
- FPP engaged with the national interpretation of the RSPO standard for Indonesia, which was adopted in August 2016 subject to a legal review of how to secure customary rights, HCV set asides and assure FPIC.
- FPP assisted local NGOs to file new complaints against several companies in violation of RSPO standards and had several meetings with RSPO Complaints Panel to encourage more rigour in enforcement.
- FPP lawyers prepared a case for ILO under Convention No. 111 which helped push the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to excise the communities' lands from the concession of Toba Pulp Lestari.
- Southeast Asia Regional conference was held on making human rights obligations binding on agribusiness with the regional human rights commissions. They issued a call for a moratorium on more concessions until indigenous peoples' and community land rights are secured

What has worked well

Civil society support and access to new technologies have worked well to strengthen indigenous peoples' own efforts and have led to transformative changes of the indigenous movement. Also community-based mapping and monitoring have played an important role in mobilising communities. This growing global network has been effective in alerting once isolated indigenous communities to their shared struggle and to their rights. It has led to businesses becoming more accountable.

Legal reviews have worked very well to highlight the need for revising the SVLK's legality definitions, which do not respect communities' customary laws, and the need for changes in relevant laws as studies carried out under this project confirmed that much forest loss is 'legal'.

Challenges

The weak performance of certification bodies continues to be a challenge. At the same time, businesses have become more directly manipulative of indigenous leaders, usually men. With indigenous leaders being co-opted the importance of indigenous women and youth being mobilised has become all the more important. Strengthening women's engagement in this work has been challenging for cultural reasons. Another challenge has been that legal compliance is not really amenable to community assessment, highlighting the need for NGO and legal support.

It was also found that written materials are not as effective as face to face meetings as local cultures are mainly oral and more efforts will be made to produce non-written materials.

Lessons learnt and looking ahead

Several key lessons have been learned. Firstly, social media and conventional media are more effective than Indonesian language reports. Indonesian language reports get less response from industry than the same reports when published on English language websites, showing how companies respond more to international market and reputational pressure than national exposure. Secondly, working in joint teams involving both strong local organisations and NGO partners is more effective than only local teams, as this approach can provide crucial advocacy and communications support.

Looking ahead, several strategic opportunities have emerged to secure communities' land rights thanks to long-term joint advocacy. The Indonesian government has adopted a target to allocate 12.7 million hectares of forests to community management and to indigenous peoples and 9 million hectares of land to agrarian reform. In addition 1.5 million hectares, of peat swamp are to be restored. Furthermore, a new law allows communal rights to be recognised in forests and plantations. Engaging in these processes will be crucial to build on the achievements made under this project to date.





Bagyeli women are engaging in community-based monitoring (© Viola Belohrad)

Cameroon

In Cameroon, FPP’s main partner is Association Okani, which is supporting indigenous Baka and Bagyeli (“Pygmies”) communities. Under Cameroonian law there is currently no legal mechanism for collective land tenure and the proposed forestry and tenure reform has been stalled for several years, leaving communities vulnerable to takeover of their lands. Cameroon’s ambitious ‘Vision 2035’, which aims to stimulate export-led economic growth in mineral, agricultural and timber commodities, is set to further increase threats to communities’ lands.

Under this project, Association Okani and FPP’s strategy focuses on increasing communities’ land tenure security through strengthening self-elected representative structures in Baka and Bagyeli communities, facilitating dialogues between communities and companies or conservation organisations, training community members in using community-based monitoring tools to document what is happening on their lands and in feeding monitoring findings into relevant national or international processes, and supporting communities to obtain fixed term community forestry titles. Capacity-building for Okani in mapping and monitoring as well as organisational development is also a key aspect of the project’s strategy.

Key project achievements April 2014 - December 2016

- Self-representation of Baka and Bagyeli has been significantly strengthened and the Gbabandi platform has been successfully established, making it the first national-level forest peoples’ platform in francophone Africa.
- Okani’s and FPP’s field investigation into transparency in the forest sector (as required in the Cameroonian VPA’s ‘Transparency Annex’) involving regular community meetings in the Océan Department and requests for information, evidenced the significant challenges faced concerning access to information.

- Participatory mapping has evidenced how communities' customary lands (including their farms, sacred sites, medicinal plants hunting zones etc.) are overlapped by concessions. FPP and partners have also fed into the development of a government accepted methodology for participatory mapping, which is set to enhance government recognition of community generated maps.
- The community-based monitoring tools have enabled communities to document the violations of their rights. For example, field interviews and reports have been essential in documenting the continued human rights violations committed by ecoguards.
- Massive planned agribusiness land grab in the Biopalm area in the Department of Océan area has been successfully prevented to date, but despite the expiration of the provisional concession in 2015 the threat of Biopalm is still present.
- Significant progress has been made in obtaining community forestry titles in the Department of Océan and the community forestry committees include good representation of Bagyeli and women.
- The government increasingly recognises communities as key actors in forest management.
- Significant improvements in exchanges and dialogues between the government, civil society, forestry companies and communities.

What has worked well

Capacity building in the communities has worked well to raise communities' awareness of their rights and enabled them to take actions to secure their lands. Holding separate and joint meetings between indigenous and Bantu communities has allowed to start breaking through discriminatory patterns and identifying common ground to work together (e.g. joint advocacy to challenge agribusiness land grab). While Bagyeli/Baka only meetings are essential for raising sensitive issues, facilitating joint meetings have been effective in building the Baka's and Bagyeli's confidence in making their voices heard and start addressing the on-going discrimination.

Community-based mapping and monitoring have also been essential in mobilising communities to challenge external takeovers of community lands.

Challenges

Despite the VPA's 'Transparency Annex' access to information remains a major challenge for communities and organisations supporting them. Even where efforts are made to increase transparency, the government's narrow understanding of transparency continues to be an issue (e.g. listing concessions granted but not how they were granted).

Another challenge is the prevalence of illegality in the forestry sector. Though around 27 companies were temporarily suspended in 2016 by the Ministry of Forestry as it tries to demonstrate its commitment to the VPA, private sector insiders estimate that all logging companies in Cameroon currently operate illegally.

The divided and competitive nature of the CSO landscape in Cameroon also poses challenges concerning joint advocacy and information exchanges needed for achieving major national-level outcomes.

Another challenge has been that the Cameroon specific objectives of this project were not clearly defined. In addition, much of the DFID FGMC funds serve as co-financing of other activities, which makes it challenging in terms of reporting. For the next phase of the project there is a need to clearly define the project activities and set out from the beginning what kind of project impacts are intended. Having a focal point for the DFID FGMC project within Association Okani would also be important.

Lessons learnt and looking ahead

Further capacity building will be crucial to build on gains made to date. More specifically, there is a need for more advocacy training, legal training and financial training. Community-based mapping and monitoring has been very successful in mobilising communities to take actions to increase their land tenure security, and continuing reinforcing training in mapping and monitoring will be very important.

Looking ahead to the next phase of the project, Association Okani would like to strengthen their strategic approach, more clearly defining the impacts sought and developing a strong logical framework. Some of the key priority actions for 2017-2018 are: rolling out the use of CBMIS tools to 25 communities in 3 zones with the aim of enhancing internal community governance; developing long format monitoring to provide more detailed records of rights violations; increase engagement with FSC, national parks and safaris; enhance national-level advocacy through building the capacity of the Gbabandi platform.



Community members in Cameroon use community-based monitoring to document and challenge illegal logging (© Viola Belohrad)

Democratic Republic of Congo

In DRC, FPP works with six partner organisations across a huge country, encompassing over 150 million hectares of forest and over 80 million people. While about 70% of DRC's forests are owned under customary tenure regimes, to date there is no legal recognition of any community owned or managed forests. About 50% of the timber traded is estimated to be illegal and violations of community rights are widespread.

A core aspect of FPP and partners' strategy in DRC is to take advantage of current opportunities to push for better recognition of community rights in land and forest sector policies (e.g. new draft Forest Decree, land reform process, Decree on Community Forestry). Another focus is on building communities' capacity to monitor and engage in initiatives affecting their rights.

Key project achievements April 2014 - December 2016

- Development and field testing of a methodological guide on FPIC, promoting FPIC in government policies.
- Development of a guide for paralegals and a guide for monitoring of human rights violations.
- Publication of a study looking at drivers of deforestation and community rights in DRC.
- Several participatory community maps have been produced and used for advocacy (e.g. map of the Makiobo-Nzazi customary lands). The community maps also play a major role in securing community forestry titles (CFCL).
- Community-based monitoring is active in several communities, accompanied by paralegals. In Thieфу, community-based monitoring of the forests has been successful in denouncing illegal artisanal logging and remove illegal loggers from the forest. Information coming

out of community-based monitoring systems has fed into several reports evaluating legality in timber supply chains and influenced statistics and diagnostics on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

- Inputs into the FLEGT-VPA legality definition and roadmap.
- Successfully challenged several imposed protected areas which have led to forest peoples being harmed and even killed.
- Initiation of the Whakatane Mechanism to resolve conflicts in Kahuzi-Biega.
- Opening of dialogue space between indigenous communities and the pilot REDD+ project to ensure that indigenous communities are involved in the project implementation (CAMV).
- Successful joint advocacy leading to:
 - Creation of provincial advisory councils on forests;
 - Progress on drafting a law on indigenous peoples;
 - Adoption of Decree 014, defining the modalities of assigning forestry concessions to local communities;
 - Adoption of Decree 025 including specific provisions concerning the management and exploitation of forestry concessions of local communities;
 - Annulation of Decrees 049 and 050 on the exploitation of lumber.

What has worked well

Network and relationship building among partners has worked very well to facilitate strategic and joint advocacy leading to major gains in securing communities' rights in land and forest policies. FPP has played an important role in both engaging in high-level political dialogues and in community level work and making sure that communities' voices are respected in key decisions. FPP's engagement has also been important to ensure that government documents are made more accessible to facilitate understanding at the community level.

Communications work has been very effective in highlighting key issues in social networks, the media, radio and TV, ensuring that addressing communities' rights in forest and land policies remains a key priority.

Challenges

Limited community capacity and poverty continue to constrain community mobilisation. A core challenge is also how to address injustices in customary land laws in national laws, such as the lack of women's rights to land. Furthermore, the Ministerial Decrees 049 and 050 illustrate the continued efforts to by-pass the moratorium on forestry concessions and continue to pursue industrial timber exploitation in the disguise of artisanal logging. At the same time, government organisations continue to base their policies on a flawed understanding of the drivers of deforestation, further undermining communities' rights to their forests.

Another challenge are the electoral issues, which have affected the progress of the land reform and caused political tensions. There is a need to adjust and restart advocacy after the administration change.

Lessons learnt and looking ahead

Given the different contexts of project partners, different monitoring tools have been used by communities. Looking ahead, it would be useful to have a multilingual platform to improve sharing of experiences across FPP partners. Another lesson learnt is that engaging government in strategic advocacy is essential to achieve success both at the local and national level and avoid that government officials feel threatened.

The next years will be crucial to build on the achievements under this project to secure communities' rights in land and forest policies. Going forward, a key priority will be consolidating FPP's and partners' national-level work, building on what has worked well at the local level.

3. Evaluation of international-level work

Feeding local and national level work into relevant international processes and using international processes to enforce and defend forest peoples' rights are other core aspects of this project. The strategy for international-level work focuses on pushing for recognition of forest peoples' rights through supporting forest peoples' engagement and influencing of processes and networks related to FLEGT, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as multi-stakeholder standard setting on supply chains (e.g. RSPO, HCV) and zero deforestation commitments (HCS).

Key project achievements April 2014 - December 2016

- FPP facilitated a tour of indigenous, community and NGO leaders to provide testimonies of impacts of palm oil supply chains on communities, their lands and forests in a hearing of the European Parliament. FPP also gave expert testimony to a hearing of the European Parliament feeding into the development of a report calling on the European Commission to move decisively towards the responsible cultivation of palm oil and to phase out its use of biofuels (adopted by the European Parliament in April 2017).
- FPP supported the effective participation and engagement of forest peoples' representatives in key international processes, enabling feeding community-based monitoring findings into processes around the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The important role of community-based monitoring in the follow-up and review processes to track national and local implementation of these global targets was underlined, including the use of indicators relevant for indigenous peoples. The Indigenous Navigator, a human rights monitoring tool for communities to assess outcomes arising from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Sustainable Development Goals was elaborated with diverse partners composed of international, national and community organisations.
- As a result of sustained input and advocacy by FPP local partners, in collaboration with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (CBD COP12), held in November 2014 in South Korea, adopted the Global Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use, a tool that can be used at the national and local level to secure recognition and support for customary sustainable practices and customary rights in all ecosystems, including forests.
- The Local Biodiversity Outlooks publication co-authored with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and the Secretariat of the CBD was launched at CBD COP13 in December 2016. It showcased some of the CBMIS work funded by this project (especially in Guyana and Indonesia) and highlighted the important role community-based monitoring plays in forest conservation and sustainable use and in contributing to the achievement of the targets under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It was well received by the Convention and is available at www.localbiodiversityoutlooks.net.
- FPP's review and rights-based analysis of EU FLEGT VPAs revealed that across the board VPAs do not require the incorporation of human rights laws (and more specifically, laws governing the fundamental question of community tenure in forest areas). The findings have fed into joint advocacy at the European level to push for better recognition of human rights in VPAs.
- FPP actively engaged with the RSPO's Dispute Settlement Facility to strengthen the terms of reference for mediation. Following the passing of FPP's 6(h) 2015 resolution at RSPO, which calls for more rigorous audits, assessments, and oversight of New Planting Procedure (NPP). FPP has also been actively participating in the Quality Assurance Task Force. FPP also secured a further resolution in 2016 which calls for RSPO to urgently adopt a protocol to protect complainants, whistleblowers, community spokespersons and human rights defenders.

Looking ahead

The next years will focus on national implementations of several key global agreements. Strategic follow-up actions will be crucial to translate major international level achievements into concrete improvements for communities on the ground. At the same time, indigenous issues and disaggregating data are important emerging themes in global and national social statistics and community-based monitoring has an important role to play. During 2018-2020, FPP and local partners also plan to engage in the development of the post-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity to ensure that forest peoples' rights and community monitoring are included (as much as possible) in the biodiversity agenda for the post-2020 period.

Many governments are now in the process of adopting national strategies and actions plans based on global goals and targets and there is a need to ensure that these national strategies and reporting include indigenous peoples and local communities. A core area for engagement will be the national-level implementation of the SDGs, several of which are of great relevance for indigenous peoples and call for improved land tenure security (e.g. SDG 1.4.2; SDG 2.3.). Concerted actions will also be needed to ensure that national REDD+ projects and systems for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) include forest peoples and uphold their rights and that indigenous peoples and local communities effectively participate in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and in CBD national reporting.

Strengthening networks of forest peoples engaged in CBMIS will be important to enhance knowledge exchanges, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of carrying out community-based monitoring and to strengthen using CBMIS in strategic and joint advocacy at all levels.

4. Progress and plans for community-based forest monitoring

Community-based forest monitoring is an essential component of this project as it allows communities to generate evidence on what is happening in their forests, which can then be used for targeted advocacy to influence forest laws, policies and programmes at all levels, highlighting the need for secure community forest tenure and recognition of community forest management. This project has both funded the development of community forest tools and the piloting and consolidation of community-based forest monitoring activities.

Key project achievements April 2014 - December 2016

- Advances and innovations stemming from work with the Wapichan people in Southwest Guyana (see pp.6-7), have been effective in adapting and consolidating the Mapfilter and related tools to enable communities to generate monitoring reports offline (piloted in Guyana and also in Cameroon)
- Expansion of the Mapfilter functionality by developing a website manager functionality, which allows communities to publish their monitoring findings on their own website, due to be finalised in 2017 with the Wapichan villages and community organisations. The websites will be editable offline and easy to manipulate to allow communities to manage their own websites and directly communicate what is happening in their forests.
- Initial piloting of an online platform called Community Lands, a specialised content management and mapping framework to help indigenous peoples capture and tell the story of their lands on the world stage
- Community mapping of customary lands in all countries
- Community-based forest monitoring successfully under way in the Wapichan territory: successful monitoring of mining activities on Wapichan traditional lands has led to concrete actions of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (e.g. seizure of equipment, miners being charged – though miners have been displaced to other mining fields where deforestation and pollution are taking place). The Wapichan monitoring teams have also monitored illegal border crossings by illegal miners, poachers and Brazilian cattle rustlers and sent reports to the government authorities. Also the police have been supportive of the Wapichan community-based monitoring and inquired about the monitoring of the illegal border crossings.
- Piloting and adaptation of the Mapfilter tool in Cameroon, with encouraging initial results and strong community motivation. The monitoring tools have allowed communities to immediately see whether monitoring observations, such as logging activities, have taken place inside or outside of a concession area.

What has worked well

Mapfilter and related tools have worked very well in empowering indigenous peoples and local communities to collect evidence on what is happening in their forests, giving them ownership over the whole community-based forest monitoring process. In the past, GIS experts were needed to generate these kinds of reports, but with this tool the whole monitoring process is in the hands of the communities. These tools have been effective in reinforcing the mobilisation of people and have a strong internal value as well as gaining traction externally. As one young Wapichan woman explained in the evaluation: “the monitoring reports and pictures have really opened the eyes of all of our communities to what is happening in our forests”

Once the smartphones are properly set-up for monitoring, they have usually proven to be very efficient and quick in generating monitoring reports, which is essential for emergency situations. Because of the simplicity of the monitoring tools, they can be easily repackaged and adapted to communities' specific situations. Using ODK Collect or GEOODK does not require much training and community members have been quick to pick up the use of the tools. At the same time, the definition of certain activity categories allows easy filtering of the monitoring findings and straight forward generation of monitoring reports. In Guyana, community monitors have also been successfully carrying out mapping work. While mapping and monitoring are quite distinct, both require terrain visits and similar skills. Therefore, mapping and monitoring activities can work well alongside each other.

Challenges and lessons learnt

Using technological solutions requires adequate training and support in order to be effective. For example, cloud based systems are only a reliable back-up, if the subscriptions are regularly followed up. There have been occasions where technology was unreliable and community monitors reverted back to using pencil and paper. In some cases, for example, smart phones have been unable to update software regularly due to weak or no signal. As a result, the phones are reported to crash and lose data, much to the frustration of monitors who had travelled many miles deep in the forest to obtain information. A lesson learnt is that for certain needs (e.g. community interviews) pencil and paper can be the best tools for the job. At the same time, more technological solutions also constitute a certain entry barrier, which skews participation in favour of younger community members and men, given the different levels of education. Likewise, the same applies for pencil and paper solutions as in many communities literacy of women continues to be very limited. Targeted actions are needed to counter this participation bias and engage all community members in the monitoring (e.g. targeted training for female community monitors).

While the smartphones are very useful devices for monitoring, GPS units continue to be the best tools for participatory mapping as GPS units work better under forest cover given that their microchip is usually more powerful and better able to obtain a fix under dense tropical forest canopy conditions. For this reason, forest monitors in Guyana, for example, have gone back to using a hand held GPS unit, while smartphones are used for pictures, sound recording and filling in a survey form.

Community-based forest monitoring can put community monitors in risky situations. For example, the illegal miners on the Wapichan territory in Guyana can be very aggressive. Community monitors need to be properly trained to minimise the risks.

There is also a need for communities to put in place strong measures to ensure accountability and verification of monitoring reports. Community protocols are a useful way of managing the data collection process and putting in place safeguards to verify the work of the community monitors and review monitoring findings before they are shared or published. The final decision on what monitoring information is shared lies always with the community. Some communities might not feel comfortable about their data going into global databases. Data sharing protocols are a way of ensuring that communities are in full control of how their data is shared.

Looking ahead

There has been a strong demand from communities and local partners to roll out the community-based forest monitoring in more communities. Limiting factors are financial and staff resources, which will to some extent constrain the roll-out of community-based forest monitoring. In the pilot communities, communities will continue their community-based forest monitoring activities and more work needs to be done on decision making processes on how community monitors are chosen, how monitoring is triggered, how monitoring groups will be supplied etc. The Wapichan people in Guyana aim to have community monitors in every village, who will be equipped with the necessary tools to generate their own monitoring reports. The gold rush is a major issue and SCPDA will be particularly targeting illegal gold mining. In Cameroon, the community-based forest monitoring will be rolled out to two additional areas.

Looking ahead, the functionality of the monitoring tools will be further expanded, making them even more community user friendly. A Mapfilter Version 2 is due to be released in 2017 through collaborative FPP, local organisation and community work led by FPP project partner Digital Democracy. This new version will enable customised configuration of filters, usage of several monitoring projects on the same computer and many other functions. A revolution of community-based mapping is also on the horizon with the development of Mapeo GIS, also being developed by Digital Democracy. This tool is a lightweight mapping application allowing communities to generate and manage their own maps without need for a GIS expert. Mapeo GIS will seamlessly integrate with Mapfilter, enabling communities to easily switch from mapping to monitoring and have all spatial information (e.g. concession data, customary usage of their lands) at the palm of their hands with no need for internet connection, cloud space or data conversion. This will also enable quick and straightforward exchange of spatial data in a completely secure, dynamic, and horizontal way.

5. Call to action to address the situation of the indigenous community Long Isun

The account offered by East Kalimantan-based NGO Nurani Perempuan highlighted the continuing crisis facing indigenous peoples and the vulnerability of their situation. The story of the indigenous community of Long Isun in its struggle to prevent the illegal land grabbing from logging company PT KBT spurred participants to issue a call to action – the Pekanbaru Declaration (see also ANNEX 1).

The case detailed how a FSC-certified logging company had illegally entered the community's ancestral land and begun operations without the consent of the community. When community representatives attempted to address the situation, they were criminalised. One community member, Theodorus Tekwan, was jailed for three months without charge.

The declaration outlines the community's wishes to take back control of the activities that occur on their customary land and for governments, certification and human rights bodies to heed their concerns and address gross human rights violations immediately.

6. Proposals for improving monitoring and evaluation

Continuing to improve monitoring and evaluation of the project was identified as a key desire of meeting participants. This global evaluation meeting and the preceding country evaluations triggered many fruitful discussions, which will be followed up in the months to come and feed into the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation activities.

Key points for improving Monitoring & Evaluation that were put forward at this meeting are:

- All of FPP's and partners' projects support the same overarching goal. For that reason, monitoring and evaluation is most effective if it is carried out in a holistic manner (as opposed to be limited to a specific project).
- Monitoring and evaluation should be seen as an on-going process, which can be streamlined in current work plans without creating additional workloads.
- Sometimes a lot can be learnt from what has not worked so well. Creating honest and open spaces for FPP and partners to continue discussing what has not worked well and why will be very useful to identify lessons learnt which can be shared across the teams to increase effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation.
- Each community and country setting is quite unique; different monitoring and evaluation tools may be appropriate for different localities. FPP's approach to monitoring and evaluation can embrace and learn from the diversity of approaches carried out in the different countries. In this meeting the request was put forward for FPP to continue the work on monitoring and evaluation and provide guidance on a set of monitoring and evaluation tools as appropriate in the different contexts. Discussions at this global evaluation meeting could feed into the development of a FPP internal position paper or best practice guide on monitoring and evaluation.



Communities in South Sumatra are using drones to map High Conservation Value areas (© Dico Luckyhart)

7. Conclusion

Bringing together project partners from all of the four countries in a global face-to-face evaluation meeting enabled honest and rich discussions and knowledge exchanges. The open and frank self-evaluation taking place in this meeting evidenced the good relationships and trust that FPP and partners have established. This meeting not only allowed identifying lessons learnt that will be applied to the next stage of the project, but also created spaces for joint strategizing looking at challenges and strategic opportunities in the years ahead to keep up the momentum for bringing about inclusive forest governance.

This led to the discussion of key considerations for the next project phase, which are:

- The general strategy of this project is effective and on target but the project implementation can be improved. This meeting played a major role in identifying lessons learnt, which can now be applied to improve the project implementation.
- Some of the challenges observed in the implementation of this project were linked to the short government deadline for the initial proposal development. For the next phase of the project it will be crucial to allow enough time to develop project strategies and activities in close collaboration with local partners, many of which face serious connectivity issues when in the field, increasing the time required for effective communications.
- Project development should be bottom-up and not driven by funder's priorities, starting with developing country logical frameworks with country specific goals and strategies, which are then used to identify suitable funders.
- Meeting participants expressed a strong appreciation of FPP's role in providing capacity building to local partners and communities and this should remain an important aspect of future project proposals.
- The proposal was put forward to create a platform among all project partners to continue facilitating knowledge exchanges about what is happening in the respective countries, community-based forest monitoring and wider strategies.
- National interests block transfer of forests to communities while timber values remain high but allows it when timber is depleted. More discussions are needed on: what strategic opportunities are there to enable transfer of forest to communities in countries with high timber values?
- If legality definitions underpinning FLEGT and VPAs do not recognise communities' rights, FLEGT risks legitimising timber theft. In Indonesia, there now is an increased recognition of communities' rights, which creates an opportunity to push for revising Indonesia's timber legality definition. For other FLEGT/VPA aspiring countries with weak timber legality definitions, more discussions are needed on: how can FPP and partners leverage the international-level work through synergies with other countries to create similar opportunities?
- Access to good information on forest allocations is a key part of promoting pro-people forest and land governance and pushing for better access to information should be a key priority for the next project phase.
- It could be strategic to increase the focus on jurisdictional approaches and forest governance in the context of wider land use planning including issues around forest livelihoods and alleviation of forest poverty, as opposed to merely focusing on timber extraction.

Acronyms

ACRONYM	MEANING
ALT	Amerindian Land Titling project
APA	Amerindian Peoples Association (Guyanese partner organisation)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBMIS	Community-Based Monitoring and Information Systems
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
DGPA	Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DRC partner organisation)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FGMC	Forest Governance, Markets and Climate programme
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FPP	Forest Peoples Programme
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
Hari	Hutan Rakyat Institute (Indonesian partner organisation)
HCV	High Conservation Value
HCS	High Carbon Stocks
ICF	International Climate Fund
ISPO	Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil Standard
LCDS	Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy
LTA	Land Tenure Assessment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (REDD+)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
RRN	Réseau Ressources Naturelles (DRC partner organisation)
SCPDA	South Central People's Development Association (Guyanese partner organisation)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SVLK	Indonesia's timber legality assurance system
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

Annex : Pekanbaru resolution

The Resolution

We the undersigned representatives of indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society organisations from Indonesia and around the world have travelled to Pekanbaru to highlight the impact of timber, palm oil and other agricultural commodity supply chains on our communities, lands and forests.

We have information in a letter from Long Isun community; and research and report to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) that violation has occurred and is done by PT Kemakmuran Berkah Timber (PT KBT), a subsidiary Roda Mas Group. The investigation found that PT KBT is actively logging primary forest in the area called the 'Heart of Borneo'. And this against the will of indigenous peoples in Long Isun village.

We urge the Government of Indonesia, of the Province of East Kalimantan and the District of Mahakam Hulu, as well as Komnas HAM and the Forest Stewardship Council to take urgent action to redress violations committed by PT Kemakmuran Berkah Timber (PT KBT), Roda Mas Group, which is actively logging primary forests in the Heart of Borneo against the will of the indigenous people.

Giving first-hand testimonies at Forest Peoples Programme partners' meeting between 7 and 8 February, we have heard evidence and messages:

- Expressing grave concern regarding the serious negative impacts of PT KBT operations on the human rights of the indigenous peoples of Long Isun, Long Pahangai sub-district, Mahakam Hulu district, East Kalimantan. These operations have led to violations of: the community's rights to their lands and territory; rights to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); rights to traditional livelihoods and to food.
- Expressing alarm at the continued activities of PT KBT on the customary land of the community of Long Isun without their consent. PT KBT has never reached an agreement with the self-chosen community representatives through due FPIC processes and continues to operate despite repeated rejections by the community of the company's presence and activities.

We communicate our deep concern at the criminalization of community member Theodorus Tekwan Yeq, falsely accused of trespassing on his community's customary lands, and the continued intimidation of community leaders who attempt to defend their customary land.

- Noting with concern the delayed response by the above in addressing these grave human rights violations and request that these be corrected immediately.
- Welcoming the government of Indonesia's renewed commitment to agrarian reform, indigenous peoples' rights, social forestry, conflict resolution and a moratorium on coal and palm oil concessions. We trust this will lead to greater efforts to now implement these policies on the ground and guarantee the protection of human rights, land rights and traditional livelihoods.

We call on the government of Indonesia, the private sector, certification bodies, investors, financial institutions and the wider public to heed our concerns and take urgent action to resolve this case.

We hereby make the following specific calls to action:

1. The SK Bupati Kutai Barat Decree No.136.143/K.917/2011 dated 4 November 2011 be revoked.
2. The indigenous peoples of Long Isun have their customary boundaries restored in accordance to the 1966 map agreed between the indigenous communities of the Upper Mahakam.
3. The customary land of the village of Long Isun be removed from all company concessions.
4. The indigenous peoples of Long Isun manage their own lands and forests.
5. This case puts the Forest Stewardship Council's credibility into question, we therefore call on the Forest Stewardship Council to resolve this case with urgency.

We ask the State to solve transmigration land cases, without jeopardizing transmigrants' rights or affected indigenous groups. Furthermore, involving transmigrants organisation, indigenous peoples and/or local communities representatives will be vital in transmigrants' settlement planning.

Signed:

AMAN (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara), Jakarta
Asm Law Office, Batam
Yayasan Betang Borneo (YBB), Palangkaraya
ELSAM, Jakarta
Hutan Kita Institute (HAKI), Palembang
Hutan Rakyat Institute (hari), Medan
JASOIL, Manokwari
JMGR (Jaringan Masyarakat Gambut Riau), Pekanbaru
KSPPM (Kelompok Studi dan Pengembangan Prakarsa Masyarakat), Parapat
KPA (Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria), Jakarta
Link-AR Borneo, Pontianak
Malacca Center, Batam - Andiko
Nagari Kapa Community, Pasaman Barat
PATRI, Jakarta
Yayasan Petak Danum (YPD), Palangkaraya
Perkumpulan Nurani Perempuan (PNP), Samarinda
Yayasan PUSAKA, Jakarta
Sawit Watch, Bogor
Scale-Up, Pekanbaru
SKP – Keuskupan Agung Merauke (Archdiocese of Merauke), Merauke
Sorong Customary Community (Masyarakat Adat Sorong), Sorong
WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia) Jambi, Jambi
WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia) Kalimantan Barat, Pontianak
Yerisiam Community (Masyarakat Yerisiam), Nabire

Endorsed by:

Forest Peoples Programme, UK
Rainforest Action Network, USA
APA, Guyana
DGPA, Democratic Republic of Congo



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