

Encouraging good plantation management

The 'Network on Site Management and Productivity in Tropical Forest Plantations' was established as a public-private partnership in 1995. Set up by CIFOR, and supported by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the United States Forestry Service, its main purpose has been to establish whether successive harvests of fast-growing plantations can be grown on the same plot of land without causing serious damage to soil and water resources. Working at 16 sites in eight countries, researchers have explored the impact of different practices on soil fertility, nutrient recycling and productivity.

The Network's achievements were reviewed at its 7th workshop, held in Bogor in 2006.

There is now a comprehensive database on site productivity, and the results show that the productivity of fast-growing plantations can not only be maintained, but increased, with no adverse effects on soils. "We can now definitively show that much of the negative propaganda against eucalyptus and acacia plantations has been ill-founded," says Sadanandran Nambiar of CSIRO. "They have no negative impacts on sites that are properly managed." The Network, he says, has shown how research and development can play a key role in helping to improve plantation

management and productivity; and it has shown how private companies and public institutions can work together to advance forestry.

The 24 workshop participants, representing forestry interests in 11 countries, visited a research site in Sumatra managed by PT Musi Hutan Persada. "Ten years ago, this company, like many others we discussed this research with, was wary of sharing information about its plantations," explains Nambiar, "but when we visited the site in November they were now very proud to show us their achievements, which have been considerable when it comes to improving productivity and managing resources efficiently." The Network has helped to build trust between companies and researchers, and skills and knowledge have been shared between different sites and countries, to the benefit of all.

One of the aims of the workshop was to find out whether those who had participated in the Network wished it to continue. It was universally agreed that it should, and there were many ideas for expanding activities to include new research topics, such as smallholder plantations and carbon sequestration. "I can't think of any network in the world that has worked so well, for so long and across so many developing countries, without losing one single partner," reflects Nambiar.

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'Life after Logging' (the Indonesian version)

Photo: Kimabajo



After CIFOR published *Life after Logging*, which explores the ways in which mammals and birds react to logging in East Kalimantan, logging-company representatives visited CIFOR's headquarters to discuss the book. When asked whether they would be happy with an Indonesian translation of the 'recommendations' section only, they said they wanted the whole book in the local language, including the long appendices with details about the ecology of each species, and how they reacted to logging.

The Indonesian version – *Hutan Pasca Pemanenan* – was duly launched in December 2006 at the 'Ak.sa.ra' bookstore in Jakarta. Co-author Erik Meijaard of the Nature Conservancy told the audience, which included representatives from Birdlife, UNESCO

and WWF, that logged-over forests could contribute much more to conservation than was previously thought. "Over half of Kalimantan's old-growth forests are managed by logging concessions, and getting them to adopt more wildlife-friendly practices could have major benefits for conservation," he said.

Meijaard and his colleagues have shown that logging activities themselves often have relatively little impact on most vertebrate species. Rather, it is the activities associated with logging – the building of roads, for example, and hunting – which have the most pronounced impact. *Hutan Pasca Pemanenan* provides recommendations about the sorts of measures logging companies could take to lessen the impact of their activities on the local fauna. Already, a number of logging companies in East Kalimantan have begun to put some of these recommendations into practice.