



SUCCESS STORY

Education and Coordination Improve Management of Biodiversity Cases



Image above: Participants study criminal evidence on a visit to the Bali Natural Resources Conservation Agency. During the visit, they met with the agency's head and discussed challenges of law enforcement in protecting Indonesia's threatened wildlife.

"This training has opened our minds about enforcing the law and combatting crimes and other disputes relating to biodiversity issues. We see how it requires coordination from multiple parties."

*Arman Syah Putra,
Chief Judge,
Blangkejeren District Court, Aceh*

Threats to Indonesia's biodiversity from lack of enforcement of environmental laws and regulations are serious and have far reaching consequences. Such crimes are international in nature, they increase the opportunity for other transnational criminal activities, and they threaten Indonesia's sustained economic development.

In August 2014, the USAID Changes for Justice Project (C4J) hosted the first joint workshop with judges and prosecutors on protecting Indonesia's biodiversity. Indonesia's biodiversity is threatened by diverse local and international interests that seek to profit from Indonesia's rich resources. Damage in one facet of the environment, such as forest destruction, leads to a domino-effect of other environmental damage, including floods, erosion, reduced land productivity, increased greenhouse gases, peatland fires, and loss of wildlife habitat.

In cooperation with Indonesia's Supreme Court and Attorney General's Office (AGO), C4J brought together 20 prosecutors and 19 judges from Aceh, Riau, and West Kalimantan over five days for a workshop to discuss applicable regulations, challenges of enforcement, and strategies for combatting environmental threats in Indonesia. This workshop was designed to improve the capacity of judges and prosecutors to coordinate effectively in managing environmental cases, as well as civil disputes relating to protection of land and natural resources.

C4J provided a diverse group of facilitators, who exposed participants to complex analyses of forest laws and regulations, as well as laws and processes on money laundering, corporate criminal liability, scientific evidence, licensing, calculation of state losses, civil and criminal case management, and utilization of Indonesia's 'multi-door' approach to improve coordination among police, investigators, prosecutors, and the courts.

Building on this first workshop, the Supreme Court, AGO, and C4J are developing an improved workshop to be held in early 2015. The next workshop will add perspectives from Indonesia's police and ministry investigators to develop a justice sector-wide approach to protecting Indonesia's biodiversity.

These joint workshops are an integral part of C4J's larger strategy to improve prosecution of crimes related to biodiversity. This strategy is designed to strengthen not only the justice sector but help protect marginalized communities from international and domestic actors who threaten Indonesia's natural resources.

The C4J Project is a five-year project funded by USAID, and implemented by Chemonics International. C4J works with the Supreme Court and Attorney General's Office to improve transparency and accountability in Indonesia's justice system. The project began in May 2010, and continues through May 2015. For more information on C4J, please contact the Contracting Officer's Representative Mr. Dondy Sentya, USAID Senior Rule of Law Specialist at dsentya@usaid.gov, or info@chemonics.com, or www.c4j-indonesia.org