



SUCCESS STORY

Working together to protect biodiversity

Indonesian justice agencies cooperate to combat illegal trafficking, poaching and logging



On Jan. 17, the Fish Quarantine Inspection Agency seized 2,350 pig-nosed turtles at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. Then, on Jan. 22, the agency seized 5,284 pig-nosed turtles at Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport. The seizure was the result of increased coordination among law enforcers who took part in USAID-supported biodiversity workshop in Bali August 2014, and Jakarta 2015

“To protect our forests and wildlife, cooperation among institutions, from investigation to prosecution, is critical. Through this workshop, I learned how we can coordinate with forensic and environmental experts, to support the case management process, so we can prosecute illegal activities more effectively...”

Harli Siregar
General Crimes Assistant
Papua Provincial Prosecutor's Office

Two illegal shipments of rare pig-nosed turtles were captured, and the suspects arrested, at airports in Jakarta and Bali, thanks to interagency cooperation from the police, the Attorney General's Office, Customs, and Quarantine. These four agencies had earlier attended a workshop to explore how the justice agencies can work together to protect Indonesia's biodiversity.

Indonesia's wildlife and forests are under threat from illegal activities including land grabs, land conversion, and logging. This is causing irreparable harm to the habitat of native plants and animals, and destroying the livelihoods of indigenous forest communities.

The USAID Changes for Justice (C4J) project is working with the Supreme Court to address these challenges via justice sector reform. An Integrated Justice Sector Workshop on Managing Cases to Protect Indonesia's Biodiversity was organized in January 2015 to bring together the various law agencies and affected communities.

One of the participants, Maman, a village leader from Bunga Raya in Riau, said, “I've gone to the provincial legislature to try to resolve land disputes between my village and the plantation company. There has been no help or follow-up until now.”

During the five-day workshop in Jakarta, participants discussed ways to combat forest and wildlife crimes, and discussed how to improve investigations, cooperation between enforcement agencies, and coordination with local communities. Participants included judges, prosecutors, police, and civil investigators from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and representatives from the provinces of Aceh, Riau, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, Papua, and West Papua.

To support the reform process, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) launched new prosecution guidelines for Illegal Logging, Land Conversion, and Wildlife Trafficking and Poaching. Together with the Supreme Court, the AGO also endorsed a new Community Handbook that explains environmental laws, legal processes, and the rights of local communities and paralegals. Participants also visited the airport to talk to customs and quarantine officers about how coordination could be improved.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Muhammad Hatta Ali said “We're committed to continuing and enhancing collaboration with all justice sector institutions. Together we can identify and promote best practices, improved court processes, and a more transparent and accountable judiciary.”

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 will continue 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