

*Aditya Suharmoko and Adianto P. Simamora, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta | Sat, 06/05/2010
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The government says it has identified four forests to host potential pilot projects as part of a billion-dollar agreement signed by Indonesia and Norway to protect the country's natural forests and peatlands.

The forests are in East Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, Papua and Riau. The government said that it would name a fifth pilot project in a forest in either Jambi or Bengkulu provinces.

The government will select one pilot project by 2012, Coordinating Minister for the Economy Hatta Rajasa said.

The government may extend pilot projects after 2016, he added.

Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan said that the proposed pilot project in Riau would target almost 700,000 hectares that are comprised mostly of peatlands in Semenanjung Kampar.

"The final decision on the pilot project will be made by a joint team from Indonesia and Norway this year," Zulkifli told The Jakarta Post on Friday.

He said that the team would assess the proposed pilot project's potential emission reductions and discuss financial issues.

"We will assess emission reductions after we stop the conversion of natural forests and peatlands in the pilot project area", he said.

Under the US\$1 billion agreement, which Indonesia and Norway signed last week, the government agreed to a two-year moratorium on granting concessions to convert primary forests and peatlands into plantations, mining and agricultural areas for commercial purposes.

World Wildlife Fund Indonesia (WWF Indonesia) said that the partnership was a needed step to protect the country's natural forests and peatlands from climate change.

"The agreement sets performance standards. We have to work hard to prove that REDD *reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation* programs are workable," said WWF Indonesia climate and energy director Fitriani Arsiansyah.

Greenpeace said that the moratorium should be secured by a presidential decree that should include previously issued concessions.

"There must be a land-swap option for non-forested and wasteland areas in the existing natural forest and peatland concessions," said Greenpeace in a statement.

The organization also protested continuing forest and peatland conversion in Semenanjung Kampar.

A study by the Indonesian Environmental Forum (Walhi) says that the moratorium would only succeed if, among several other initiatives, the government banned conversion of remaining natural forests for industrial purposes and prevented overlapping land use.

The study also said the government should provide forest access to local communities, such as the Dayak people in Kalimantan or the Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi.

"The government must ensure that no permits are given to conserve important ecological areas such as mangroves, peat, quarts and river banks."

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said he would personally monitor the pilot projects, as previously reported.

Indonesia plans to reduce its carbon emissions by 26 percent by 2020 with its own resources, or by 41 percent with international help.

Minister Hatta said that Indonesia could receive up to \$6 per ton from developed countries if the nation achieved a 2.4-billion-tons carbon emission reduction. "We'll get \$5 billion if we can reduce 5 billion tons *of carbon*," he said.