



Media release

Peat restoration uncertain, who will benefit from the new regulation?

Severe fires 2015 does not change anybody's behaviour. Eyes on the Forest (EoF) coalition's investigation found three of seven industrial timber plantation companies – that has been named in previous cases as suspects to forest and land fires case in 2013-2014— are once again apparently breaching protection and restoration regulations. Is this caused by poor supervision and coordination by the Government?

Embargoed until 09:00 WIB on 30 August 2019

PEKANBARU, INDONESIA – Eyes on the Forest coalition calls on all stakeholders to take serious action to restore peatlands. To avoid the level of fires in 2015 which claimed 100,000 premature deaths¹ and inflicted loss of USD 16 billion.²

As the 2015 haze continued to affect millions of people in the region, Indonesia's President announced: "You will see result soon and in three years we will have solved this." Three years after the announcement, Eyes on the Forest published investigative report today entitling "Peat fires raging as Indonesian Government turns back the clock on restoration" based on field and monitoring survey in seven HTI concessions in Riau. The concessions surveyed by EoF covered 12 percent of total peatlands categorized as Peat Ecosystem Protection Function (FLEG) as determined by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF). Three out of seven concessions surveyed were suspects of forest fires case probed by the Ministry of Environment in 2013 and 2014, namely PT Bukit Batu Hutani Alam, PT Sakato Pratama Makmur (Hampar/Humus), and PT Sumatera Riang Lestari block 4 Pulau Rupa.

In the period July-December 2018, EoF conducted field survey and found two pulp and paper giants companies, Asia Pulp & Paper (APP)/Sinar Mas Group (SMG) and Asia Pacific Resources International Limited (APRIL)/Royal Golden Eagle (RGE) are allegedly in breach of Regulation of MoEF P.16/2017 by replanting acacia and rubber trees on peatland they should have protected and restored.

"Nearly four years after fires 2015, there is not much progress shown in their HTI concessions," said Okto Yugo, Deputy Coordinator of Jikalahari. "Our investigations found that the two paper giants had not followed government regulations on peat protection and restoration. They replanted acacia pulp wood after harvesting, instead of restoring the peatlands with native species as required."

Restoration priority area of Peat Restoration Agency (BRG) in Riau HTI concessions covers 519,471 hectares or more than a half of total national target. EoF area survey (194,874 hectares) in this

¹ <https://www.seas.harvard.edu/news/2016/09/smoke-from-2015-indonesian-fires-may-have-caused-100000-premature-deaths>

² <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/643781465442350600/Indonesia-forest-fire-notes.pdf>

report, are part of the BRG's priority area. EoF sees that low realisation of peat restoration in HTI concessions must be responded seriously by BRG, as their tenure will end next year.

"Raging peat fires that happen this year, shows reduced government and companies commitment on peat protection inside and outside concessions," said Riko Kurniawan, Director Executive of WALHI Riau.

Now, almost four years after the President's 2015 commitment, and a few weeks before the country's Presidential and legislative election, the Ministry issued the new regulation P.10/2019 on designation, establishment and peat dome peaks management based on Peat Hydrological Units, this is a setback of commitment to restore peat that was burnt in 2015. A report by EoF published today reveals that the new regulation seriously contradicts higher law (Government Regulations regarding peat restoration (PP71/2017, as amended by PP57/2016) and the Ministry's own preceding regulation on peat restoration (P16/2017).

"The P.10 /2019 is clearly a setback. The release of this regulation is surprising! This policy enables companies to return to pre-2015 business as usual peat management," said Nursamsu, Market Transformation Manager, WWF-Indonesia. "Hence, EoF is asking the President to take actions to reevaluate this regulation immediately due to its many contradictions with previous regulations."

EoF alleged this new regulation is designated to facilitate companies to exploit peatlands again. In contrary, the report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published on 8 August this year, stated the importance of peat protection and restoration to tackle climate change.

While this media release is being prepared, in HTI concessions forest fires are still burning in Sumatra and Kalimantan. This also reoccurs in PT Sumatera Riang Lestari Blok 3 Kubu, PT Sumatera Riang Lestari Blok 4 Pulau Rupert, and PT Rimba Rokan Perkasa, three of seven concessions surveyed by EoF (see attached Map)

Notes to Editors:

- Eyes on the Forest was founded in 2004 by three NGOs in Riau Province: Walhi Riau, Jikalauhari and WWF-Indonesia. Its network members include NGOs in Jambi Province in Sumatra and also Kalimantan.
- The new EoF investigative report titled "Peat fires raging as Indonesian Government turns back the clock on restoration" can be downloaded at : [Peat fires raging as Indonesian Government turns back the clock](#)
- Investigative video can be downloaded at: <http://bit.ly/videodroneEoF>

For further information please contact:

Afdhal Mahyuddin (amahyuddin@wwf.id) -- EoF Communications ph: +62 81389768248

