Peat lands possess one of the largest terrestrial carbon storage capacities that at their best can store more carbon than the rain forests. Peat is plant material accumulated over hundreds of years that have decomposed due to lack of oxygen, low nutrient content, and the presence of organic materials that decay with difficulty. Unfortunately, the carbon storage in peat is only protected by the wet condition of the peat itself, and when forests are cleared and peat lands drained, carbon is released as CO2 greenhouse gas. In addition, excessive drainage of peat lands increases their susceptibility to fire.

Indonesia has the largest tropical peat lands in the world, and they generate about a third of the country’s carbon emissions as a whole. The Government of Indonesia has committed to cut 29% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. To that objective, a number of policies have been enacted including those pertaining to peat management, among others:

- Presidential Decree 10/2011 on primary forest and peat land, to improve governance and to impose moratorium on new licenses
- Government Regulation 71/2014 on the protection and management of peat land ecosystem
- Presidential Instruction 8/2015 on Delay of New License Issuance and Governance Improvement of Primary Forest and Peat Land
- Presidential Regulation 1/2016 on Restoration of the National Peatland Agency (BRG, Badan Restorasi Gambut)

Approach

In support of the efforts of the Government of Indonesia to improve the management of peat lands, MCA-Indonesia has provided grants to a number of implementers. The recipients of these grants also support the eight BRG functions, namely the coordination and strengthening of peat restoration implementation policy; planning, controlling and cooperation of peat restoration implementation; mapping of peat hydrology unity; determination on the zoning of protected function and cultivation function; implementation of infrastructure construction for peat wetting (rewetting); restructuring of burnt peat areas management; implementation of socialization and education of peat restoration; and the implementation of supervision in construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure in concessions lands.

The grant implementers are:

a. Euroconsult Mott MacDonald Consortium
The Kehijau Berbak project initiated by this consortium focuses on issues related to the Berbak landscape, peat lands, smog and floods, small-scale agriculture, as well as the Tahura rehabilitation. The project is designed to increase household income, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and peat land fires through inclusive low-carbon economic growth in the Berbak landscape and other land uses in the vicinity. The project is located in Muaro Jambi.
and East Tanjung Jabung, Jambi. This is part of the Partnership Grant from the Green Prosperity Project.

b. WWF Indonesia Foundation (Yayasan WWF Indonesia)

Through the Partnership Grant of the Green Prosperity Project, the RIMBA Project proposed by WWF Indonesia Foundation aims to protect biodiversity and enhance carbon reserves in critical landscapes in Sumatera by improving the forest ecosystem connectivity through the development of green economy. The expected outputs are improvements in livelihood, business continuity, and management of the three pillars of sustainable development by the community. The project is located in three provinces and covers 8 districts, namely Muaro Jambi, East Tanjung Jabung, Kerinci, Merangin, and Tebo (Jambi), Kampar and Kuantan Sengingi (Riau), as well as Dharmasraya (West Sumatra).

c. Gita Buana Consortium

This consortium implements the Community-Based Restoration Project in the Berbak Landscape Ecosystem – the second largest peat land in Southeast Asia – in Muaro Jambi and East Tanjung Jabung, Jambi. The program is developing a planned community-based ecosystem recovery for Berbak landscape to address environmental issues and local economic growth. One of the activities being developed is the restoration of degraded lands jointly with the community, starting from mangrove plantation and forest fire prevention to rehabilitation of the Tahura region through a partnership model. This program is supported by the Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) Grant.

d. Mitra Aksi Foundation Consortium (Yayasan Mitra Aksi Consortium)

As well as in the Kerinci landscape, this recipient of CBNRM Grant is working in the Berbak landscape in Muaro Jambi and East Tanjung Jabung Districts. The consortium strives to increase the income of farmer producers through a planned, inclusive, and low-carbon land treatment that is integrated with the utilization of potential agriculture and non-timber forest products to increase revenue. Some of its adopted activities are land preparation practices with no burning, critical land rehabilitation and reduction of chemical additives in the agricultural sector, restoration of critical peat land through the construction of bulwark channels integrated with the utilization of local-variety fish farming, and the construction of hydrant wells for horticultural crops cultivation and agroforestry.

e. KKI Warsi Consortium

This consortium works to strengthen and expand Community-based Forest Management practices, which will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the increase in the community’s household income. In East Tanjung Jabung District, the Warsi Consortium, supported by the CBNRM Grant Program, is working for the development of Village Forests in Sinar Wajo and Sungai Beras villages of Mendahara Sub-District, and Koto Kandis village of Dendang Sub-District, located in the Peat Protected Forest Areas of Sungai Buluh. Some areas of the Village Forest have received the Decision Letter on the Determination of the Village Forest Working Areas and the Decision Letter on the Right to Cultivate the Village Forest, and based on these documents the villagers can manage and also rehabilitate the partially degraded land of the Village Forest due to peat fires. A training and learning center related to sustainable development practices is also established in the Sebapo village, Sub-District of Mestong, Muaro Jambi District.

f. Consortium of Universities for Green Knowledge (Perguruan Tinggi Untuk Pengetahuan Hijau, PETUAH).

This Green Knowledge Grant recipient implements activities related to peat. Led by the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (Institut Pertanian Bogor), the consortium with yland six other member universities will establish Centers of Excellence. The one established at the Sriwijaya University will be a Center of Excellence for Peatland Conservation and Productivity Improvement.

Millennium Challenge Account-Indonesia
Reducing Poverty through Economic Growth

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