



APP smoke screens past deforestation in Sumatra  
*Independent evaluation finds company's new forest conservation policy  
no more than a declaration of "completed planned deforestation" in Sumatra*

(Press Release — under embargo until 00:01 GMT 03 April 2013)

Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia – A new analysis by Eyes on the Forest (EoF) finds that the “forest conservation policy” published in February by one of the world’s largest pulp and paper producers, the Sinar Mas Group’s Asia Pulp & Paper (APP), appears to be yet another attempt to hide the vast deforestation and damages caused by the company during almost three decades of operation in Sumatra.

“Our analysis found that the policy protects at most 5,000 hectares of natural forest in Riau Province, in stark contrast with more than 1.4 million hectares of deforestation we estimate the company’s pulp production in the province has caused,” says Muslim Rasyid of Jikalahari.

The new report published today reveals that the concessions of SMG/APP suppliers in Riau alone lost more than 680,000 hectares of natural forest between the start of the company’s Riau pulp mill in 1984 and 2012. Of that, 77% was lost in legally questionable ways and 83% in Sumatran tiger and elephant habitats.

“APP in its much-touted new policy does not commit to restore natural forest and peat soil to compensate for the serious environmental damages it caused in the past”, says Hariansyah Usman of WALHI Riau. “The fact that SMG/APP’s much advertised High Conservation Value and High Carbon Stock assessments are conducted in concessions which have already completed their planned forest clearance makes the values of these assessments to nil.”

“Our analysis points to one conclusion: that APP is reckoning to fool people into imagining huge conservation benefits while overlooking past transgressions. Our problem is that we don’t see the policy’s potential future conservation benefits balancing in any way the many unresolved issues stemming from APP’s deforestation legacy, the huge greenhouse gas emissions, the wildlife’s loss of habitat, and the many conflicts with communities who lost their lands.”

SMG/APP announced its policy as “an end to the clearing of natural forest across its entire supply chain in Indonesia, with immediate effect”. However, according to Aditya Bayunda of WWF-Indonesia, “Our findings suggest that SMG/APP announced the policy because their suppliers had completed their planned natural forest clearance in Sumatra. 89% of natural forests remaining last year in their suppliers’ concessions in Riau

were protected by law and additional 8% by the company's own previous commitments."

The company's mills also continue accepting and pulping natural forest timber that it claims was felled before the moratorium started on 1 February, creating a loophole which suppliers may utilize to feed wood into the mills from new deforestation in violation of the policy. Report by West Kalimantan NGOS last week on violation of the FCP by two APP suppliers vindicates concerns that freshly cleared timber will continue to be "laundered" into pulp mills.

Despite repeated requests for transparency by civil society organizations that attended several SMG/APP "socialization" meetings in Indonesia about its new policy, the company has not yet provided full details on the status of natural forests in its suppliers' concessions. The company argues it does not yet have data on natural forest cover for all these concessions and that there is not yet agreement on clear role and protocol of CSO participation in monitoring its policy implementation.

"It is surprising for a pulp & paper producer to not have the most essential data on the extent and condition of the wood supply in their suppliers' concessions. It is even more surprising that the company expects its internal audit reporting without any independent verification by civil society, to be good enough to convince customers, considering the history of unmet commitments by SMG/APP", says Bayunanda. "Until now, there is no truly independent verification of any implementation".

"Eyes on the Forest recommends that buyers and other business partners of APP remain very cautious and not do business with the company", says Rasyid. "All parties should request SMG/APP to improve its policy to also encompass mitigation of the damages they caused, provide transparency on all their activities, including the status of all existing wood supply bases and its expansion plans in Sumatra, and Kalimantan to prove there are real conservation benefits in the policy."

EoF published analyses of the report on its interactive on-line map, based on Google Earth's Maps Engine platform, to allow stakeholders to evaluate for themselves some of the aspects of SMG/APP's new forest policy and monitor its implementation. EoF will update its database regularly as information from other provinces and new details about existing concessions becomes available.

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Notes for editors:

- The 'Where are the trees' report can be downloaded at:  
[http://www.eyesontheforest.or.id/attach/EoF%20\(03Apr13\)%20Where%20are%20the%20trees%20EN%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.eyesontheforest.or.id/attach/EoF%20(03Apr13)%20Where%20are%20the%20trees%20EN%20FINAL.pdf)
- High resolution cover image of the report can be downloaded at:  
<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/83668676/EoF%20Report%20->

[%20Where%20are%20the%20trees%20\(April%202013\)/EoF\\_Where%20are%20the%20trees\\_April%202013\\_Cover.jpg](#)

- The analysis data is published as interactive maps on the Eyes on the Forest-Google Earth online Sumatra database at: <http://maps.eyesontheforest.or.id>
- On 18 March, Greenomics published a report to show that the FCP was announced after APP suppliers in Sumatra completed their planned deforestations:  
[http://www.greenomics.org/docs/APP%27s\\_artful\\_deception\\_with\\_new\\_policy\\_201303.pdf](http://www.greenomics.org/docs/APP%27s_artful_deception_with_new_policy_201303.pdf)
- On 26 March, NGOs in Kalimantan published a report that APP's suppliers continued logging and peat canal development activities after the FCP imposed moratorium:  
[http://www.eyesontheforest.or.id/attach/Joint%20Press%20Release\\_APP%20FCP%20Violation%20in%20West%20Kalimantan\\_260313\\_English\\_20130326090349.pdf](http://www.eyesontheforest.or.id/attach/Joint%20Press%20Release_APP%20FCP%20Violation%20in%20West%20Kalimantan_260313_English_20130326090349.pdf)

For further information, please contact:

- Muslim Rasyid, Coordinator, Jikalahari  
Email: [muslim@jikalahari.or.id](mailto:muslim@jikalahari.or.id) or [muslim.rasyid@gmail.com](mailto:muslim.rasyid@gmail.com), Mobile: +62 812 7637 233
- Hariansyah Usman (Kaka), Executive Director, WALHI Riau  
Email: [wongkaka99@gmail.com](mailto:wongkaka99@gmail.com), Mobile: +62 812 7669 9967
- Aditya Bayunanda, GFTN and Pulp&Paper Manager, WWF-Indonesia  
Email: [abayunanda@wwf.or.id](mailto:abayunanda@wwf.or.id), Mobile: +62 818 265 588
- Nursamsu, Sector Reform (Policy Work) Site Coordinator, WWF-Indonesia Riau Program  
Email: [nursamsu@wwf.or.id](mailto:nursamsu@wwf.or.id), Mobile: +62 812 7537 317
- Afdhal Mahyuddin, Editor, EoF  
Email: [afdhalmy@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:afdhalmy@yahoo.co.uk), Mobile: +62 813 8976 8248

#### About Eyes in the Forest

A coalition of NGOs in Riau Province has documented APP's destruction of more than two million hectares of Sumatra forests since 1984 when the company started to operate on the island. APP's activities have made a major contribution to pushing the island's tigers, elephants and orang-utans into critically endangered states. For more info, please visit [www.eyesontheforest.or.id](http://www.eyesontheforest.or.id).