



Participatory Action Research to Community-Based Fire Prevention and Peatland Restoration

The Participatory Action Research to Community-Based Fire Prevention and Peatland Restoration (PAR CBFPR) Project

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) has been working with communities at the local level to understand economic, social and political dynamics causing forest and land fires, and studying their implications. As a follow-up in 2018, with support from Singapore Cooperation Enterprise and Temasek Foundation International, CIFOR partnered with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) Australia and Center for Disaster Study University of Riau to conduct participatory action research. At the local level in Dompas Village, CIFOR works with the village government, farmers' group, fire care community (MPA) and women's group on a family well-being program (PKK). In participatory action research (PAR), CIFOR researches, facilitates and mainstreams land development without using fire. CIFOR supports and assists the local community to determine and implement land clearing without using fire alternatives and to find a sustainable business model as part of a fire prevention and peatland restoration effort, and as a co-learning process. CIFOR minimizes risks, strengthens practices and traditional knowledge, and mobilizes community-based initiatives.

Goal

This project aims to support a gradual change in behavior of local communities regarding land preparation without using fire. This goal will be approached by (a) undertaking a review of community-based best practices in fire prevention and restoration; (b) developing and testing on the ground land preparation without using fire systems and peatland restoration

practices; (c) mainstreaming community-based fire prevention/management and peatland restoration; and (d) communicating best practices and successes of community fire prevention and restoration to funders, governments and community-based organizations to embed these best practices in development programs for subsequent scale-up.

Activities

We will perform PAR with the following loops of steps:

- a. **Reflection:** reflection of best practices of Community-Based Fire Prevention and Peatland Restoration (CBFPR) including the baseline study
- b. **Planning:** planning method of activities (e.g. land preparation methods), crops, sustainable business model, activities plan and timeline, etc.
- c. **Action:** action or activity implementation for example, construction of canal blocking, replanting degraded open peatland, etc.
- d. **Monitoring:** monitoring the biophysical aspects as well as changes in behavior using Theory of Change (ToC). Then we will disseminate the research findings at workshops at national and subnational levels.

We focused the field testing in the Bengkalis District of Riau Province. The research and dissemination activities, however, will also be conducted in other districts in Riau Province. Riau Province was selected for the research because because it experienced the most frequent forest and land fires forest and land fires.¹ Riau also underwent massive forest conversion to oil palm plantations and constitutes the largest area of oil palm plantations in Indonesia.

1 Sizer N, Leach A, Minnemeyer A, Higgins M, Stolle F, Anderson J, Lawalata J. 2014. Preventing Forest Fires in Indonesia: Focus on Riau Province, Peatland, and Illegal Burning. World Resource Institute, Washington DC



Photo by Imami Basuki/CIFOR



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Profile of the action arenas

Using PAR, together with partners and local communities, we conducted a series of activity, study and discussion sessions through the loops of the reflection, planning, action and monitoring phases. We facilitated a series of discussions and activities at seven action arenas, where we developed a sustainable business model for fire prevention and peatland restoration, constructed restoration facilities and encouraged social transformation in a local community. In a participatory manner and using certain criteria, we identified and selected seven action arenas located at Dompas Village. In general, all action arenas are located on areas with peat deposits with unique biophysical characteristics, with a total of 11.1 hectares (excluding the home garden/Action Arena 7). We classified these action arenas into three types of land management: public, private and co-management land, described as follows:

1. The public land, the property rights of which belong to the village (village government's asset), is currently managed by the Fire Care Community (MPA), hereafter referred to as Action Arena 1.
2. Co-management lands refer to those privately owned lands that are managed by community-based groups, i.e. women's group (PKK) and farmers' group, hereafter referred to as Action Arenas 2 and 3.

3. The private land is owned and managed by farming families, hereafter referred to as Action Arenas 4, 5 and 6. Action Arena 7 is located in the Dompas villagers' home garden.

For each action arena, we assessed them for their biophysical, social and economic conditions. We worked together to identify and formulate roles and responsibilities regarding the cost-benefit sharing mechanism, commodities to be planted, business model, landscape engineering, and many other strategies.



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<https://www.cifor.org/fire-and-peatland-restoration/>



Supporting Partners



Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

CIFOR advances human well-being, equity and environmental integrity by conducting innovative research, developing partners' capacity, and actively engaging in dialogue with all stakeholders to inform policies and practices that affect forests and people. CIFOR is a CGIAR Research Center, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA). Our headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia, with offices in Nairobi, Kenya; Yaounde, Cameroon; Lima, Peru and Bonn, Germany.

