

Report of Ex-post Evaluation

Project PD 224/03 Rev 1 (F)

**TRANSBOUNDARY BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION: THE PULONG
TAU NATIONAL PARK, SARAWAK STATE, MALAYSIA**

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ACRONYMS

CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HoB	Heart of Borneo Initiative
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KMNP	Kayan Mentarang National Park
MOF	Ministry of Forestry - Indonesia
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
PHKA	<i>Perlindungan Hutan dan Konservasi Alam</i> (Indonesian Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation)
PMU/PMB	Park Management Unit/Park Management Body (BP <i>Badan Pengelola</i>)
PTNP	Pulong Tau National Park
SFC	Sarawak Forest Corporation
SFD	Sarawak Forest Department
TBCA	Trans-boundary Conservation Area
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
SOW/TOR	Scope of Work/Terms of Reference

Part 1: Executive Summary

An evaluation of the ITTO Pulong Tau National Park project was conducted in June, July and August 2010. Persons concerned with the project were interviewed in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Kuching and Miri and field visits were made to the Bario and BaKelanan sectors of the park. Local people, eco-tourists, local officials and field staff of the Sarawak Forest Department were interviewed in the field. Small scale interventions to promote local livelihoods were examined.

Overall the project was rated as successful in promoting ITTO goals and objectives in this extremely important forest area. Specific objectives of the project relating to extension of the national park area and the establishment of formal mechanisms for transboundary collaboration were not achieved. These objectives were recognized as being over-optimistic early on by the project steering committee but they remain valid longer term goals and their achievement should be pursued.

It is recommended that ITTO retains its commitment to the protection of the Pulong Tau and Kayan Mentarang National Parks and the achievement of sustainable forest management in their surroundings. ITTO might align itself with the Heart of Borneo initiative and promote the importance of sustainable forestry as a component of the HoB. ITTO should continue to exploit its comparative advantage as an intermediary in strengthening collaboration between its members.

Part II: Evaluation Report

1. Project Context

1.1 Project Background

The Kelabit highlands are located in Miri Division of Sarawak on the border with Indonesian East Kalimantan. They have long been known to naturalists for their mild climate, scenic beauty and rich biodiversity. Sarawak's highest mountain, Gunung Murud, 2442 m., is located in this highland area.

Pulong Tau means "Our Forest" in the language of the Kelabit people who are one of the dominant local ethnic groups. The name has been given to a national park which is unusual in being a tropical forest protected area which was originally proposed by the communities inhabiting the forest. Their appeal for protected area status for their forest which was shared by the Penan and Lun Bawang who also inhabit the area was made in 1983. At this time logging licenses were being allocated in the general area and the initiative by the local people was certainly motivated by their concern at the damage that logging might do to their forest. The Sarawak Forest Department (SFD) conducted a study in response to this local demand which was published in 1984 and was generally supportive of the idea. Further studies were subsequently conducted by the SFD and a commitment to the idea of a national park was made by the Chief Minister of Sarawak State. Progress in moving forward with the establishment of a park was slow. Logging expanded into the area in the late 1980s and 1990s and this certainly chilled enthusiasm for protection. Interest in the protected area proposal appears to have simmered gently throughout the 1990s with little action taken either at a legislative level or on the ground. However the ITTO sponsored Borneo Biodiversity

Expedition in 1997 brought conservationists, scientists and foresters from both sides of the frontier together and led to a wave of interest in cross-border collaboration and the first suggestions of trans-boundary protected areas.

1.2 ITTO Project

In 1999 the SFD sent a request to the ITTO for a project preparation mission and subsequently James Gasana was sent by the ITTO to prepare a proposal for a transboundary project. At that time ITTO was already funding a “Model Forest” project through CIFOR on the Indonesian side of the frontier. The project was approved in 2004 and implementation began in 2005. In that same year the first phase of the Pulong Tau National Park (PTNP) – an area of ca 60,000 ha was gazetted. The ITTO project was labeled as a transboundary biodiversity conservation initiative but there was no matching transboundary project on the Indonesian side of the border. ITTO did execute a project in the adjoining Kayan Mentarang National Park (KMNP) which lies along the Sarawak border but this did not explicitly target transboundary action, its main emphasis was on the national needs of protected area management. Although PTNP was labeled as a transboundary initiative the areas of the national park did not at any point touch the Indonesian border.

The project proposal clearly distinguished between the strategic trans-boundary objectives which aimed at better sharing of knowledge and ensuring ecological continuity across the border. These objectives were to be met through technical meetings, exchange visits, sharing of information and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on transboundary issues. The project also had a set of development objectives which aimed at better park management, involvement of local people in management and the promotion of alternative income earning opportunities for local communities. These activities were essentially to be conducted at the national level. The project document did not imply or suggest any sharing of operational management responsibilities across the international frontier.

The project was approved at a time when the other major ITTO transboundary initiatives between West Kalimantan and Sarawak – the Betun Kerihun – Landjak Entimau projects were enjoying a considerable measure of success.

1.3 Geographic and Socioeconomic Context

The two pairs of the ITTO supported transboundary projects in the island of Borneo aim at the conservation of the hill dipterocarp, sub-montane and montane forests that are the predominant forest types in much of the center of the island. Much of the vast area of dissected landscapes with steep slopes and numerous watercourses was still in a relatively pristine state until the 1980s. Many of the forests were on steep slopes which were at the limit of the possibilities of safe and sustainable logging at that time. However, at that time industrial logging began to penetrate into even quite remote regions. Strong demand in international markets for the timber species found in these forests led to vigorous expansion of logging into even the most remote areas in the 1990s. Demand for the high value timbers of *Agathis* which is abundant on ridge tops in central Borneo also grew and encouraged loggers to go into more and more difficult terrain – even at the limits of what is legally authorized by the logging regulations of the two countries. However, notwithstanding concerns expressed by environmental groups this highly selective logging did little damage to the rich biodiversity of Central Borneo.

The indigenous peoples of Central Borneo on both sides of the border were somewhat ambivalent about industrial logging. They welcomed the jobs and infrastructure that became available to them but were resistant to the damage that they perceived as being done to the forest and to the inflow of people from other parts of Malaysia and Borneo, attracted to their traditional homelands but the availability of jobs. The forests were therefore subject to three conflicting tensions – there were those who advocated the preservation of the forests for their biodiversity values, those who favored sustainable logging and those who believed that community management of the forests would provide better overall outcomes. The past twenty years has seen a constant tussle to find the right balance between these three approaches to forest management. The ITTO projects sought to employ all three approaches in a balanced way to make use of multi-stakeholder platforms to ensure equity in decision making. ITTO was therefore a pioneer in promoting integrated approaches that subsequently were labeled as “ecosystem” or “landscape” approaches to reconciling conservation and development.

At a global scale the forests of Borneo are considered to be high priorities for biodiversity conservation although not necessarily of higher importance than similar forests lying along the equator in other parts of SE Asia, Africa or South America. The forests have high levels of biodiversity and moderately high levels of endemism. They contain only a few of the large, charismatic animals that often form the object of international conservation programmes. The Orang Utan, found in Betun Kerihun and Landjak Entimau but not in Pulong Tau or Kayan Mentarang is the focus of much conservation attention. The Sumatran Rhinoceros now very scarce in Borneo may still occur in Pulong Tau. Others much of the biodiversity is in animals and plants that are less know to non-specialists and which have less appeal to the media.

1.4 Strategy

The ITTO strategy appears to have been threefold. First, one of addressing the needs for institutional support for the establishment and management of the individual national parks. Second, of addressing the needs and concerns of the populations of people living in and around the protected areas. Third one of encouraging policy level interventions between the two countries to achieve in the center of Borneo a set of linked protected areas whose whole would add up to more than the sum of its parts. The ITTO deployed its expertise and comparative advantage in convening international dialogues, mobilizing best practice and exploring options that provided optimal balance between industrial and environmental goals.

2. Evaluation Scope, Focus and Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation sought to assess the project at all levels from its impact on the international strategic relations between the forest management and conservation programmes in Indonesia and Malaysia to its impact on people living in and around the protected areas and its impact on the status of the biodiversity of the proposed protected areas. The evaluation formed part of a broader review of ITTO transboundary biodiversity conservation programmes that have been undertaken in SE Asia, The Congo Basin and Central and South America over the past decade. The evaluation drew upon the discussions and presentations at an international

conference on trans-boundary conservation initiatives, convened by the ITTO in Quito, Ecuador in July 2010.

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation began with a review of the prodigious and high quality documentation produced by the project. A programme of field visits and meetings with concerned stakeholders was organized by the Project manager in Sarawak, Dr Paul Chai. The team consisted of Dr Chai the project leader, Wilhelmina Cluny the wildlife biologist employed by the project, Prof. Jeff Sayer, forest conservation specialist and leader of the ITTO evaluation team and Dr Intu Boedhihartono an Indonesian anthropologist who was a member of the 1997 transboundary biodiversity expedition and who has since conducted research on forest dwelling peoples throughout Borneo. The team visited Bario on the eastern limit of the PTNP and incipient administrative headquarters of the park and Ba'Kelanan on the Northern limit of the Park, close to Gunung Murud and to the proposed extensions to the park. Additional interviews were conducted by telephone with project stakeholders located in the State Capital Kuching, the Federal Capital, Kuala Lumpur and with persons involved in the Kayan Mentarang National Park on the Indonesian side of the frontier. The outcome indicators from the project log frame were all verified. Both of the evaluators had extensive knowledge of the area and its social and environmental problems from their long-term field work on the Indonesian side of the border.

3. Evaluation Results

3.1 Evaluation of Original Project Document

3.1.1 Basic Proposal

The project document provides a credible and coherent analysis of the conservation and development problems of the transboundary area. Its diagnosis and prescriptions are sound and it sets out a reasonable programme for ITTO support which ought to have been attainable with the resources and time available. The proposal under-estimated the difficulties of moving forward with the legal measures required to gazette the PTNP and the administrative difficulties of achieving effective trans-boundary collaboration. The project document provided for considerable interpretation and flexibility in how resources were to be deployed. This makes it a little difficult to assure accountability as many actions were the shared responsibility of the SFD/SFC, local communities, The Samling Forestry Company and the ITTO project. This was probably fortunate as the project leader was able to deploy the ITTO resources in the most effective way to complement the activities of the other actors. The project document under-estimated the difficulty of achieving the required level of community engagement in management of the PTNP. Communities were too isolated and the logistic difficulties of convening multi-stakeholder meetings were considerable.

3.1.2 Structure and Presentation of Proposal

The structure and presentation of the proposal was of a high quality. It could however have benefited from the inclusion of higher quality maps – although such maps remain difficult to obtain.

3.2 Evaluation of Project Execution

3.2.1 Efficiency and Effectiveness

Overall the project has been implemented in an efficient and effective manner. The failure of the SFD/SFC to provide an effective management unit in the field and to proceed more

rapidly with gazetting the PKNP meant that the overall objectives of the project could not be fully met. Part of the problem with the legal establishment of the extension of the park lay with the fact that logging licenses had been allocated to Samling in the areas proposed for the park extension – these licenses expire in 2012 and in reality much of the area has not been under active logging during the project period so compromise arrangements with progressive extension of the park or anticipatory provision of legal status might have been possible. Another issue lay with the presence of some small villages near to the proposed extension areas. This problem might have been addressed through making some small modifications to the park extension boundaries. There are several different alignments shown of different maps for the park extension and those shown in the PTNP management plan appear to be the most reasonable and as far as the evaluation was able to determine do not include any settlements.

The lack of progress on development of more effective trans-boundary arrangements appears to have resulted from a lack of receptiveness from the authorities on the Indonesian side of frontier. Some changes in the senior staff responsible for the counterpart project on the Indonesian side of the border, the fact that a proposed ITTO project for KMNP was not approved and a general reticence on trans-boundary issues at a political level may have contributed to this lack of progress.

Activities with local communities have progressed well given the scale of the resources available for this part of the programme. Making a significant impact on the livelihoods of small isolated communities with the sort of micro-interventions included in the project is notoriously difficult. The livelihoods of these people are subject to much greater influence from large scale development activities such as road construction and the employment and economic activity associated with industrial investment, in this case logging. The tourist industry in the area has expanded significantly during the project period. This was mainly a result of better access by air and the entrepreneurship of some local people and tour guides. However the presence of the project certainly facilitated this tourist expansion and probably guided it towards better environmental and social pathways.

The extensive inventories of flora and fauna and the structured studies of the livelihoods of local people were the strongest point of the project and have resulted in informative and useful publications which were obtained at reasonable cost. It will be important to ensure that the results of all of these surveys are carefully archived as they will have great value both historically and in monitoring long term change in the ecosystems of the area and in the livelihoods of the people.

3.2.2 Techniques Applied

The techniques applied were in general standard and were executed to high professional standards. One might criticize the lack of full community engagement in many aspects of the project. Local people were used as guides and field assistants and ethno-botanical information was collected but little progress was made in giving local people genuine responsibility for taking and implementing decisions in the project area. It would be argued that the local capacity to take such responsibility was lacking but it would have been good to see a little more progress made in developing such capacity.

3.2.3 Project Management, Financial Management, Administration

The overall project management was of a high standard. Financial and administrative management appears to have been efficient and effective. It is regrettable that the SFD/SFC commitment to provide a higher level management unit in the project area did not materialize. A project of this level of ambition requires the fulltime presence of senior management staff in the field. The remoteness of the locations and the difficulty of moving around within the project area probably contributed to the reluctance of the authorities to move more assertively on this but many of the other difficulties that the project experienced might have been averted had such a high level presence been maintained. At the time when the KMNP had a senior resident project manager in Malinau relations across the frontier were effective and the withdrawal of this person also led to a reduction in the intensity of interactions across the border.

3.2.4 External Factors – Unexpected Problems or Circumstances

The failure to approve the counterpart project on the Indonesian side of the border certainly reduced the intensity of transboundary activity. The unwillingness of the Sarawak authorities to move more expeditiously on the extension of the park was unexpected at the time of the initiation of the project.

3.3 Evaluation of Project Results

3.3.1 Anticipated Results

The indicators and verifiers included in the project logical framework were examined by the evaluation mission and the following observations were made.

1. Development objective: The legal establishment of the park extension was not completed during the project period but has now been approved by the SFD and the final gazette notice is with the State parliament. Local people were better involved in management but only to a limited extent.
2. Initiation of process of sustainable management: A high quality management plan has been developed. It is not clear to what extent this plan has been officially adopted by the SFD and SFC. Some of the activities included in the plan for immediate implementation have not progressed. The plan can be said to have been “agreed” but not “approved”.
3. Improved cooperation between Sarawak and Indonesia: The project team appears to have made considerable effort to meet the project objectives for trans-boundary cooperation but has met with only limited success. Several technical meetings have been held both in the field, in Kuching and in Jakarta to bring together field staff and senior staff from both countries. These meetings have not been very effective in leading to concrete actions on the ground. Staff members have changed at all levels – especially in Indonesia – during the project and this lack of continuity has hampered progress on trans-boundary activities. The MoU on transboundary cooperation has still not been signed. There are still no effective trans-boundary structures in place.
4. Conservation and management capacity strengthened: Some buildings are now available and some SFD staff are posted to Bario. There is no resident field staff in Ba Kelanan. The lack of a strong field management presence was a serious handicap to the overall progress of the project.
5. Extension of the PTNP: This fundamental objective of the project was not achieved.
6. Baseline ecological and biodiversity surveys: Excellent baseline surveys were conducted and the results published in attractive format.

7. Socio-economic and cultural studies: These were carried out to a high standard.
8. Management plans elaborated and approved: Elaborated to a high standard but not formally approved.
9. Transboundary cooperation agenda established and structures put in place: Unfortunately little progress was made on the formal structures – ideas for cooperation were extensively debated. Overall there was quite a lot of talk but not much action.
10. Memorandum of understanding between the two countries concluded: A draft was prepared by the Sarawak parties but a response from Indonesia is still pending.

The project document also contains a detailed list of activities and inputs. Almost all of these were carried out and the inputs delivered. In this sense it can be concluded that the project management team did its job well but the lack of a matching commitment at a political level was the reason that the overarching objectives were not met.

3.3.2 Unanticipated or Unexpected Results

Again it was the failure to progress on gazetting the park extension and formalizing the trans-boundary management framework that limited the impact of the project.

3.3.3 Evaluation in Terms of Biodiversity Conservation

The forests in the PTNP and in the proposed extension areas are in good condition and there are not apparent threats to its biodiversity. Logging in the proposed extension areas has been light and there is almost no agricultural encroachment onto the forests. The most endangered species in the area may be the Sumatran Rhinoceros. There is a possibility that a few remain but their status is very unsure. There was a reported sighting in the 1980s, another less convincing one in the 1990s and a rather unsatisfactory photograph taken with a camera trap two years ago. The species is believed extinct on the Indonesian side of the frontier. One of the major potential benefits of a large trans-boundary protected area would be to provide habitat for this species and for other rare species such as the banteng which still exists in small numbers in KMNP. The area is rich in biodiversity and contains important populations of rare birds, fish, amphibians and plants. It merits intensified protection of this resource as pressures will certainly mount in the future.

3.3.4 General Achievements and Expected Future Results

In spite of its failure to achieve some important formal objectives as set out in the project document the project has without any doubt had an overall beneficial effect on conservation and development in the area. Awareness has been raised, local people have been sensitized and are supportive of the PTNP, political support persists even if not translated into practical realities and overall the area is in better condition now than when the project began. Knowledge of the area is greatly increased, eco-tourism has expanded dramatically and the general idea of the majority of the area being protected seems to have been “socialized”.

There remains however the need to move forward on some of the more formal objectives. Legal gazettelement of the extension remains a desirable goal and the potential for trans-boundary collaboration is high.

3.3.5 Beneficiaries and Evaluation of Project Effects on Communities

Community members interviewed were in general supportive of the project goals and activities. They were a little critical of the lack of progress in achieving results on the ground. Several would have liked to see more investment in building tourist trails and control posts at the park boundaries. We did not encounter any resistance at all to the idea of a large part of the area becoming a national park.

The community development projects and especially the activities with schools were widely appreciated but are of course of small scale and have not had a major impact on the livelihoods of the majority of the people. This is common with these sorts of projects. It will rarely be possible to have a major impact on the livelihoods of several thousand people in remote areas with a budget of less than a million dollars – most projects of this sort are excessively optimistic on their ability to stimulate significant local development. However the activities clearly create goodwill and enhance communication with the communities.

3.3.6 Technical and Scientific Quality of Results and Their Dissemination

The management plan and the technical reports are of a high quality and some would merit publication in the more formal literature – perhaps a special issue of a journal as has been done for the Kayan Mentarang side of the frontier.

3.3.7 Community and Authority Participation in Project Activities

Formal structures for community management were not established. Again the original objectives of the project may have been a little over-optimistic given the lack of experience of community management arrangements in Sarawak – and the difficulties of putting them into place anywhere. The overall intention of the project was constructive but the progress that has been made may be as much as was possible in the circumstances.

3.3.8 Post-Project Situation

A follow up phase of the project was continuing at the time of the evaluation.

3.4 Evaluation of Proposed Project Follow-up Phase

There is as yet no proposal for a follow up phase. There is a proposal for an extension of the present phase for one year. In considering this proposal the ITTC might wish to seek a stronger level of commitment from the SFD/SFC to deliver on their engagements to the conservation programme in the area.

Further work is clearly needed to exploit the potential for transboundary cooperation and ITTO has a role to play in this. ITTO might consider aligning its programmes in Borneo with the tri-national “Heart of Borneo” initiative which brings together Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia at a political level to address strategic issues relating to forest conservation in Borneo. This might enable ITTO to influence the activities of other actors – for instance the major investments of WWF and the GEF in transboundary work in Borneo. Association with the HoB might provide the most effective route to achievement of the original ITTO goals for better transboundary collaboration.

3.5 Lessons Learned

- A flexible implementation framework proved successful in allowing ITTO to complement and exploit synergies with other parties involved in the project.
- An effective field presence with senior staff and good facilities is fundamental to long-term impact for projects of this sort.
- Engagement with local communities has to be seen as a progressive and long-term endeavor.
- A modest ITTO contribution has catalyzed a significant volume of inputs from other partners both the private sector (Samling) and the government of Sarawak (SFD and SFC).
- A counterpart project in KMNP on the Indonesian side of the frontier would have greatly increased the ability of the project to achieve its overall objectives.

4. Relationship to ITTO/ITTA Goals and Objectives

The project is entirely consistent with ITTO's overall goals and objectives and with the contents of a number of ITTO policy papers – notably the Guidelines on Sustainable Forest Management and on Biodiversity Conservation in Tropical Timber Production Forests.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Overall the project has had a positive impact on forest conservation in Borneo. It fell short on some of its specific objectives but it has made a general contribution to building capacity, generating knowledge, raising awareness and building support for long term conservation in Pulong Tau. The project delivered significant impact for a very modest investment.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations Concerning Follow-up Phase

The possibility of a modest level of continued support should be considered. This should be contingent upon:

1. Concertation with the HoB initiative. ITTO should explore the possibility of providing its support for KMNP and PTNP in association with the HoB.
2. More emphasis to developing effective but realistic transboundary mechanisms. It is not necessary to have complicated arrangements for integration of management across the frontier – all that is needed is to establish connectivity between KMNP and PTNP and to greatly improve communications between the management staff on the two sides.
3. Progress on establishment of the extensions to PTNP – it is really important to achieve some connectivity between PTNP and KMNP – at present the two parks do not join at all – even some minimum level of connectivity would be major progress. The extension towards Batu Lawi would also seem to be an obvious move – the area has outstanding landscapes and biodiversity and no alternative uses – it has great potential for eco-tourism.
4. Explore the options for different categories of protected areas for the forests adjoining PTNP. Some of the areas with logging licenses and remote communities could be protected as IUCN category 5 or 6 protected landscapes or as community reserves.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Co-Implementing Organizations

1. The SFD should establish an effective presence of senior management staff in PTNP and build control stations where roads enter the park.
2. The extensions to the park as shown in the maps in the PTNP management plan should be legally gazetted.
3. An MoU should be signed between the Ministry of Forestry in Indonesia and the SFD.

5.2.3 Recommendations for ITTO

- Explore collaboration with the Heart of Borneo initiative for any continuation of work in Pulong Tau National Park
- Re-open discussions for an ITTO contribution to conservation programmes in Kayan Mentarang National Park on the Indonesian side of the frontier.
- Further explore options for supporting biodiversity conservation in production forest areas in the areas surrounding PTNP and KMNP.
- Continue low-level support to transboundary conservation in Central Borneo.

Annex 1: Persons Interviewed

Efransjah. Director WWF Indonesia

Hadji Sapuan Ahmad. Head of International Affairs, SFD

Wilfred Landung, Head of PABC, SFD

Dr Paul Chai – Project Director, Kuching

Suwartono, Director PKPA, Bogor,

Wilhelmina Cluny – Biodiversity specialist on the project team.

Penghulu Philip Lakai Tuan. Head of Kelabit village 14 near Bario.

Anli Jawatan Kuasa, Keselamatan Kemajuais Kampung – BaKelanan

Dawat Mutang, AJKK Puneng Kelana.

Musa Sigar, AJKK Kampung Long Kermap, BaKelanan

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