Greenomics Indonesia
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IPOP-OBSERVER

Responses to operation of new palm oil concession in the Leuser Ecosystem

- ***As an IPOP pilot area, what solutions can be provided by IPOP management and signatories?***
- ***Considering that the owner of the new palm oil concession is the honorary consul of one of the EU countries, the EU needs to immediately intervene to provide its perspectives and proposed solutions***

29 October 2015

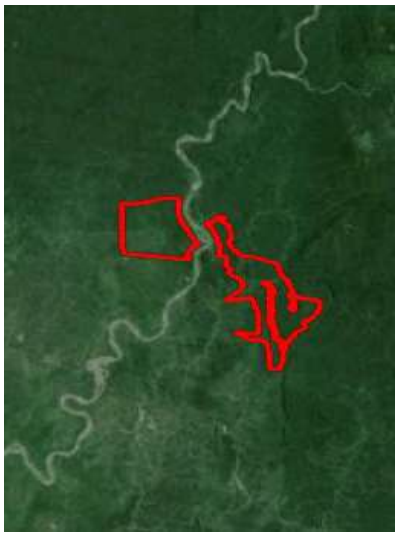
This photo was taken at Trumon's Conservation Response Unit on 22 October 2015, almost 24 km from the location of the new palm oil concession.

The new palm oil concession consists of Sumatran tiger habitat, according to IUCN data (2011), and is also elephant habitat based on UNEP data (2011).

BACKGROUND

In August 2014, PT Indo Sawit Perkasa (ISP) was granted a palm oil plantation development license by the Governor of Aceh for more than one thousand hectares located in the Subulussalam municipal administrative area, which comes within the boundaries of the Leuser Ecosystem. More recently, ISP obtained permit to conduct land clearing operations in forested areas that are within the Leuser ecosystem ***(delineated in yellow).***

The permit, which covers forested areas in the Leuser Ecosystem, was granted by the Governor of Aceh based on an Aceh Gubernatorial Regulation issued in February 2015.



97°53'53.1"E 2°51'34.6"N – 21 May 2015

This report sets out the results of the spatial analyses and field observations conducted by Greenomics Indonesia on the ISP concession for the purpose of encouraging IPOP management and signatories related to this case to provide IPOP-based solutions.

Given that **the owner of ISP is the honorary consul of one of the EU countries**, this report is also intended to encourage the EU – which has had a strong commitment to protecting the Leuser Ecosystem – to propose solutions based on the perspectives of the EU.

Given that the ISP concession is a new concession located inside the Leuser Ecosystem, it has the potential to serve as an interesting case study for the relevant stakeholders, particularly as regards the implementation of IPOP so as to find an IPOP-based solution, bearing in mind that Aceh has been selected as one of the pilot areas that have been identified by IPOP Management.

METHODOLOGY

This report uses spatial monitoring to track landcover changes on the concession using USGS Landsat 8 and Google Earth images, which were then used as the basis for field observations. The report also uses legal data to support the spatial monitoring and field observations.

97°53'50.6"E 2°51'21.9"N – 11 September 2015

DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND

97°53’53.3”E 2°51’22.7”N – 11 September 2015

According to the results of our field observations in May 2015, ISP is in the process of growing palm saplings in nursery blocks on the concession. These preparations were still ongoing at the time of our observations in September 2015.

Given that land-clearing permits have been issued for land-clearing operations in forested areas on the concession, this means that ISP is preparing to enter the next stage in the development of its new palm oil plantation, namely, the planting of the palm saplings after the completion of land-clearing operations.

As of 21 September 2015, no large-scale land-clearing operations could be detected that would suggest the start of the land-preparation process prior to planting. The bulk of the land that has been cleared to date appears to be for nursery operations.

IMMEDIATE SOLUTION NEEDED FROM IPOP MANAGEMENT AND SIGNATORIES

The Leuser Ecosystem forest is targeted for land-clearing by ISP as part of the development of its new palm oil plantation. This provides an ideal opportunity for IPOP management to provide an IPOP-based solution as regards ISP's operations.

Wilmar and Musim Mas – which currently buy palm oil from companies that are linked to ISP – also need to actively participate in providing concrete solutions to ISP and its suppliers.

The parts of the Leuser Ecosystem forest that are located on ISP's concession are targeted for clearance.

97°53'56.8"E 2°51'29.3"N – 21 May 2015

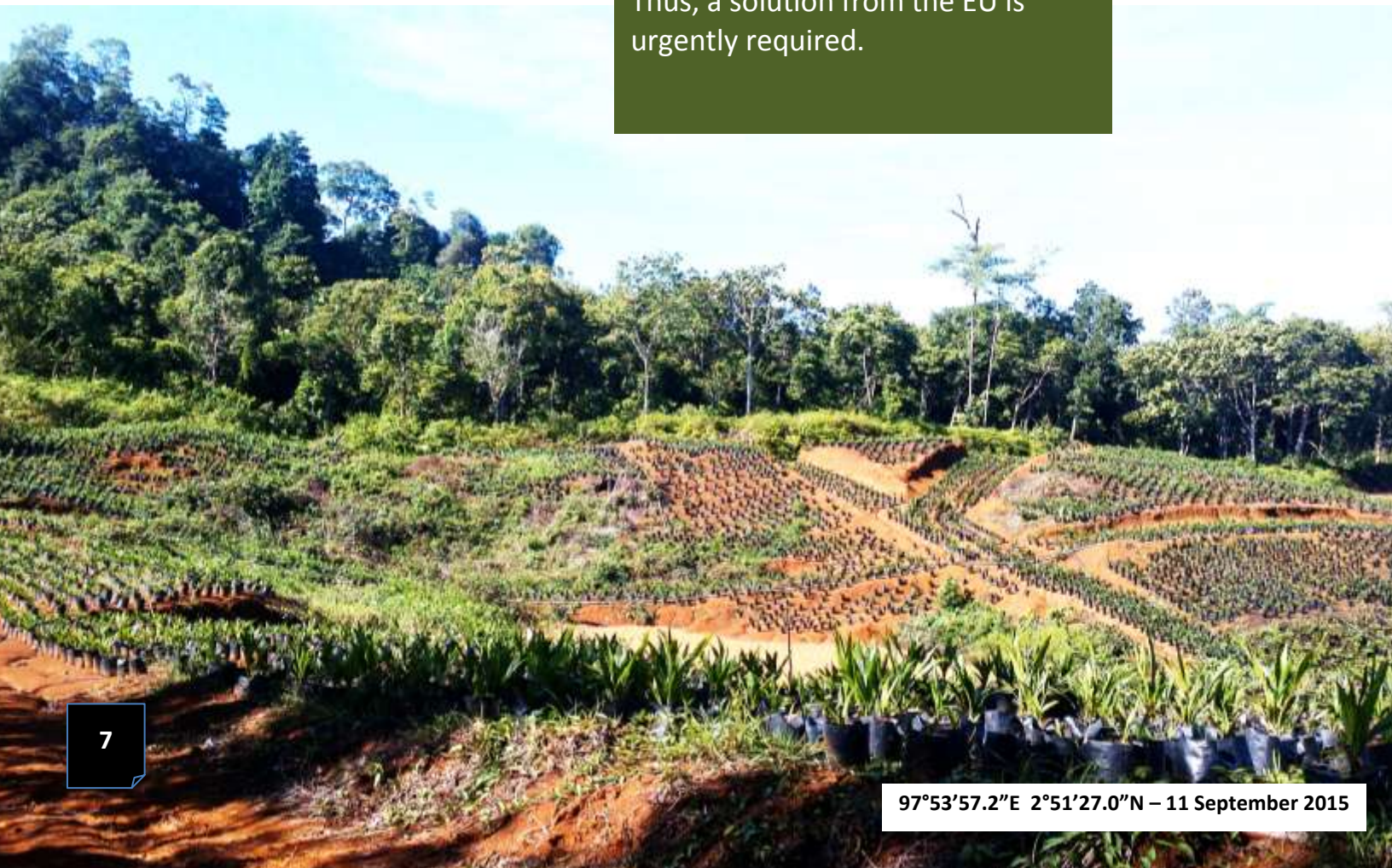
From the supply chain perspective, ISP is linked – both directly and indirectly – to suppliers of Wilmar and Musim Mas that operate palm oil plantations in Aceh Tamiang District, which lies outside the Leuser Ecosystem.

98°13’292”E 4°22’380”N – 15 September 2015

SOLUTION FROM EUROPEAN UNION URGENTLY REQUIRED

The EU's commitment to saving the Leuser Ecosystem is certainly not in doubt. However, in the context of ISP's operations, the EU needs to intervene so as to provide a concrete solution, given that the owner of ISP is the honorary consul of an EU-member state.

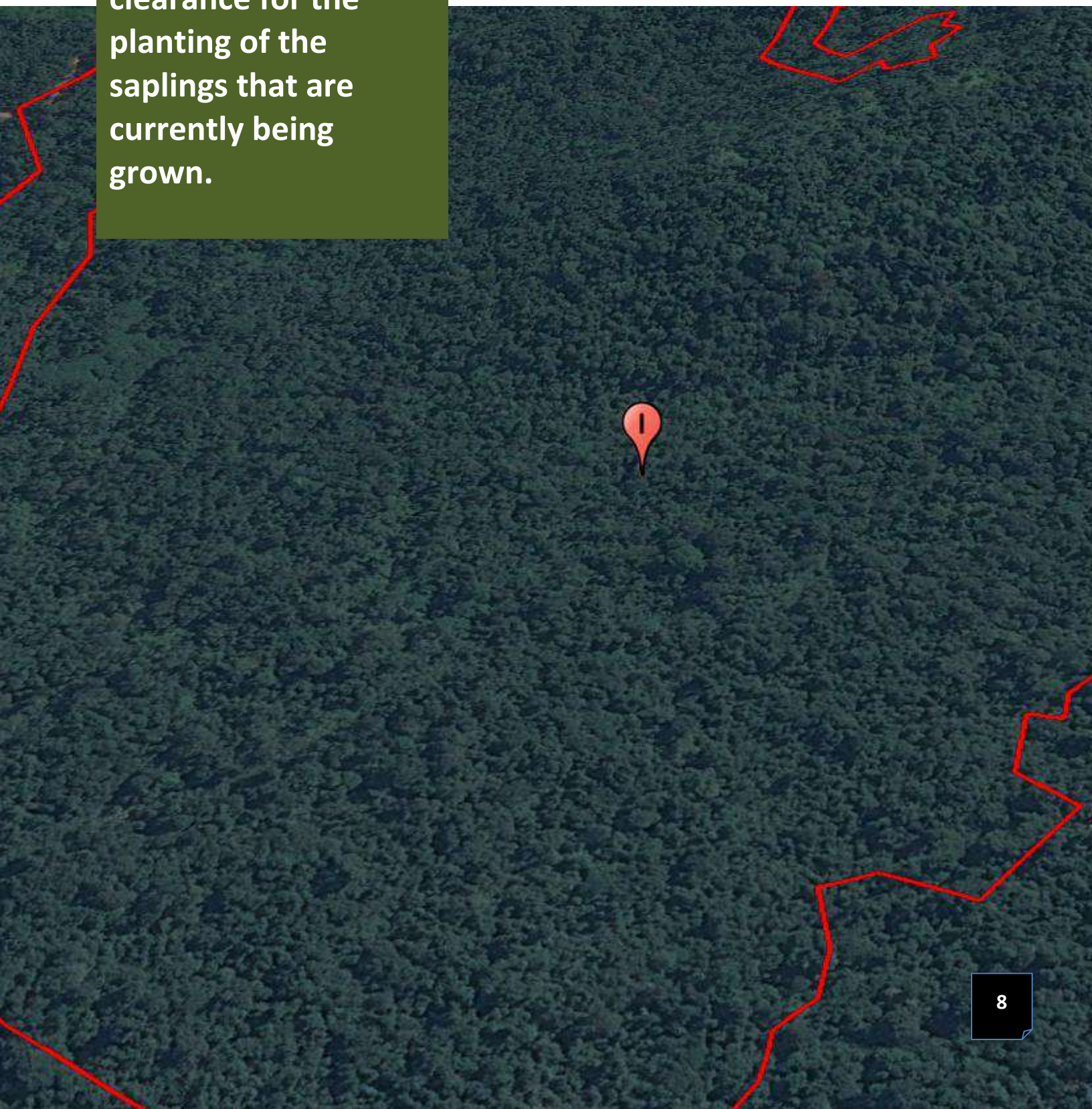
In the near future, palm saplings will be planted in those parts of the Leuser Ecosystem forest located close to the nursery blocks. These areas will soon be cleared in preparation for the planting stage. Thus, a solution from the EU is urgently required.



97°53'57.2"E 2°51'27.0"N – 11 September 2015

Forested areas contained in the ISP concession, as shown here by Google Earth, are targeted for clearance for the planting of the saplings that are currently being grown.

Google Earth (6/26/2015)
97°56'28.03"E 2°49'44.77"N



RECOMMENDATION

97°53'50.6"E 2°51'21.9"N – 11 September 2015

The sooner IPOP management and signatories come up with IPOP-based solutions to the operations of ISP the better it will be. Likewise the EU needs to propose solutions as soon as possible based on its commitment to protecting the Leuser Ecosystem.

This case constitutes an important challenge for the IPOP management and signatories in finding concrete, IPOP-based solutions that can be proposed to the Aceh government.

IPOP-OBSERVER – an initiative by Greenomics Indonesia to identify the extent to which IPOP is being implemented in Indonesia – uses the results of spatial monitoring, field observations and legal analysis to question the extent of the role played by IPOP signatories in providing solutions to their suppliers in their efforts to fulfill one of the objectives of IPOP, namely, to find solutions for sustainable palm oil that is deforestation free. The main purpose of IPOP-OBSERVER is to share lessons learned from the implementation of IPOP.

For further discussion please contact:
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