

**APRIL – Indonesia**

# Advancing forest ecosystem restoration in Sumatra

Agricultural lands occupy almost half of the world's land surface and a further expansion is projected to feed a global population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. The social and economic contribution that agriculture makes at both the macro and micro levels is also well documented: agriculture contributes 30% of the GDP in many low-income countries and employs more than 2 billion people globally. Over 75% of people living in poverty depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agri-business firms—local, national and international—play major roles in agricultural production and services.

As a significant land user, agri-business also has a critical role to play in holistic sustainable land management that protects and maintains essential ecosystem services and builds rural community resilience. GAA and EcoAgriculture Partners are working together to identify and learn from a selection of innovative regenerative and restorative landscape partnerships in which agri-business companies are actively involved. These case studies will support us in our shared ambition to better understand the agri-business perspective—their business rationale for landscape partnerships, institutional models, business and landscape benefits, and how to bring success to scale. We welcome your input and feedback.

Case studies are available at [globalagribusinessalliance.com](http://globalagribusinessalliance.com)



Peatland Forest on the Kampar Peninsula, Sumatra

## Rationale

Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER) was established by APRIL Group in 2013 as an ecosystem restoration program to protect, restore, conserve and manage 150,000 hectares of ecologically important peatland forest situated on the Kampar Peninsula and Padang Island, within Indonesia's Riau Province in Sumatra. A leading producer of fibre, pulp and paper, APRIL manages industrial and community fiber plantations, alongside five Ecosystem Restoration Concession licenses issued by the Indonesian government, as part of an integrated production-protection landscape model. RER contributes to APRIL's commitment to conserve one hectare of natural forest for every hectare of plantation. The company is 81% towards this goal, and has committed US\$100 million in funding to support long-term landscape conservation and restoration programs, including RER.

## APRIL's roles in landscape partnerships

RER's production-protection model is supported by the implementation of a landscape approach that requires ongoing collaboration between government, communities and other concession holders, who share objectives and responsibilities in terms of forest protection and land use management. The RER program originally began as a partnership between APRIL, Flora & Fauna International (FFI) and BIDARA, an Indonesian social equity consultancy. Among the first steps in the program were assessments of the RER forests' biodiversity levels, carbon stocks, and the socio-economic status of surrounding communities. Later, local NGO Laskar Alam joined the program to help develop close working relationships with local communities on Padang Island. RER's partnerships are structured as service agreements,

Independent authors

where FFI has conducted ecological and social baseline and impact studies, while BIDARA and Laskar Alam help engage local groups in improved agriculture practices. APRIL and the RER teams work collaboratively with the provincial government's Forest Management Unit and Natural Resources Conservation Agency to implement a coordinated landscape management approach. Community land holders participate on a voluntary basis.

### Actions and investments for landscape sustainability

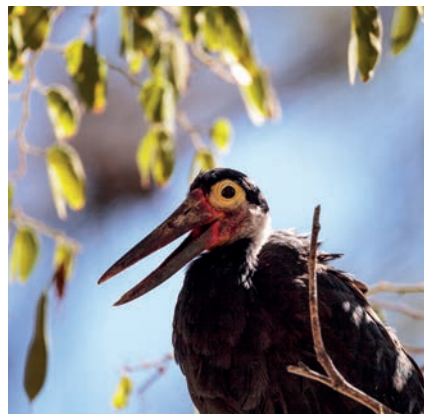
RER's production protection model aims to ensure that the program is financially sustainable over time. Returns generated by APRIL's pulp and paper manufacturing arm are invested into RER operations, partnerships and community development programs in the villages. The program's work with farmers is aligned to this objective, focusing on developing improved agronomic practices, including the use of 'no-burn' land preparation techniques to achieve higher yields. For example, RER offers technical and material input on growing common products for local markets, and provides support for villages that remain fire-free over the 4–6 month dry season, usually in the form of local infrastructure investment. The program also provides fishermen in the area with technical assistance and equipment, including boat engines and nets, when they demonstrate they are refraining from illegal practices. In addition, RER supports government forest patrols to prevent poaching of birds and other animals, and illegal logging. RER and APRIL team members assume intermediary negotiation support roles to foster compliance with anti-poaching rules, to 'keep everyone legal on the landscape,' says Brad Sanders, Head of Operations, Restorasi Ekosistem Riau.

### Benefits and successes

Since 2015, RER has been a zero fire, zero encroachment, and zero illegal logging landscape. The RER teams have successfully worked with local communities on fire prevention strategies to keep the RER fire free, supported by education campaign, capability building and community infrastructure incentives. Biodiversity continues to recover, with a total of 757 plant and animal species having been identified in the RER areas, as of June 2018. This total includes 48 species that are considered to be endangered, including the Sumatran Tiger and Sunda Pangolin. RER has also demonstrated that traditional community activities, like fishing and honey gathering, can be fostered as sustainable community enterprises and viable business alternatives to slash and burn agriculture practices.

### Lessons learned and future directions

Despite the successes achieved so far, the program continues to focus on embedding sustainable land and forest management practices that will last beyond the 60-year term of APRIL's ecosystem restoration licenses. According to Brad Sanders, long-term approaches to sustainable land management must be 'in our blood' to keep delivering on RER's vision. "As the pressure on natural resources increases over time, it is important that everyone with an interest in the landscape continues to work together to ensure its protection and management."



Storm Stork, one of the endangered resident species within the Kampar Peninsula

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#### Restorasi Ekosistem Riau

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#### The Global Agri-business Alliance

The only multi-commodity, multi-geography, CEO-led platform for supply-side sector engagement and collective action: growers, processor, traders, providers of finance and inputs. Member companies have come together to strengthen their contribution to building sustainable landscapes and livelihoods. A time-bound initiative, GAA has its sights set firmly on 2030 and on making an additional contribution to the SDGs. The GAA does this by providing a platform for engagement and collaborative action that 1) scales best practice through peer learning 2) contributes to thought-leadership and 3) informs and influences emerging policies.

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