

Illegal Logging

The Problem:

Illegal logging leads to loss of forest biodiversity and ecosystem services, deprives local communities of their rights and livelihoods, and generates approximately US\$10–15 billion annually in criminal proceeds. In national revenue terms the World Bank estimates that Governments lose around USD \$5 Billion per annum in direct taxation. Illegal logging can refer to timber from restricted forests, harvesting protected species or in excess of allowable yields, harvesting in violation of land or tenure rights, and failing to pay taxes and royalties.

Malaysia needs to curtail illegal logging activities. To do this Malaysia law enforcement responders must identify and intercept the criminal act much sooner after it commences. This earlier intervention will prevent destruction of the forest area, reduce the revenues generated by the criminals, facilitate impound of expensive plant and equipment and offer the greatest chance for arrest and criminal prosecution.

To this end the Government of Malaysia formally requests support from UKSA in provision of advice and possible solution that may embed into our existing capability by way of enhancement.

Context

Malaysia is part of the front line in the battle to save the planet and its bio-diversity. We have an enormous problem in the continued protection of our rainforest and some of the species therein – these include Pygmy Elephants, Orangutans, Sumatran Rhino and Malayan Tigers all of who are endangered species. These rare and important animals are threatened by habitat loss in protected areas due to illegal logging and the activities of poachers. Poaching is made much easier in the aftermath of illegal logging

A study conducted in 2003 by WWF with Columbia University, Indian Institute of Science, Sabah Wildlife Department and Wildlife Conservation Society provides evidence that Borneo's pygmy elephants are genetically distinct from Asian elephants and have been isolated from them for at least 18,000 years. That makes them a high conservation priority.

Although there are 243,661 hectares of protected area in the Sabah region, [deforestation, particularly illegal logging](#) in the surrounding forests threatens to isolate populations of endangered species within these areas. Rampant poaching, assisted by the increasing number of roads, areas of cleared land and logging trails, poses a grave threat to Malaysia's endangered species.

Wildlife crime is a big business. Run by dangerous international networks, wildlife and animal parts are trafficked like illegal drugs and arms. Experts at TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, estimate that this illegal industry runs into billions of dollars each year.

A number of the species that call the Heart of Borneo home are at risk such as pangolin, sun bears, clouded leopards, Malayan tigers, fruit bats, rhino and pygmy elephants

Impact Statement

Global Environmental Impact

Scientists claim that global deforestation accounts for 15% of human caused carbon emissions. The World Bank estimates that trees are being cut down by up to 4 times the sustainable rate. Countries such as Malaysia have adopted much stricter control in terms of forest management and are seeking to arrive at a completely sustainable solution. Malaysia is finding that as logging activities are reduced they are being replaced by illegal logging. We urgently need information to establish illegal logging sites in order that we can intervene and prosecute offenders thereby making our efforts toward sustainable forest management successful and meaningful.

Impact on bio-diversity

The specific threats against the Pygmy Elephant caused by habitat loss and poaching are exacerbated by the planting of Palm Oil crop to replace primary jungle. Pygmy Elephants treat Palm crop as human children do fast food – quite simply they love it. This brings the animal into conflict with farmers often ending in the violent death of the animal.

The Malayan Tiger, a sub-species of tiger found only in the Malay Peninsula and the southern part of Thailand, is in danger of extinction. Until 2004, these Malayan tigers were classified the same as the Indochinese tiger until tests showed it to be a separate subspecies. There are only about 300 of this sub-species, with only 3,200 wild tigers remaining in the world. The largest continuous forest area in Peninsular Malaysia, Belum-Temengor, is the tiger's main habitat, but the forest is at risk of a devastating amount of deforestation from illegal logging. The Tigers bring around USD \$50,000 on the black market making this a prize for any poachers.

Economic Impact

It is estimated that illegal logging denies revenues to the people of Malaysia in the order of USD \$500m per annum. It is also clear that indigenous people are having their land and therefore sources of food and livelihood denied to them at a cost exceeding USD \$800m per annum in compensation and welfare payments.

Impact on Indigenous people's food security

Loss of forest due to illegal logging has significantly reduced the bat population. Bats are a natural means by which fruit crops are pollinated so there is enormous impact on indigenous people and their food security when the forest is illegally cleared (a) because the food source has directly been removed through illegal logging and (b) because the bat population is no longer available to pollinate the wider forest area.

Malaysia now has a situation where some communities are having to pollenate fruit trees by hand. The problem is exacerbated by the increase use of pesticides which further cause problems in maintaining wildlife and rain forest. Pesticides are being used more because the bat population is no longer providing the natural means by which insect populations are managed.

The Action Plan - What action Malaysia will take with the information and advice provided

The agencies that represent the Police, Environment, Indigenous Peoples, Forestry and Wildlife all need a source of information that:

- Identifies the overall shape of deforestation activities to facilitate better management practice.
- Identifies illegal logging sites to facilitate intervention and prosecution.
- Supports prosecution by way of its evidentiary value.
- Supports the protection of endangered species

Using this information our national agencies will mobilize and prevent illegal logging activities, protect the environment and support national policy to arrive at a sustainable forest management solution.

The Malaysian government will:

- Use the information/data/methodology outputs developed in the Program to work alongside our national initiatives in this area and measure the effect they have over existing performance.
- If proven more effective and within a cost effective solution the program outputs will be:
 - Used to inform government policy and national strategy in dealing with this criminal activity
 - Embedded into law enforcement responder working practice.

