



RIMBA DISCLOSURE PROJECT (RDP) JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

53 CSOs DEMAND EIA TRANSPARENCY FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

- The RDP and the undersigned are concerned by a lack of transparency surrounding environmental impact assessments (EIA) by the Department of Environment (DOE), compounded by the sudden removal of the EIA Portal on the DOE's website.
- This lack of transparency is inconsistent with the Department of Environment (DOE)'s own Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines (2016).¹
- In line with our right to freedom of information, we demand immediate action from the DOE to make EIA data publicly available on the internet, and that they regularly update their databases.

7 July 2022. The RDP and the undersigned demand that the DOE, in conformance with their own guidelines, make data on EIAs transparent and freely available on the internet with immediate effect through the following actions:

1. Regularly updating the online EIA database on a daily basis.
2. Ensuring that the database includes EIAs from at least 10 years before (2012 onwards), and a list of all EIAs prior to that should also be made publicly available.
3. Guaranteeing that the database is comprehensive and inclusive of **ALL** EIAs submitted, and that information on their approval status is accurate.
4. Including relevant information in the database, including the project proponents and EIA consultants that have submitted the EIA.
5. All first schedule and second schedule EIAs to be publicly available in full and downloadable online.
6. The DOE to organise EIA briefings with the project proponent via an online meeting system (e.g., Zoom) where the public are able to raise questions, concerns and objections.

EIAs are mandatory for projects of a certain size and sector. Data on EIAs are essential for CSOs to monitor projects, such as logging and plantations, land reclamation, mining and

¹<https://enviro2.doe.gov.my/ekmc/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FA-EIA-GUIDELINE-IN-MALAYSIA-1.pdf>

quarrying, infrastructure, and others. These projects are of public interest as they may potentially involve environmental destruction, impacts on communities, exacerbate climate change and have exposure to corruption.

Transparency of EIAs is guaranteed, in theory, by the DOE's EIA Guidelines (2016), which states that web displays of EIAs are required for both first schedule and second schedule EIAs.

Previously, the DOE had an EIA portal available on their website. While this portal had many limitations in terms of the availability of data, in February 2022 the DOE redesigned their website and this portal, the only government database on new EIA submissions and approvals has now disappeared, and replaced by a new database on the DOE website², which is inadequate as:

1. It is not regularly maintained or updated, with the last EIA posted being in May 2022, and it only shows 9 EIAs since February 2022³ (as of 9.40am, 7 July 2022).
2. It only shows EIAs from 2020 onwards.
3. A number of EIAs appear to be missing from this database, based on a cross-check with the Rimba Disclosure Project's own data (for examples of missing EIAs, see appendix)
4. No further information about the EIAs (such as an executive summary) are available.
5. This database cannot be found on the website's directory and potentially can only be accessed by those who have the specific link.

This lack of transparency makes it very difficult for NGOs and the public to act as a check-and-balance to the environmental regulators, as we are left in the dark about what projects have been approved and are being planned in sensitive areas.

This problem is exemplified by our investigations⁴ into the Tekai hydroelectric project, where due to EIA non-transparency, we were not even initially aware that a massive dam had been approved in the forests of Ulu Tembeling. Evidence of an EIA could only be found online when this was listed in the CV's of the consultants involved.

Despite being a second schedule EIA which, under the DOE guidelines, are supposed to be publicised and made available for public comment, there is no sign of this EIA on the DOE's website, and to-date, we have not been able to access this, even its executive summary.

Finally, while we are aware that some EIAs can be viewed at DOE offices, we reiterate that it is inadequate for EIAs to only be accessible physically, as this provides needless barriers for the public to access information on projects which ultimately affect them. Furthermore, offices may restrict access to and photography of EIAs.

² <https://ekas.doe.gov.my/senarai-eia>

³ For example, this EIA from that time period is not in the database: "THE PROPOSED PALM OIL AND COCONUT PALM PLANTATION AT LOT PTD 4882, PTD 4085, PTD 4963, PTD 4118, PTD 4117 AND PTD 4121 (3775.34 ha) MUKIM PADANG ENDAU, DAERAH MERSING, JOHOR DARUL TAKZIM."

⁴ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19g7f6svTBg0XQiln8NYLaPvXbMg5kW0bhs-xezt6vbQ/edit>

Notes to Editor

The RDP had previously highlighted the issue of EIA non-transparency in our [April](#) and [May](#) monthly reports. We also reached out to the DOE for clarification via email, dated 14 June 2022, but received no response.

This press statement specifically refers to the “Senarai EIA⁵” page on the DOE’s website, and not the “Archive of EIA Report⁶” page, which is even more incomplete and only includes schedule 2 EIAs.

About the Rimba Disclosure Project

The Rimba Disclosure Project (RDP) is an independent, non-political forest monitoring watchdog which aims to create transparency by being a centralised source of data and investigations on forest loss in Malaysia.

For media enquiries, please contact:

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CSO Endorsements:

1. **Agora Society Malaysia**
2. **AJ Rimba Collective**
3. **ALIRAN**
4. **Alliance of River Three**
5. **Association of Women Lawyers (AWL)**
6. **Badan Warisan Malaysia**
7. **Center to Combat Corruption & Cronyism (C4 Center)**
8. **CERAH - Anti Haze Action**
9. **Coralku Conservation**
10. **Environmental Protection Society Malaysia (EPSM)**
11. **Five Arts Centre**
12. **Free Tree Society Kuala Lumpur**
13. **Freedom Film Network (FFN)**
14. **Friends of Bukit Kiara**
15. **Gerimis Art Project**
16. **Glimpse of Malaysia**
17. **Greenpeace Malaysia**
18. **Jaringan Ekologi dan Iklim (JEDI)**

⁵ <https://ekas.doe.gov.my/senarai-eia>

⁶ <https://www.doe.gov.my/en/category/archive-of-eia-report/>

19. Justice for Sisters
20. Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY)
21. Kolektif Iklim
22. Kota Damansara Community Forest Society
23. KotaKita Sabah
24. Malaysian Action for Justice & Unity (MAJU)
25. Malaysian Youth Delegation
26. Monsoon Malaysia (MM)
27. North South Initiative (NSI)
28. Our Journey
29. Partners of Community Organisations (PACOS)
30. Pergerakan Tenaga Akademik Malaysia (GERAK)
31. Persatuan Aktivis Sahabat Alam (KUASA)
32. Persatuan Alam & Warisan Bukit Fraser
33. Persatuan Pecinta dan Pemuliharaan Penyu Pulau Pangkor
34. Persatuan Pemeliharaan dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar (PELIHARA)
35. Persatuan Rimba Komuniti Shah Alam
36. Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor
37. Persatuan Tindakan Alam Sekitar Kuala Langat
38. Pertubuhan Alam Masa Depan Borneo Sabah @ Future Alam Borneo
39. Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (GRASS Malaysia)
40. Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam (pekamalaysia.org)
41. Pertubuhan Solidariti Hijau Kuantan
42. Reef Check Malaysia
43. Regional Environmental Awareness Cameron Highlands (REACH)
44. Rimba Disclosure Project
45. Sahabat Alam Malaysia
46. Save Malaysia Stop Lynas
47. Sinar Project
48. Society for Equality, Respect And Trust for All Sabah (SERATA)
49. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
50. Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy
51. Treat Every Environment Special Sdn Bhd (TrEES)
52. Water Watch Penang
53. Youths United for Earth

Individual endorsements:

1. Rosli Omar
2. Shaq Koyok (Orang Asli Activist)
3. Sharifah Sofia
4. Zolkifli Jaffar

Appendix

The following EIAs from 2020 appear in the RDP's records but not on the DOE's EIA list:

1. CADANGAN 315 HEKTAR PROJEK LADANG HUTAN DI HSK LEBIR, KOMPATMEN 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15 (SEBAHAGIAN), MUKIM RELAI, DAERAH CHIKU, JAJAHAN GUA MUSANG, KELANTAN
2. CADANGAN PROJEK LADANG HUTAN KAWASAN HUTAN SIMPANAN KEKAL DENGAN PENANAMAN POKOK PELBAGAI SPESIES DI DALAM KOMPARTMEN 8 (SEBAHAGIAN), 9 (SEBAHAGIAN), 10 (SEBAHAGIAN), 11 (SEBAHAGIAN) & 12 (SEBAHAGIAN), DI HSK LEBIR, MUKIM RELAI, DAERAH CHIKU, JAJAHAN GUA MUSANG, KELANTAN
3. THE PROPOSED 406.52 HECTARES (1004.51 ACRES) OF FOREST PLANTATION DEVELOPMENT ON PART OF COMPARTMENT 33, 34 AND 35 IN TEKAM FOREST RESERVE, MUKIM PEDAH AND MUKIM PULAU TAWAR, DISTRICT OF JERANTUT, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR
4. THE PROPOSED 404.70 HECTARES(1000.04 ACRES) OF LOGGING ACTIVITY IN PRIVATE LAND IN MUKIM KERATONG ROMPIN