

Bentala Kalimantan



What We're Doing

One of the world's greatest conservation opportunities lies in the ancient rainforests of Borneo—home to critically endangered orangutans, towering yellow meranti trees that reach 100 meters and isolated Dayak communities who have stewarded these lands for thousands of years.

Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo, is nearly twice the size of France and holds about 25 million hectares of tropical forest. It's a major carbon sink and key to Indonesia's goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2060. Yet Kalimantan has one of the highest deforestation rates globally. Around 60 percent of its high conservation value forests fall within production zones under 30-year concession licenses. Many are inactive or poorly managed, leaving them vulnerable to illegal logging and palm oil conversion. Without action, these forests could be lost forever.

"For us, the Dayak people, the forest is our source of life," says Asrani, a village leader in East Kalimantan. "Losing it feels like losing a loved one, leaving us with a profound sense of loneliness because it sustains us." That's why in East Kalimantan, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and our Indonesian partner Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) are testing a bold idea: **tropical forests can deliver real conservation outcomes while remaining economically productive.**

Through the Bentala Kalimantan ("Land of Kalimantan") initiative, we're advancing an integrated model that combines protection of high biodiversity areas, sustainable timber operations in select concessions and community engagement to create jobs and future income through high-integrity carbon credits. The project also supports community-led "green" livelihoods such as sustainable smallholder cocoa and rubber production.

Bentala Kalimantan is taking root in the tropical forests of the Wehea-Kelay Landscape, where YKAN has acquired long-term management rights to two logging concessions spanning nearly 90,000 hectares. These sites aim to prove a powerful truth: **Indonesia's forests are worth more alive than cut.**

A New Approach to Tropical Forest Conservation in Indonesia

Bentala Kalimantan contributes to TNC's global mission to protect 30 percent of the planet by 2030 by protecting 1.2 million hectares of forest, including:

- ▶ 800,000 hectares in timber concessions
- ▶ 380,000 hectares in protected forest areas
- ▶ 40,000 hectares of community-managed forest

Why This Matters

Indonesia's forests are among the most biodiverse on Earth and could contribute up to 40 percent of the country's carbon reduction target by 2030. Their protection and sustainable management are essential to meeting national climate goals and advancing global efforts to combat climate change and biodiversity loss.

These forests are home to endangered species like the Bornean orangutan, whose survival depends on intact habitats. Regular biodiversity monitoring in the area suggests it is home to nearly 1,000 species of flora and 600 species of fauna, underscoring its ecological richness. They also support Indigenous and local communities whose livelihoods, cultures and futures are deeply tied to the health of their forests. With many concessions inactive and vulnerable, conservation-first forestry offers a lifeline—not only for the climate, but for iconic wildlife and the communities who live alongside them.

Bentala Kalimantan demonstrates how conservation and sustainable development can go hand in hand—creating a model that can be replicated across Southeast Asia.

Above: Aerial view of an undisturbed part of a forest concession © YKAN; Right: Mrs. Telvina takes care of tree seedlings, especially Meranti and Kapur species, and is also responsible for planting them within one of the forest concessions in East Kalimantan © YKAN

Spotlight on Solutions

Bentala Kalimantan is more than a conservation project—it's a scalable solution for climate, biodiversity and community resilience. Key components include:

- ▶ **Conservation Set-Asides**
By conserving half the land in concessions for nature, we aim to safeguard vital ecosystems while unlocking sustainable revenue streams that incentivize long-term forest stewardship.
- ▶ **Sustainable Timber Practices**
We promote low-impact logging techniques and rigorous monitoring to ensure that timber production sustains—rather than undermines—forest health. These practices align with international certification standards and improve access to premium markets.
- ▶ **Community Empowerment**
Local communities are central to Bentala Kalimantan success. We support job creation, skills training and market access for community enterprises, ensuring that conservation delivers tangible benefits. This inclusive approach strengthens stewardship and builds local ownership.



Steps to Scale

TNC, in partnership with YKAN, is working with government agencies, Indigenous communities and the private sector to transform how forests are managed in Kalimantan. Together, we are:

Today

90,000
hectares



1. Demonstrating the Bentala Kalimantan Model

We are directly managing two forest concessions using a pioneering 50:50 framework—allocating half the landscape for strict conservation and the other half for sustainable timber production. By being on the ground, we're building credibility where it matters most: in the forest, with communities and in the markets.

2026

360,000
hectares



2. Building a Coalition

Success at scale requires collaboration. We are convening a coalition of like-minded concession holders to implement this model. Participating concessions must meet robust entry requirements and will gain access to shared infrastructure, group pay for protection and carbon projects, coordinated timber sales and tailored training and support. This collective approach reduces costs, enhances efficiency, accelerates progress and strengthens local leadership.

2030

1.2 million
hectares



3. Going to Scale

Without finance, scale stalls. We're developing a framework using blended tools like carbon and biodiversity payments to attract private investment and shape national policy. Tested in our managed concessions with coalition partners, it will serve as a proof of concept for a greener, more sustainable model in East Kalimantan and beyond.

Catalytic Philanthropy

This model has the potential to unlock USD \$400–500 million in private investment over time. To realize this vision, we aim to raise USD \$35 million by 2030 to catalyze early-stage implementation and scale-up.

Join Us

Your support helps:

- ▶ Scale community-led conservation
- ▶ Restore degraded forests
- ▶ Strengthen forest patrols
- ▶ Build coalitions and mobilize green finance

Contact

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Top to bottom: A stork-billed kingfisher rests on a branch, Borneo © Ondrej Prosimsky; Mario Lewing Eng patrols the Wehea Protection Forest in East Kalimantan © Arhaus/Peter Larson