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The IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) named three conservation leaders from Indonesia, all involved at some point with BirdLife's Partner [Burung Indonesia](#), as the recipient of Kenton Miller Award of the year. The prestigious award recognises and promotes innovative approaches to conservation and ecosystem protection, and which has been at the centre of BirdLife's [Forest of Hope Programme](#).

Sukianto Lusli, Agus Budi Utomo, and Yusup Cahyadin—the awardees are honored for their development and implementation of innovative approaches to forest conservation in Indonesia. Through their vision, commitment, determination, advocacy and leadership they have changed national policy and legislation of productive forest management so that it can contribute to conservation.

Sukianto was the former Executive Director of Burung Indonesia (BirdLife In Indonesia) in the country—who together with Yusup initiated ecosystem restoration of production forest during his work for Burung. At the beginning, the initiative was considered unpopular since the production forests had been the second biggest contributor for Indonesia's foreign exchange earnings.

However, their long work of advocacy resulted in the issuing of Ministry of Forestry regulation for Ecosystem Restoration Concession (ERC) in 2004. Through this regulation, unproductive production forests in Indonesia can now be managed under ERC license for conservation.

The first license was issued in 2007 for a-53,000 hectares production forest in lowland South Sumatera proposed by PT REKI, an ecosystem restoration company set up by the consortium of Burung Indonesia, BirdLife International, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Bird. Three years later, during Agus's leadership in Burung, PT REKI received another license for an adjacent 50,000 hectares production forest in Jambi (also in Sumatera). Both concessions are known as Hutan Harapan or the Forest of Hope.

After the establishment of ERC regulation, Agus promoted the strengthening of ER regulation for better implementation of ER management as an innovation for forest conservation outside protected areas in Indonesia.

The WCPA Selection Committee for the award consider the leadership and positive example of Sukianto, Agus and Yusup have created lessons, good practices and the right environment to enable other practitioners to replicate their ecosystem restoration model across Indonesia and beyond. The ecosystem restoration model that they initiated is contemplated as an innovation which fills the gap of protected areas network in Indonesia. Thus, they have helped contribute to global conservation targets in line with Indonesia's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Agus who received the award with Sukianto and Yusup on November 19 in the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, said, “we dedicate this recognition for Indonesia to promote conservation and sustainable forest management for our future generation.”

The current Executive Director of Burung Indonesia thanked the Government of Indonesia, who have allowed 12 ER licenses in Indonesia comprising half a million hectares. In total, 2.69 million hectares have been allocated for ER concession development in Indonesia.

“We thank other BirdLife Partners who have joined in our efforts to save and restore Indonesia’s rainforests, especially The RSPB (BirdLife in the UK), and DOF (BirdLife in Denmark), NABU (BirdLife in Germany), Natagora/Natuurpunt (BirdLife in Belgium), Nature Society Singapore (BirdLife in Singapore), SVS/BirdLife Switzerland, and Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife in the Netherlands).”

And the many donors and collaborators in our restoration work, namely: Basel Zoo - Across the River, Care for Nature Trust, Co-operative Bank, DANIDA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, DEFRA Darwin Initiative, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, EC Environment and Natural Resources Thematic Programme, EU - 'Tropical Forests', Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondiale (FFEM), Forest Restoration Research Unit (FORRU), Global Conservation Fund Conservation International, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), International Association for Bear Research and Management, International Climate Protection Initiative of the Federal Ministry for the Environment (Germany) through KfW Development Bank (Germany), Kew, Royal Botanic Gardens, Ministry of Forestry (Departemen Kehutanan, Republic of Indonesia), Nando Peretti Foundation, Nationale Postcode Loterij, Naturally Plus, Panthera, Sea World/Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, Singapore Airlines, The Michael Marks Charitable Trust, and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Vereniging Natuurmonumenten.

The team’s initiative also inspires other countries in Asia to plan other “Forests of Hope”, the BirdLife International Global Programme for forests.