

What is Impact?

Eric Meijaard, Borneo Futures and University of Queensland

Abstract

The Borneo Futures research program aims to significantly influence land use planning and decision-making in Indonesian and Malaysian Borneo. Since 2011, the program has used research and communication to inform public and political thinking. Expected impacts will play out over large areas and long time frames, and it will be difficult to determine causal relationships between Borneo Futures activities and policy and land use impacts. I review our program activities, highlighting several areas of research where it appears that we have had impact. Specifically I highlight one impact pathway, communication on Indonesia's fire and haze problems, where impact and causal relationships seem clear. Borneo Futures reports on fire and haze were read by an estimated 500,000 people, resulted in much increased political pressure and were followed by a significant change in political action. Insights from this impact pathway provide further thinking on the kind of conservation research that needs to be conducted, and how research results could be used to effectively reduce threats in complex conservation contexts.