

Respecting FPIC and Openness: Earthworm Foundation Stands Committed to Open Communication and Working in Partnership with PT Toba Pulp Lestari, Tbk

As an organization that upholds transparency and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), Earthworm Foundation is committed to ensuring that our decision-making processes are participatory, accountable, and respectful of the rights and interests of all stakeholders. We believe that engaging with the communities in a transparent and inclusive manner is essential to building trust, fostering collaboration, and achieving our mission.

In order to fulfill these commitments to the public, Earthworm Foundation has published two public updates in October and December in the context of engagement with PT. Toba Pulp Lestari Tbk ([TPL](#)).

In the updates, we outlined the steps we have taken to assess TPL's social engagement and conflict management systems and processes and the recommendations to support the company to improve their community engagement approach. We recognize the importance of constantly evolving and adapting and welcome any feedback. We also recognize our work to understand and build trust has only just begun and there is still lots of work and learning ahead. We will be providing another update on progress as indicated in April.

In this early phase of work, we understand that not all parties understand Earthworm's work. A recent publication by [KSPPM and AMAN Tano Batak](#) is one such example. The parties implied that Earthworm was not following the principles of FPIC and that we were linked to practices of intimidation. Although we respect the right of any party to voice or document their perspectives or concerns, we also want to strongly refute these claims as they go totally against our values and the principles under which we operate. These allegations were published prior to any communication on the issues with EF and we have not been granted any opportunity to discuss since. If the parties are willing to engage, we would be very willing to listen to any concerns and share more details. The following is a summary of how we have been operating to date:

- Initial visits by Earthworm to communities in TPL estates have focussed on introducing the Foundation, our staff, the public statements explaining our role supporting TPL, and the FPIC principles that Earthworm is mainstreaming throughout our work on the ground, and throughout TPL operations.
- Earthworm has introduced itself personally to leaders from the majority of local communities living in or impacted by the 5 TPL estates.
- Earthworm provided information to communities (on the above) in paper form, in Bahasa Indonesia, a language that the local communities understand well. Example of the information provided to the communities here.
- Earthworm only met with communities who gave their consent.
- All Earthworm visits and meetings with communities were documented. These include location and time details.
- Earthworm developed draft minutes of meetings with communities, and final agreed minutes were provided to communities in paper form, with the identical copy being recorded by us.

- Data on land claim grievances against TPL have been provided to TPL by the government. TPL has used the government-provided data on land claims to generate maps that are being used by Earthworm and TPL to understand the situation.
- Earthworm has held two meetings with PBM (Pargamanan-Bintang Maria). The first meeting was to introduce ourselves (as described above), and during a second meeting with them, that they consented to, the meeting included attendance and participation by representatives of KSPPM alongside around a dozen community members.
- In order to generate further data around the land claims made by NGOs to the government, Earthworm has established a participatory mapping programme with TPL, which includes an internal training for TPL staff in their offices, and a field training exercise with them in one of the priority land claim areas
- Earthworm and TPL teams have begun participatory mapping activities in Sionom Hudon Timur. This participatory mapping activity was held as a training practice for TPL staff in an effort to find solutions to land conflicts. Participatory mapping will also be carried out in other locations adjacent to the TPL concession. This is currently ongoing. (Earthworm and TPL have produced an indicative map, however we need consent from the community to publish the map)
- Earthworm teams have conducted conflict mapping training and participatory mapping training for TPL teams, including their Social Capital, Sustainability and Planning teams as part of efforts to increase capabilities and find strategies for solving tenurial problems and encourage engagement with the community
- Our team is currently conducting a review of TPL's business processes and SOPs to improve internal systems, especially related to grievance mechanisms and conflict resolution

Earthworm Foundation takes any form of intimidation very seriously. We understand that incidents of intimidation can have serious and long-lasting impacts on individuals, and we are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. Our organization has a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of harassment and discrimination and we are dedicated to addressing and resolving any issues that arise promptly. We welcome and value any insights or feedback from anyone on how we can improve our processes and approach to preventing and addressing intimidation.

Source: <https://www.earthworm.org/pages/statement-on-ksppm-press-release>