Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) Activity in Nusa Tengara Timur, Indonesia: The TEBE Project for the Mutis-Timau Forest Complex

The Mutis-Timau forest complex in Nusa Tengara Timur (NTT), Indonesia, is one of the country’s major remaining forested areas and the source of two key river systems. In spite of its importance, the area has been exposed to significant deforestation and degradation. A high density of free-roaming cattle, swidden agricultural practices and intensive gathering of firewood (mostly for household fuel consumption) have caused a gradual process of deforestation and prevented regeneration. Although indigenous institutions and customs play a vital role in the management of the forest, land tenure arrangements are ambiguous and this has allowed further encroachment on the forest reserve.

The strategic importance of Mutis-Timau is ensuring water supply around Timor, hence a wide range of stakeholders have been drawn together to act on its preservation and sustainability. Most stakeholders are committed to improved management of the forest, while recognising the importance of indigenous tenure and ownership of the process.

The KYEEMA Foundation, with funding support from AusAID, has worked closely with two local NGOs, Yasan Peduli Sanlima (SANLIMA) and Yayasan Timor Membangun (YTM), to develop a REDD activity concept that will enable communities to better manage the Mutis-Timau forest and materially benefit from REDD. The TEBE Project (‘Towards Enabling Mitigation of Climate Change Through Promotion of Community-Based Economic Growth’) is based on the introduction of community forest management concessions to resolve forest tenure issues and enable communities to assess, and access, carbon market funding.

The TEBE Project is based on a three step implementation framework, which will lead to a self-sustaining, carbon-financed REDD program. The three steps are:

1. Initiate and create pre-conditions to start a market funded REDD project. The emphasis will be one establishing village forest concessions and building local capacity to manage them.

2. Develop a Project Design Document for entering the market, involving a participatory assessment of project sites, financial viability, government licensing and project implementation arrangements.

3. Implement REDD (approximately 1 year after the inception period). This phase is intended to be funded through VCS REDD credits and other possible compliance
markets or carbon financing mechanisms. Carbon emissions will be achieved through re-planting and re-greening, reduced deforestation and improved stoves and domestic biogas.

To date, the KYEEMA Foundation Country Director, Johan Kieft, and Program Coordinator, Talul Ludofikus Korbaffo, together with implementing partners SANLIMA and YTM have begun consulting with stakeholders about the TEBE Project and training staff in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Community-Based Assessment (CBA) in preparation for baseline data collection.