

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

CEPF Grant 112978

Yayasan Penyu Indonesia

Reducing turtleshell trade by supporting Small-Scale Fisheries in Banggai, Sulawesi

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8. Project background

The Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) is classified as “critically endangered” by the IUCN, with 22,000-29,000 nests remaining per year worldwide (see NOAA 2013). It is estimated that in the last one hundred years the global hawksbill population has decreased by 90%. Indonesia may have been home to the largest hawksbill turtle population in the world. In 2008 it was estimated that the nesting population of hawksbill turtles for that year in Indonesia had fallen to between 1,362 and 3,026 females (see Mortimer and Donnelly 2008).

In addition to the threats that all sea turtles face (egg harvesting, nesting beach hunting, bycatch and marine hunting, nesting habitat degradation, marine habitat degradation and pollution), hawksbill turtles are exploited in particular because of the beauty of their carapace scales. The waters of the East Indian Ocean were once the most productive source of turtleshell in the world, and most of it was exported to Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands (see Mortimer and Donnelly 2008). Especially in Japan, the manufacture of arts and crafts products from turtleshell, called *bekko* in Japanese, has a tradition that has been going on for centuries. In the past, the main market for the supply of raw materials was Indonesia, with the city of Makassar – formerly known as Ujung Pandang – in South Sulawesi as the main trading point (see van Dijk and Shepherd 2004).

In Indonesia, hawksbill turtles are protected by law number 5 of 1990, but this did not stop the trade of hawksbill turtles. Despite being listed on CITES Appendix I, Japan continued to import an average of 38,700 kg of *bekko* annually. From 1980 to 1989, imports were voluntarily limited to 30 metric tons per year. Thereafter, import quotas for raw *bekko* were reduced for several consecutive years, until a zero quota for imports was introduced, which took effect on January 1, 1993. International pressure had forced Japan to stop imports of its sea turtle products (see Lam 2012).

In addition to international trade, turtle shell products and raw materials are also traded domestically. Hawksbill turtles are hunted to be stuffed for display, or to use their scales as raw material for making jewelry and other decorative products. Products made from hawksbill turtles are so widespread in Indonesia that it is difficult to trace all sources of origin. Where gift shops are found, turtle carapace products are likely to be available: at airports, shopping malls and handicraft markets. Furthermore, turtle shell products are offered for sale on social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), as well as on Indonesian online shopping platforms such as tokopedia.com or Shopee.com.

With the decreasing population of nesting turtles, hunting activities shifted from nesting beaches to the sea. And as it becomes increasingly difficult to find adults, hunting pressure on juvenile turtles is increasing (see Imron et al. 2015).

From 2019 to 2020, through our international partner, the Turtle Foundation, we received a USFWS grant (grant number F19AP00477) to implement a nationwide campaign in Indonesia, which aimed to gain better information about the turtleshell trade through market surveys - including online trade - and to initiate a behavioural change towards demand reduction with a media awareness campaign. The media campaign included the production and broadcasting of a television and radio ad as well as continuous postings over social media (facebook and instagram). Altogether we were able to reach a huge audience with over 20 million viewers on all channels.

From previous social media work, we had made the experience, that reactions from followers were particularly strong, when the cruel process of gaining turtleshell by killing the turtles with boiling water to peel off the scales from their carapaces was mentioned. Many people responded, that they had not been aware that it kills the turtle to peel off its scales and vendors had lied to them by explaining the scales would grow back. Compared to such emotional reactions of anger and sadness, we received much less feedback from postings about factual information such as legal aspects or the endangered status of sea turtles. We therefore choose an emotional approach for the campaign design: we created a comic avatar as ambassador for the campaign, a juvenile hawksbill turtle, which we named Kimi. And we created the slogan *Keren Tanpa Sisik* (Cool without scales), which aims to influence potential buyers that turtleshell products are no longer fashionable. Throughout the campaign, reactions to all postings were measured and it was verified that emotional content created the strongest reactions, for instance, when Kimi was asking the audience for help to save his family in the ocean from being killed.

The overall results of the trade survey showed that 29,326 turtleshell products were found on eleven online trading platforms, while 105 shops in sixteen locations could be identified, which offered at least 12,541 products made from turtleshell with a total value estimated at IDR 1,058,347,500. The highest number of stores was found in Nias and Bali, followed by Makassar city, while the largest number of products was found in Kupang, Banggai, Makassar and Nias.

The information from Banggai Regency was provided by the local organisation AITo (Alliance for Tompotika Conservation), who has been working in the region for the conservation of Maleo birds and sea turtles since 2006. Beside on-site conservation work, AITo is actively implementing education&awareness campaigns and community engagement projects in Banggai. Turtle Foundation has a long standing partnership with AITo to exchange information and education material about sea turtle conservation.

In Banggai, on the roadside of the main Trans Sulawesi Road in Pagimana District, we found various kinds of products made from turtleshell, which are considered a popular local souvenir - side by side with dried salted fish (*ikan asin*). The vendors confirmed, that the raw material for the turtleshell products is provided by local fishermen and crafted into bracelets and rings by local people as well. There was obviously no awareness at all that the production and sale of turtleshell items is actually illegal. Gomez and Krishnasamy (2019) reported that stuffed turtles were seen openly for sale in a shop in Luwuk (late 2007) and residents of the Banggai archipelago villages reported that they would catch turtles with spears for their meat and eat their eggs if they found them. Usually, hawksbill turtles are caught in the sea by fishers as 'secondary' income.

With our previous experience with campaigning against turtleshell trade in Indonesia, the high density of turtleshell products in Pagimana combined with a low level of awareness and the strong local partner we have with AITo, we decided to do the next, more targeted intervention in Banggai.

By addressing the turtleshell trade in Banggai with the suggested project, we believe that we can make an important change for the hawksbill turtles in the region, contribute to a better management of marine biodiversity and improve local small scale fisheries by developing alternative income opportunities for local fishermen and fish-selling women, which are in line with the Indonesian and international laws for protected species.

The project will have three components:

- An assessment of human threats against turtles and an associated awareness campaign to educate people on turtles' protected status, the existence of a marine protected area, and the value of biodiversity.
- Community-based biodiversity monitoring.
- Repair of market facilities and training in livelihood activities for income enhancement of artisanal fishers.

The proposed project will be implemented in three districts, i.e. Banggai, Banggai Kepulauan and Banggai Laut. While the market surveys and awareness campaign will cover the whole three districts, a special focus will be put to the sub-district (*kecamatan*) Pagimana, and here especially to the village Jaya Bakti, where we observed a high density of turtleshell products on the local market.

The total population of the three project districts is approximately 553.000 people, and Luwuk is the main city in the region with a total population of around 360.000 people. The sub-district Pagimana is part of the district Banggai and is located 64 km north of Luwuk, around a bay called teluk Poh and includes several separate islands, of which Pulau Puah is the biggest. Pagimana has a total population of around 25.000 people spread over 33 villages.

All three districts, and especially Banggai Kepulauan and Banggai Laut consist of various islands surrounded by the sea. In addition to the three major indigenous groups, namely Saluan, Balantak, and Banggai, there are also people from other parts of Indonesia such as Bali, Java, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, Bugis and Makassar who have long settled here and blended with the local community. A special ethnic group in the region are the Bajo people, who are actually sea nomads.

One possible effect of this project will be that people who are engaged in the currently illegal capture/hunting of turtles and illegal trade turtle products will be discouraged from doing so, via a public awareness campaign and community monitoring.

9. Participatory implementation

Prior to this project taking place, the marine zone off the coast of Pagimana was declared a special zone with a protected status, allowing for legal limits to be placed on fishing activities, including fishing seasons, licensing requirements, catch limits, and gear limits. This is over and above legal protections for Hawksbill turtles that exist regardless of the status of the geography. The protected zone was created by the Government of Indonesia with the free prior and informed consent of the communities, as they understood that a regime for legal use of the waters is maintained.

Further, prior to this project taking place, YPI received the official endorsement of the government, the Coastal and Marine Resources Management Center (BPSPL), based in Makassar, on 5 April 2022.

During implementation, each of the project components involves community participation.

The first component is an awareness campaign, letting people know our goals, the laws on conservation, and their rights. The second component will work directly with fishermen, teaching them how to monitor marine life. The final component will involve training people in alternative livelihoods and is discussed more below.

10. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

Eligible “affected” persons include those living in the village of Jaya Bakti in Pagimana, focusing on fishermen who catch Hawksbill turtles and people who sell and trade turtle-based products.

These people are engaged in illegal activity. The likely impact is that they will have less income absent the alternatives discussed below. We will not be imposing new restrictions on them, but rather encouraging the voluntary choice of alternatives.

11. Measures to assist the affected persons

We will work with affected people specifically and with the community in general.

For directly affected people, we will provide training in (a) how to realize more income out of existing fish catch through better handling and more efficient processing and (b) production of handicrafts and other tradeable and saleable products that can be derived from legally available resources (e.g., soap production).

For the broader community, we will repair the Jaya Bakti market area to improve sales. This will lead to increased income and reduce the pressure people feel to engage in illegal activities.

12. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism

YPI will ensure that local stakeholders are aware of the work and understand how to voice complaints if any. We will:

- Post information in Bhs. Indonesia in the *kantor desa* of Jaya Bakti, at government offices in Pagimana, Banggai, Banggai Kepulauan and Banggai Laut, and at the joint YPI/AITo field office in Jaya Bakti.
- Explain our activities at all stakeholder meetings.
- Create fliers about the project’s objectives and planned activities. These fliers will include contact information for YPI and AITo staff. We will distribute these fliers at all stakeholder meetings.

During all meetings and in general interactions with the public, YPI and AITo personnel will inform local people and other stakeholders that they have the right to raise a grievance at any time with YPI, local authorities, or CEPF about any issue relating to the project. Before starting the project implementation,

local communities will be informed of the objectives of the grant. They will be given telephone numbers and e-mails of contact persons at YPI and AIto, local government, and CEPF. This information will also be put on all education materials that will be produced during this project implementation including posters, brochures, and booklets. Contact information of the Regional Implementation Team and CEPF will be made publicly available in Bhs. Indonesia. If YPI receives a grievance, it will communicate the grievance, together with a proposed response, to CEPF and the RIT within 15 days.

We will inform stakeholders that grievances should proceed in the following order below. If the stakeholder is unsatisfied with the response at any step, they may proceed further.

- Executive Director, YPI, info@yayasanpenyu.org, +62 817-9706-262
- RIT Team Leader, Burung Indonesia, info@burung.org; +62 251-835-7222
- Conservation International Ethics Hotline: +1-866-294-8674 / secure web portal: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html>

13. Implementation Arrangements

The project will be coordinated from YPI offices in Denpasar with a permanent field presence in Jaya Bakti. The primary field-facing personnel will be:

- Project Manager
- Campaign Coordinator
- Community Coordinator
- Monitoring Coordinator