

OP RENGAS-COMOS: A NEW DIMENSION TO COMBAT ILLEGAL LOGGING IN SARAWAK

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Abstract

With 62% of Sarawak's 12.4 million hectares landmass under forest cover, Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) is responsible for enforcing both the Forest Rules and Forests Ordinance, 2015 (Cap.71). In conjunction with its 100th anniversary since establishment, FDS has transformed the way it conducts its enforcement in 2019 by adopting Op Rengas-COMOS, which incorporates digitalization and inter-agency collaboration. The Continuous Monitoring and Surveillance (COMOS) initiative leverages on geospatial-based technologies to effectively obtain, analyse and disseminate tactical information to its enforcement personnel, thus enabling them to make critical decisions during the various stages of the enforcement operation. This has effectively reduced costs and time in its intelligence gathering by giving up-to-date and accurate information to its enforcement personnel. The success of this approach has been translated into the increase of cases involving forest offences in 2019 during the inception of this approach and the subsequent reduction of up to 50% in the following years. With both the local and international acknowledgement, such achievement supports the adoption of Op Rengas-COMOS in combating illegal logging.

Keywords: Combating Illegal Logging, COMOS, Forest Technology