

Comment on Merten et al. (2017) “Expanding oil palm cultivation in Indonesia: Changing local water cycles raises risks of droughts and floods”, Briefing Paper, German Development Institute, Berlin.

The CRC 990 / EForTS project clarifies that the Briefing Paper is not a synthesis of the broad research work and therefore should not be misinterpreted as a position statement of the CRC as a whole. The paper is a mixture of results of a limited number of publications of the CRC 990 / EForTS project and own interpretations, as is also clearly indicated in the paper. The CRC 990 / EForTS project would like to stress that the consequences of expanding oil palm plantations are complex and need consideration of the full range of changes in ecological and economic functions of ecosystems. It is the aim of the CRC 990 / EForTS project to provide science based knowledge on these functions in a comprehensive way. This is done by publishing scientific articles, of which the CRC has more than 100 already (as of May 2018). It lies in the nature of scholarly work that individual papers at times concentrate on partial aspects. The uniqueness of the CRC 990 / EForTS is that the project as a whole looks at all the relevant partial aspects, thus allowing broader synthesis work based on all the individual publications. The various publications document the complexity of the changes associated with the transformation of tropical lowland rainforest into plantation systems and call for the adoption of a set of strategies for improving the benefits and minimizing the negative impacts.

The Joint Management Board of CRC 990 / EForTS